

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

Commission on Public Schools



Committee on Public Secondary Schools

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

Amherst, NH

October 28, 2018 - October 31, 2018

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

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 community develops, plans, and funds programs:
 - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
 - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
 - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
 - programs and services
 - enrollment changes and staffing needs
 - facility needs
 - technology
 - capital improvements.
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Souhegan High School is located in the south-central region of the state serving the communities of Amherst and Mont Vernon. Equidistant from the city of Boston, the Atlantic beaches, and the White Mountains, both towns are quintessential New England communities that have retained their rural aesthetic. While retail and manufacturing are Amherst's largest local employers, Mont Vernon has a small general store in the center of town but does not have a business or retail district other than small cottage businesses located in private homes.

With a combined population of 14,630 in 2017, the communities of Amherst and Mont Vernon are economically, culturally, and ethnically similar. As of the last census in 2010, the minority populations of both towns were less than 5 percent, as their white populations were just under 96 percent. Latino and Asian students constituted the largest minority groups, both just under 2 percent each, while African Americans and Native Americans were each less than 1 percent of the population.

The majority of Amherst and Mont Vernon residents work in either the greater Nashua/Manchester area or the technology belt that surrounds Boston. In fact, 61 percent of Amherst's residents commute to New Hampshire employers in nearby communities; about one-fifth commute out of state, while another one-fifth work within Amherst. The median family income of both communities is well above the state average of \$70,303 in 2015. Amherst's median family income in 2015 was \$130,278 and Mont Vernon's was \$109,286. The unemployment rate is quite low; in 2015 Amherst's was 4 percent and Mont Vernon's was 3.6 percent. As of 2015, fewer than 3 percent of Amherst residents lived below the poverty level, as did 9.4 percent of Mont Vernon's residents. The majority of Amherst and Mont Vernon's residents are employed in professional sectors of the economy, such as management and related fields. The largest employers in Amherst include the retail store Walmart as well as a number of manufacturing companies: H & H Metals, Diacom Corporation, and Resin System Corporation.

SAU 39 governs three separate school districts. The Amherst School District serves Amherst's pre-K-8 students attending Clark/Wilkins and Amherst Middle School. Mont Vernon tuitions students in to the Amherst Middle School for seventh and eighth grade. The Mont Vernon School District serves Mont Vernon students attending the Mont Vernon Village School in grades K-6. The Souhegan Cooperative School District (SCSD) serves all of Amherst and Mont Vernon's students in grades 9–12 at Souhegan High School.

Souhegan High School is a mission-driven school of inclusion and competency-based education. Since its inception in 1992, the Coalition of Essential Schools' Ten Common Principles have guided and grounded Souhegan High School. Souhegan is also one of four original districts in New Hampshire's Performance Assessment in Competency Education (PACE) program, launched in 2014. PACE is a "first-in-the-nation accountability strategy that offers a reduced level of standardized testing together with locally developed common performance assessments," according to the New Hampshire department of education. Students attend heterogeneous classes and participate in performance and competency-based assessments, both within their courses and through a series of capstone projects.

Souhegan High School is a democratic school. The Community Council, the school's governance organization, is comprised of students, faculty, school board members, and community representatives; students hold the majority of seats in the Community Council. The Community Council has been responsible for passing a modified block schedule, approving the removal of the decile system, and examining proposals for safety and security.

Souhegan's total enrollment in 2017-2018 was 790, with 375 males and 415 females. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition of Souhegan is fairly homogeneous with a minority student population of 9 percent for the 2017-2018 school year. Latinos or Hispanics comprise about half of the non-white population (30 students), Asians comprising about 40 percent (19 students) while African Americans and American Indians/Native Alaskans comprise the smallest percentage of minorities (7 and 5 students, respectively). English is the primary language spoken by the vast majority of the student population, with fewer than 10 students receiving services for limited English proficiency.

In grades 9 and 10, students are grouped on heterogeneous teams consisting of four core classes: English, social studies, science, and either math or health and wellness. In grade 11, students are teamed in heterogeneous social studies and English classes, while in grade 12 students select a senior seminar course that combines English with one other discipline (social studies or science).

All students are required to take four years of English, three years of math, science and social studies, one year of physical education, a half year each of arts and computer science, advisory, and health, and five credits of elective coursework, including either Spanish, French or Latin world languages. In addition, students contribute 40 hours of community service during their four years of high school.

Across all grades, 42 percent of all students elected to participate in honors during the 2016-2017 school year, which is embedded in the heterogeneous class structure. In the 2017-2018 school year, Souhegan offered 15 AP courses. While enrolled at Souhegan High School, some students also take advantage of courses offered through New Hampshire's Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS), which offers extended learning opportunities and/or competency recovery. Additionally, approximately 40-50 students enroll in credit-bearing college courses each year through a variety of programs: Running Start (the community college system for Marketing), Nashua Community College, Southern New Hampshire University, and the University of New Orleans, where students in the Ethics Seminar may earn college credit by completing additional coursework. In the fall of 2017, just under 11 percent of the student population received special education supports and services.

Souhegan High School offers a variety of co-curricular activities that draws a vast majority of students. Eighty-seven percent of students participate in at least one of the 47 different academic, student government, and performing arts programs, or in one or more of the 56 varsity and sub-varsity athletic teams. Students benefit from numerous extended learning and immersion opportunities, including internships, travel abroad, musical performances, and 10th grade Winter-session.

Souhegan maintains strong and expanding partnerships with local businesses and organizations through a variety of programs. Souhegan collaborates with over 100 community contacts as part of the Souhegan Mentorship Network. This network also supports the tenth grade career panels. Additionally, Souhegan is currently formalizing a partnership with BAE Systems, which has supported Women in Technology, FOCUS, and BAE Internship programs. Other programs built on community and business partnerships include FBLA, Division I (grades 9 and 10) community service days, the Souhegan school store, as well as a new Transitions Evening Program for students transitioning to the workforce. In addition, seniors must work with at least one outside expert as part of their Senior Project. Engineering science teachers are piloting a partnership with Omron Technology for robotics curriculum. Biology teachers partner with the Concord Consortium using their online interface, Geniverse, to teach genetics. Likewise, a marine biology teacher partners with Stanford University and the Education Development Center to develop a marine biology curriculum using authentic data sets. Other key business partnerships include Dyn (now Oracle), Microtime Computers, St. Joseph's Hospital, NH Public TV, Hampshire Hills Fitness Club, and state and national political parties.

Each year, Souhegan inducts approximately 50-60 students into its chapter of the National Honor Society, in addition to the 20-30 students inducted each year into the Spanish and French National Honor Societies. Souhegan also honors its students through the book awards program and the junior and senior awards ceremony.

Souhegan operates on an hours-based calendar, rather than on the number of days. Students receive a minimum of 170 days of instruction with the same number of instructional hours as the 180-day calendar. Operating with an eight period modified block daily schedule, students are able to earn 7.5 credits per year.

In 2017-2018, there were 78 teachers at Souhegan High School, creating a student-to-teacher ratio of 11:1. The average class size of core classes was 21 students for the 2017-2018 school year. In that same year, the average teacher's student load was 98 students. Through the 2017-2018 school year, all teachers teach four and one-third courses per year. Beginning in 2018-2019, all teachers teach four and one-half courses per year. Beyond their core teaching assignments, teachers also serve as daily advisors to 10-12 students to support students' academic and social-emotional development. Teachers also serve as senior project mentors to seniors as they complete their extended individual inquiry projects. Teachers do not have assigned duties beyond those

that address teaching and learning. District records show that over a three-year period (FY 15-17) teachers averaged six days of reported illness each year and an average of 1.5 personal days. Grade 9 and 10 teachers have common planning periods with inter-disciplinary team colleagues as well as common planning time with their respective course colleagues. Grade 11 World Studies and World Literature teaching teams also share common planning time. All members of the professional staff and some members of the support staff participate in transformational learning communities (TLCs), a monthly professional development initiative. The Career Growth Plan also supports teachers' professional development, whereby teachers engage in a multi-year research-based inquiry project related to their professional practice. The National Education Association (NEA) represents teachers in the Amherst and Mont Vernon School Districts. However, Souhegan's Personnel Policy Committee, comprised of elected faculty and staff, represents its professional and support staff in contract negotiations.

Souhegan has a long history of supporting approximately four to eight teacher internships through its current collaborations with UNH-Manchester, as well as past collaborations with Keene State College, Plymouth State University, and St. Anselm's College. The average daily student attendance rate in the two years spanning 2015-2017 hovered just under 96 percent. In a four-year cumulative average (2012-2016), the graduation rate was 96.7 percent; 1.4 percent of students exited early, and 1.9 percent dropped out. In 2016-2017, Souhegan's overall college attendance rate was 90 percent. Seventy-seven percent of 2017 graduates enrolled in four-year colleges, 13 percent attended two-year colleges, while the remaining 10 percent entered the workforce or military service.

Souhegan Cooperative School District is within the upper tier of schools in terms of per-pupil expenditures. Souhegan ranked 17th out of 75 high schools in FY16. Per-pupil expenses were \$18,266 in FY16, while the state average was \$15,068. As is typical in New Hampshire, the majority of public school funding is derived from local sources. In FY18, 73 percent of Souhegan's funding came from local sources, only 22 percent of funds came from state sources, and about 5 percent came from federal sources. Amherst allocates 74.5 percent of its personal property tax revenue to schools, while Mont Vernon allocates 64 percent. Seven students attended as paid non-residents with a tuition fee of \$18,085 to attend Souhegan High School for the 2017-2018 school year.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Souhegan High School Mission Statement

Souhegan High School aspires to be a community of learners born of respect, trust and courage.

We consciously commit ourselves:

- *To support and engage an individual's unique gifts, passions, and intentions.*
- *To develop and empower the mind, body, and heart.*
- *To challenge and expand the comfortable limits of thought, tolerance, and performance.*
- *To inspire and honor the active stewardship of family, nation, and globe.*

The Souhegan High School Constitution

Preamble:

In the words of our Mission statement, Souhegan High School aspires to be a community of learners born of respect, trust and courage. Community in that Souhegan encourages its many diverse constituents to become involved in their governance. Respect in that each governing body respects the decisions of others. Trust in that each governing body trust the others to govern. Courage in that the members that comprise all governing bodies have the courage to speak their minds on issues that matter to them and to seek solutions to problems that they encounter. In an effort to clarify and define the rules, rights and responsibilities of each of these diverse groups in the governance of Souhegan, we present this Constitution to the Souhegan Community.

Section II: As a community of learners, Souhegan commits to a common philosophical core- an amalgam of values around which to teach and learn. Among those are integrity, courage, perseverance and discipline.

The Souhegan High School “Six” of Behavioral Expectations

- *Respect and encourage the right to teach and the right to learn at all times.*
- *Be actively engaged in the learning; ask questions, collaborate, and seek solutions.*
- *Be on time to fulfill your daily commitments.*
- *Be appropriate; demonstrate behavior that is considerate of the community, the campus, and yourself.*
- *Be truthful; communicate honestly.*
- *Be responsible and accountable for your choices.*

The Ten Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools

- *The school should focus on helping young people learn to use their minds well. Schools should not be comprehensive if such a claim is made at the expense of the school's central intellectual purpose.*
- *The school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that the students need, rather than by "subjects" as conventionally defined. The aphorism "less is more" should dominate: curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort to merely cover content.*
- *The school's goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals will vary as those students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of students.*
- *Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. Efforts should be directed toward a goal that no teacher have direct responsibility for more than 80 students in the high school and middle school and no more than 20 in the elementary school. To capitalize on this personalization, decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of students' and teachers' time and the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff.*
- *The governing practical metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker, rather than the more familiar metaphor of teacher-as-deliverer-of-instructional-services. Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves.*
- *Teaching and learning should be documented and assessed with tools based on student performance of real tasks. Students not yet at appropriate levels of competence should be provided intensive support and resources to assist them quickly to meet those standards. Multiple forms of evidence, ranging from ongoing observation of the learner to completion of specific projects, should be used to better understand the learner's strengths and needs, and to plan for further assistance. Students should have opportunities to exhibit their expertise before family and community. The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery for graduation - an "Exhibition." As the diploma is awarded when earned, the school's program proceeds with no strict age grading and with no system of credits earned" by "time spent" in class. The emphasis is on the students' demonstration that they can do important things.*
- *The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation ("I won't threaten you but I expect much of you"), of trust (until abused) and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school's particular students and teachers should be emphasized. Parents should be key collaborators and vital members of the school community.*
- *The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialists second (experts in but one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and a sense of commitment to the entire school.*
- *Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to total student loads per teacher of 80 or fewer pupils on the high school and middle school levels and 20 or fewer on the elementary level, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff, and an ultimate per pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10 percent. To accomplish this, administrative*

plans may have to show the phased reduction or elimination of some services now provided students in many traditional schools.

- *The school should demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. The school should honor diversity and build on the strength of its communities, deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity.*

The Academic Learner Expectations

Knowledgeable Person

- *Acquires and integrates the critical information necessary for success in academic and non-academic domains.*
- *Effectively utilizes the strategies and skills necessary for success in academic and non-academic domains*

Complex Thinker

- *Effectively translates issues and situations into manageable tasks that have a clear purpose*
- *Effectively uses a variety of complex reasoning strategies*

Skilled Information Processor/Consumer

- *Effectively interprets and synthesizes information*
- *Effectively uses a variety of information gathering techniques and information resources*
- *Accurately assesses the value of information*
- *Recognizes where and how projects would benefit from additional information*

Effective Communicator/Producer

- *Expresses ideas clearly*
- *Effectively communicates with diverse audiences*
- *Effectively communicates through a variety of mediums*
- *Effectively communicates for a variety of purposes*
- *Creates quality products*

Self-Directed Learner

- *Seeks different perspectives and considers choices before acting*
- *Pushes the limits of his/her ability and perseveres when faced with difficult situations*
- *Establishes clear goals and manages progress toward achieving them*
- *Generates and pursues personal standards of performance*

Collaborative Worker

- *Works toward the achievement of group goals*
- *Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills*
- *Contributes to group maintenance*
- *Self-assesses and monitors own behavior within a group*

Responsible Citizen

- *Shows willingness to work toward improvement of the community*

* * *

Transition to a Mastery-based System of Learning

Souhegan is deeply immersed in shifting its curriculum, instruction, assessment, grading, and reporting system to a mastery-based system aligned to competencies and standards. This work began a number of years ago when the New Hampshire Department of Education selected Souhegan to be one of four districts in New Hampshire to pilot PACE (Performance Assessment in Competency Education). While this school-wide (and now SAU-wide) transition built on its strengths in the areas of teacher leadership, student agency, quality performance assessment, and demonstration of mastery, Souhegan is now transforming its school-wide “Academic Learner Expectations” to align more transparently with both 21st century learner expectations and discipline-based competencies. This new framework reflects Souhegan’s long-standing practice of assessing student mastery of both academic and habits of work competencies. It also, though, reflects its commitment moving forward to curriculum, instruction and assessment more clearly aligned to discipline-based standards, as well as a shift towards standards-based grading, and competency-based reporting that is the foundation of a mastery system of learning. Souhegan is currently finalizing updated school-wide rubrics for its habits of work (Work Study Practices) competencies; discipline-based common rubrics are currently in development for content-area competencies. The below is the SAU39: Portrait of a Graduate of Souhegan's mastery system of learning framework.

SAU39: Portrait of a Graduate

Knowledge Constructor

- Students build a strong foundation in academic content areas and draw on their knowledge to complete new tasks.

Critical Thinker

- Students think creatively and analytically to evaluate information and design solutions to complex problems.

Skilled Collaborator

- Students learn to work in teams with diverse perspectives to achieve shared goals.

Effective Communicator

- Students clearly convey information and thoughts to connect and respond to their audience.

Engaged Learner

- Students actively monitor and navigate their own learning towards long-term goals and aspirations.

Confident Global Citizen

- Students develop positive attitudes and beliefs about their identities to contribute and find meaning in the world around them.

All six of these examples elaborate in varying degrees on the essential core values, beliefs and learning expectations that are instrumental to Souhegan High School's everyday practice; namely, to develop thoughtful and empathetic learners who are mindful of the importance of the values of respect, trust and courage. Central to these values is the belief that twenty-first century learning for a Souhegan student best thrives in an educational atmosphere where wisdom in all disciplines is cultivated based on beliefs and expectations that stem from an important single purpose undergirding this work. Ted Sizer best describes this notion in his book *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School*, writing “One purpose for schools—education of the intellect—is obvious. The other—an education in character—is inescapable.” Souhegan possesses this belief and has built its values, beliefs and learning expectations around this theme.

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 Souhegan High School, a committee of eleven 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 20 students, 10 parents, 3 central office personnel, and 1 member of the school board.

The self-study of Souhegan School extended over a period of 12 school months from April 2017 to June 2018. The visiting team was pleased to note that students, staff, community members, 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, Souhegan 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 Souhegan High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Amherst, New Hampshire, 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, special education personnel, school administrators, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Souhegan School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 48 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 12 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 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 Souhegan High School.

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to re-commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. One of the great strengths of the Souhegan school community is its core values and the impressive impact of its core values and beliefs about learning.

The essence of the original mission, generated throughout the foundational work preceding and shaping the school's opening in 1992, is preserved and enhanced 26 years later in 2018. The principal and his team demonstrated their keen understanding and sensitivity to the critical juncture of reverence for the past and vision for the future that defines and shapes the current dialogue percolating at Souhegan High School. The principal gently refers to the school as approaching middle age, and as such, is confronted with conflicting priorities, which if left untended, could bruise the school culture. It is the strength of that culture, one deeply valued and grounded in decades of research and best practice, that continues to keep the school moving forward in ways which have yielded exemplary results. The clarity and contagious energy that emanate from the foundational documents are beacons of the growth mindset and sign posts of the paramount importance of paying explicit and daily attention to the mantra of placing students first. The school uses dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive processes when addressing redesign. The use of transformational learning communities (TLCs), teaming, multiple faculty-led study groups coupled with the Community Council allows Souhegan to dynamically, collaboratively, and inclusively affirm its core values and beliefs about learning.

Students and teachers are very familiar with the academic learning expectations (ALEs). The school's beliefs about learning are clearly articulated in the seven academic learning expectations. The ALEs are "Knowledgeable Person, Complex Thinker, Effective Communicator, Self-Directed Learner, Collaborative Worker, and Responsible Citizen." Familiarity with these expectations extends throughout the school community. The Endicott survey reports 94.8 percent of students stated that they are familiar with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Students agreed that working toward proficiency in each of the seven areas is of paramount importance punctuating the mantra at SHS that student achievement is first and foremost about learning. In the Endicott survey, 94 percent of parents stated that they are familiar with the core values and beliefs of the school. The academic dean referred to the ALEs as part of the school's DNA. Students expressed a clear understanding of the ALEs, as well as how they are measured. One student explained that teachers stress the ALEs during grades 9 and 10 known as Division I. The student went to explain that by grades 11 and 12, the ALEs have been internalized, and the focus has moved from memorizing the names and definitions of all seven to the application of the mindset the ALEs cultivate. Students expressed a broad respect for the evaluation metric of the ALEs noting that they place value in the growth-oriented conversations that occur between teacher and students around the 1-4 scoring system measuring their progress in achieving the school's ALEs. The ALEs grew from research rich discussions, and those discussions are in place again as the school continues to refine and to update the ALEs. The core values of "Respect, Trust, and Courage" have served as the steady guideposts influencing every facet of school culture. Their prominence is evidenced, not only by their visibility in posters and through all school documents, but also, in the organic actualization of these three values in how members of the Souhegan community work with one another. Additionally, the mission statement's core ideas are woven into the "Souhegan Six" behavioral expectations and the Souhegan High School Constitution. The Souhegan Six grew out of the work done by the founding team whose work was informed by the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES). As a member of the CES, Souhegan's essence is captured in the application of those principles. The Souhegan Six serve as the benchmarks and inspiration through which the school reflects the school's mission statement which is "Souhegan High School aspires to be a community of learners born of respect, trust, and courage. We consciously commit ourselves to support and engage an individual's unique gifts passion and intentions, to develop and empower the mind, body, and heart, to challenge and explained the comfortable limits of thought, tolerance, and performance, to inspire and honor the active stewardship of family, nation, and globe." Conversations with all stakeholder groups, a review of the Endicott survey results, and the palpable presence of attitudes and dispositions about learning observed and felt throughout the visit revealed how embedded the core values are into the fiber of the school community.

Through inclusive practices, an unwavering commitment to collaboration, and a steady emphasis on research, Souhegan continues its journey of maintaining fidelity to its founding principles coupled with a willingness to engage in ongoing reflection. As a result of Souhegan High School's commitment to its core values of respect, trust, and courage, the school community benefits from the consistency of its ideology and its thoughtful grounding in research practices visible throughout all aspects of the school community.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members
- department leaders

- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- 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 of the academic learning expectations is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success defining targeted high levels of achievement.

The academic learning expectations (ALEs) serve as the backbone of the students' academic growth at Souhegan High School. Like the core values of respect, trust, and courage, the academic learning expectations are widely known and deeply valued by members of the school community. The Endicott survey reports that 71 percent of students, 92 percent of staff, and 78 percent of parents agree that the school's academic, social, and civic learning expectations are challenging. As stated in the student handbook, referred to as the Student Owner's Manual, rubrics are used to communicate expectations and performance relating to the Souhegan learner expectations. The rubrics describe a student's level of proficiency. These academic learning expectations embody the skills and abilities that serve as the school's 21st century learning expectations. These expectations are evidenced throughout all aspects of student academic life including the honors challenge, Saber support, academic support, advisory, and class forums. Each teacher, team, and/or department has the autonomy to define performance levels and descriptors for the ALEs.

There are several study groups attending to the ongoing exploration and revision of the school's academic learning expectations to ensure their continued efficacy and viability. Specifically, the work study practices committee began its work in the summer of 2015. Programs and protocols throughout the school are re-evaluated and re-imagined in confluence with ongoing discussions around assessment and grading spearheaded by the assessment, grading and reporting (AGR) committee. This committee has been active in re-visiting Souhegan's academic learning expectations using the Performance Assessment in Competency Education (PACE) model, concepts from mastery-based learning systems, and 21st century learning expectations with an anticipated implementation of revised ALEs effective in 2019-2020 school year. The leadership team described the intersections between PACE and the academic learning expectations stressing the value and timing of being a PACE school. They explained that working through PACE gives the school standards but not standardization. Members provided a thoughtful overview of how PACE has prompted some important dialogue at the school regarding the balance of standards-based reporting while holding firm to the central tenet that standardized assessments do not measure the kind of work that allows Souhegan to hold true to the guiding principles of the Essential Schools.

There are applications of all seven of the current ALEs. One impressive outcome is the broad base of student proficiency in the fourth expectation entitled "Effective Communicator." In a gallery walk of student work, each student displayed impressive poise and informed speech. Parents and staff members commented on the feedback they receive about the poise and presentation skills of Souhegan graduates as they migrate to college and to the world of work. It was reported that professors and employers provided the school will positive feedback about the level of preparation and excellence demonstrated by SHS graduates as they engaged in scholarly preparation and professionalism in delivery of knowledge and in the sharing of ideas. The school's core values of respect, trust, and courage are the keystones of athletics, clubs, events, and community service. Specific examples include Community Council, community service days, participation in the New Hampshire Scholars program, Division I Portfolio Exhibition, winter-session, the junior research project, and the school's capstone senior project.

Because Souhegan High School continues to engage in the redesign of ALEs and school-wide criteria for success, addressing academic, social, and civic competencies, the school will continue to ensure challenging and measurable learning expectations for all students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, 94 percent of staff and 91 percent of students agree the the school's core values and beliefs are actively reflected in the school's culture, and 96 percent of staff confirm that, when making important teaching decisions, they consider the school's core values about learning. When asked if the school's core values and learning expectations are referenced at parent conferences, 83 percent of parents agreed that they are. There are a myriad ways that the culture of Souhegan High School embodies its core values, beliefs and ALEs. Respect, trust, and courage are central to school policy, procedure, decision-making, and resource allocation.

The core values can be seen in structures, programs, and experiences where all school community members take part, such as advisory, Division I Exhibition, and senior project. Additionally, Souhegan's core beliefs are demonstrated through the leadership opportunities afforded to stakeholders through the Community Council, Judicial Board and Community Review Board. Moreover, the core values of respect, trust, and courage are reflected in many programs such as winter-session, Fang Fest, community service days, Run for Hope, the Hope for Gus project, Ethics Forum, and extended learning opportunities. The three core values of respect, trust, and courage play a key role in weighing issues brought to the Community Council such as the gender neutral restrooms, and the placement of cameras on school grounds where student-led policy changes were proposed and addressed.

In terms of formal curriculum, Souhegan High School is in the process of undertaking a complete school-wide revision of the academic learning expectations. This procedure includes a thorough documentation, unit by unit and assessment by assessment, of Souhegan's current and common practices in every discipline aligning the entire curriculum with ALEs, competencies, and content standards. The goal of this process is that it will eventuate into a comprehensive learning progression that will include common performance assessments where appropriate, and provide inextricable links between and among curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on PACE (Performance Assessment in Competency Education) guidelines. Likewise, and in conjunction with work on academic learning expectations, the assessment, grading and reporting (AGR) committee is reviewing how Souhegan reports, grades and assesses student performance in line with its core values. Work is underway to ensure that the philosophy behind and practices in place transition to a competency-based approach. Working in concert with, and guided by the skillful and inspired leadership of the principal and his team, Souhegan High School is engaged in a dynamic process of re-imagining itself. Central to the dynamics of respectfully organized and thoughtfully choreographed reflection and planning is the shared commitment to preserving what makes Souhegan High School a learning community focused on students.

Because Souhegan's core values, and beliefs are actively reflected in the culture of the school, and guide the school's policies, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment procedures, decisions, and resource allocations, students, staff, and community members benefit from the consistency, transparency, and positive impact of the school's dedication to being a truly mission-driven learning organization.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing

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

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The school is engaged in a review and revision of its core values and academic learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities. The commitment to do so is based on a thorough immersion in the scholarship around institutional change, theory of action, and the adherence to the Ten Principles of Coalition of Essential Schools.

The principal is clearly an instructional leader whose beliefs about learning are informed by the research and inspired by the students and staff he leads. He is eloquent in his understanding of and ability to articulate the current status of Souhegan High School as an institution which has not strayed from the ten CES principles while adhering to them as the grounding structure of the school. He likes to talk about the current period in the history of Souhegan High School as "positioned to be brand new again." He is leading the school through a multi-dimensional discussion framed in the concept of re-imagining. When asked about how he has achieved such a high level of faculty engagement, he speaks to the overarching norm of not only expecting innovation and germinating novel ideas, but also to his pledge of support for ingenuity among all members of the SHS school community.

Last summer, professional development was organized around teacher-led design studios, setting the tone for creating a spirit of adventure and creativity while building on the CES principles. As articulated in the Souhegan High School 2018 Summer Professional Learning catalog, each of the design studios will involve a literature review of current research, an examination of current practices at SHS, an analysis of associated data, a creation of short term refinements, and a brainstorm protocol to generate ideas that may be used to inform the present and to guide the future of SHS. Design studio teams are limited to five participants per team. Participants are expected to continue the design process throughout the 2018-2019 school year during time specifically allocated for the work. All teachers are encouraged to submit topics for design studios.

The principal has surrounded himself with a bright and caring leadership team which expands to include multiple levels of teacher leadership. Among his team are two deans of faculty. The dean of faculty is dedicated to adult learning while the academic dean spearheads multiple discussions on evidence-based research and the impact of PACE ensuring that there is a parallel path of continuous growth and mutual support between the CES principles and the focus on proficiency assessment articulated in PACE. Members of the leadership team talked about re-design as a process which challenges existing norms while affirming their suitability. They spoke about having the tools in place in 2018 to accomplish what the school set out to accomplish in 1992. While the essence of the foundational principles remains solidly in tact, the school has the technology and support through PACE to engage in even more robust reflection, re-imagining, and redesign.

Throughout all the rich dynamics created by an inclusive leadership style, the powerful mantra of "student first" is at the center of all study groups. Any and all revision of core values or learning expectations begins with the student. The principal and his school is united in efforts to promote student agency while ensuring a level playing field for all students. The team calls on the seminal research from Brown University as it asks which of the existing academic learning expectations are the most central to the school's mission, and how should those expectations be measured, reported, and equated through the quality of the student's experiences. Central to the process of revision and review of the school's core values and learning expectations is Souhegan's role as a member of SAU 39. There is a deliberate focus on vertical collaboration and district cohesiveness. What was once viewed as incidental contact between Souhegan and its feeder schools is now a district priority. The middle schools are working on developing core values, and the high school has committed to a variety of transition strategies which include curriculum alignment. Central office personnel describe the district mission as coming from Souhegan. There is an articulated focus on developing student agency and instituting academic learning expectations throughout all grades in the district. The middle schools are initiating advisories, the keystone of Souhegan High School. The high school has benefited from practices in place at the middle schools as well. Specifically, the high school has implemented a continuation of student-led conferences, a long held and respected middle school practice. This spirit of collaboration and commitment to providing students with a seamless transition to high school is further exemplified in the plans to expand the profile of a graduate beyond the high school to embrace the work of the entire SAU 39.

Members of the administrative team stated that the current work is really about "redefining who we already are" noting that the core values are part of an institutional DNA. The sage and inclusive leadership team coupled with the deeply-rooted dedication and like mindedness of the faculty have imbued the task of review and revision of the school's core values with a sense of intellectual pursuit of what is best for students at this time.

As indicated in the Endicott survey, 87.2 percent of the staff believe the school's core values and beliefs about learning guide decisions related to policies, procedures, and the allocation of resources, 94.2 percent feel the school's core values and beliefs are actively reflected in the school's culture, and 96.5 percent answered that when making important teaching decisions, they consider the school's core values and beliefs about learning. The leadership team at Souhegan is aware that the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations have not been reviewed on a regular basis. However, faculty continuously review, adjust, and create new curriculum for students using the core values as the basis of their decisions. So, in that sense they are reviewed on regular basis, but not necessarily with the intent of modification, but rather one of calibration.

The faculty remains fully committed to the original foundational principles. There is excellent work underway. Specifically, the work study practices committee began its work to review and to establish a new series of school-wide performance indicators and analytic rubrics using the New Hampshire State Work Study Practices as an initial framework, along with Souhegan's ALEs. The revision process is in progress, and Souhegan is piloting the new series of school-wide performance indicators and analytic rubrics beginning in the fall of 2018. The school expresses and demonstrates the ability to preserve its original principles. The superintendent pointed out that it is his intention to expand the instructional design and practices that define Souhegan High School throughout the district. Specifically, he references the Hewlett Foundation work on deeper learning, the Buck Institute's rich offerings in the area of project-based learning and project-based assessment, and Marzano's work on school structure. The superintendent noted that the district mission grew from that of Souhegan High School, as did the current conversation to generate academic learning expectations throughout the district. The superintendent expressed his support for and keen awareness of the guiding principles upon which Souhegan High School was founded.

The work underway at Souhegan honors the integrity of its past while carrying out a dynamic and inspiring vision of its future with the students at the center of the discourse. As Souhegan High School completes its research-based, data-driven, and priority-aware review of its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, the finished product will illuminate and respond to current needs and priorities of both the district and the school community.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The high degree of fidelity to, and use of, the school's core values, beliefs, and academic learning expectations throughout the school

Commendation

The impact, clarity, visibility, and simplicity of the school's three core values of "Respect, Trust, and Courage" as tools to embrace and to inspire the essence of Souhegan High School

Commendation

The process in place to familiarize students with the academic learning expectations and the role they play in developing habits of mind

Commendation

The impressive regard for and use of research in all phases of creation, redesign, and implementation of practices informed by the school's core values

Commendation

The commitment to the core values, beliefs, and academic learning expectations that unites and guides all stakeholders at Souhegan High School

Commendation

The widely supported commitment to referring to the foundational principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools as the school revisits its origin and shapes its future

Commendation

The unwavering system of checks and balances in place to keep the school sharply focused on what is best for students

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure the process of reviewing and revising the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations is ongoing and cyclical with prescribed timelines, based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities

Recommendation

Provide time and resources to endorse the widely supported commitment to referring to the foundational principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools as the school revisits its origin and shapes its future

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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

The results of the Endicott survey indicate that 77 percent of the staff agree that the school's formal curriculum design ensures that all students practice and achieve all the school's learning expectations, and 82 percent of parents agree that the curriculum provides their sons and daughters with opportunities to achieve the school's learning expectations. Teachers have access to rubrics that develop and measure the seven academic learning expectations (ALEs). Students report that the 1-4 scoring on the ALE rubrics are helpful in developing them as learners. In Psychology class, the rubrics are used to assess three of the seven academic learning expectations. Specifically, students focus on their growth as knowledgeable person, complex thinker, and effective communicator. A rubric used in the Advanced Studio Art class assessed students in the areas of knowledgeable person, complex thinker, self-directed learner, and effective communicator. Division I students are thoroughly immersed in becoming familiar with the language and measurement of the seven academic learning expectations. Students spoke to how much these seven academic learning expectations shape their experiences at Souhegan High School, as well as how they internalize and value the ALEs as they move through their high school years. Students report going to teachers for input and advice, not only about content knowledge, but more importantly, for feedback on growth in the parameters defined by the academic learning expectations.

Teachers report that they have worked and continue to work together in developing and reworking curriculum and assessments that address the ALEs. Curriculum documents show how specific subject area learning expectations are addressed, taught, and assessed. While teachers are not required to turn in lesson plans, the instructional coaches support teachers in planning, calibrating, and revising curriculum. The coaches work in collaboration with teachers and administrators providing resources for instructional staff. At SHS, the coaches serve as the primary tools for establishing reliability and consistency among students' learning experiences. Working closely with the deans, the coaches provide content specific research and strategies for their respective groups of teachers. While there is no formal accountability specific to curriculum, the culture at Souhegan High School remains constant in its focus on students. Teachers are dedicated to helping students succeed and offer multiple paths of intervention, collaboration, and feedback to their students who see their teachers as supportive, accessible, and eager to ensure that the students practice and achieve each of the school's academic learning expectations. Teachers trust in each other to teach what has been agreed upon in the curriculum.

As a result of the purposeful design of a curriculum designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations, the school demonstrates its commitment to developing 21st century knowledge and skills among all students.

Sources of Evidence

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

- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

While there is a written format for curriculum 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, there is not a consistent format.

In the Endicott survey, 29 percent of the faculty agree that there is a common, formal curriculum template used in all subject areas. There is widespread use of the Understanding by Design format. Rubrics and curriculum maps reference essential questions, concepts, content and specific 21st century learning expectations. While school-wide rubrics exist, they are not uniformly used. At this time, the school supports teacher autonomy in the design and use of rubrics best suited to develop and to measure the school's academic learning expectations. Students report that while teachers measure the ALEs, there is uniformity in the 1-4 scoring system which translates into 1- Not Met, 2- Not Quite Met, 3- Met and 4- Exceeded. Students reported that they get a high degree of satisfaction when they receive a 4 on an ALE and benefit greatly from teacher feedback on the ALEs. Students frequently refer to the academic learning expectations. A student described how the test they had just taken would be graded and how that would be correlated to the academic learning expectations. It is expected that the work underway with PACE assessment maps and the faculty's growing familiarity with Marzano's Critical Concepts Scale will bring about increased consistency in both instructional and assessment practices.

A review of the student work sample affirmed a use of rubrics measuring specific academic learning expectations, use of essential questions, concepts, content, and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success. For example, in science, the world energy summit project included a rubric posing the essential question, "How can the various countries reduce the effects of climate change on their country without jeopardizing their economic stability and well being of their country?" Students developed responses to the essential questions in ways which not only responded to the ALEs, but also helped to shape the curricular focus.

As a result of the consistency in the written curriculum 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, students benefit from the thoughtful instructional design.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The curriculum at Souhegan High School strongly 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.

In the Endicott survey, 83 percent of the students agree that the content of the courses they take challenge them to think critically and to solve problems. A multitude of student work highlighted depth of knowledge and application of that knowledge showing that students are regularly asked to synthesize the knowledge gained in class with real-world examples. For example, a personal narrative in a Psychology class asked students to apply knowledge gleaned from their studies to their life, an analysis of the history of Spain as it impacted the country's current struggles with a democratic model, and applying evolving skills in vocabulary and grammar to give directions to another student using the Spanish language to complete the task.

In addition to higher order thinking, students are also encouraged on a daily basis to problem-solve and to create cross-discipline connections. Examples of interdisciplinary work include a biodiversity project and an accident reconstruction project in collaboration with the local police department. Multi-discipline learning occurs on several platforms including teacher teaming between and among two or more courses or through a single course with consultation between the course's teacher and other faculty. The Endicott survey reports that 72 percent of students agree that information they learn in one class can be used in other classes, and 80 percent of the faculty agrees that the curriculum emphasizes cross-disciplinary learning. Teachers throughout the school are integrating lessons focused on the ethical and responsible use of technology into their content-based teaching. An example of this is the ocean tracks unit of study in science classes. Project-based learning and assessment provide opportunities for students to engage in collaboration, problem-solving and authentic learning opportunities many of which mirror real-world situations. Often, there is an off-campus component to project-based assessments.

On the Endicott survey, 88 percent of staff affirmed that the curriculum emphasizes informed and ethical use of technology. Opportunities for learning beyond the classroom include the marine biology trip, a trip to Thailand, and the tenth grade's Intercession, a week-long program for staff and student to share in expeditionary learning. As measured in the Endicott survey, 66 percent of the students agree that their school provides opportunities for learning off campus through field trips, internships, job shadowing and dual enrollment in college courses. Authentic application of understanding is a deeply rooted priority at SHS. The Endicott survey reports that 95 percent of the staff agree that the curriculum emphasizes application of knowledge and skills. During conversations with the principal, he talked about his vision of expanding extending learning opportunities for all students.

Because 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, and informed and ethical use of technology, Souhegan students benefit from a rigorous course of coordinated and integrated study providing them with excellent preparation for college and careers.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

At Souhegan High School, currently there is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum, as well as ongoing work underway to ensure increased consistency in this area.

The Endicott survey reports that 74 percent of the faculty believe the written and taught curricula is aligned. The assistant superintendent spoke to the district's commitment to alignment of the written and taught curriculum with specific references to the work underway to provide consistent vertical articulation between the high school and the sending middle school. There is increased emphasis under the leadership of the superintendent to establish academic learning expectations and core values and beliefs about learning at the middle school level with the goal of providing more uniform transition among seeing schools to they high school. While teachers do not submit lesson plans, there is consistent collaboration and communication among staff regarding curriculum.

The district strategic plan includes an action plan for defining and documenting the relationships between deeper thinking and curriculum standards. There is work underway focused on ensuring that the articulated curriculum is aligned with the state standards as well as with performance assessments. District goals include intentional focus on providing students with opportunities to be actively engaged in performance assessments showing what they know. The school ensures alignment using a variety of tools including but not limited to common assessments, classroom observations, evaluation, department head oversight, curriculum documents, rubrics used in classes, work done in transformational learning communities, departments, teams, observations. The configuration of the ninth grade teams and the corresponding common planning time for grades 9 and 10 strengthen the alignment between the written and taught curriculum in the core courses.

As a result of the clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum, students at Souhegan High School have shared experiences while developing the knowledge and skills articulated in the state standards.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Effective curricular coordination exists in most areas and vertical articulation exists in some academic areas within the school. As noted in the most recent district strategic plan, there is work underway focused on strengthening vertical alignment of the high school curriculum with that of the sending middle school.

Currently, the instructional coaches are working on K-12 alignment. Contained in the document articulating the role of the SAU 39 coaching program, is a list of what coaches value. One of the primary areas identified is collaboration across schools and districts as well as the broader education community. The assistant superintendent outlined the district's strategic plan and its goal to strengthen the relationships among curriculum areas in the area of developing deeper thinking. She pointed out that the curriculum is aligned to the state standards and that the district is currently revamping its assessments as part of its transition to a standards-based grading system. The district is placing careful emphasis on performance-based assessments. According to the Endicott survey, nearly 60 percent of the staff believe that they have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. The school administration reports that the district curriculum coordinator monitors the alignment of the curriculum across the schools. The summer literature institute involves collaboration among 7th through 12th grade teachers. The science department is in the process of aligning its curriculum with the Next Generation Science Standards and has been working on implementing these standards K-12. As such, they have been reworking, aligning, and revamping their curriculum.

Teachers are allotted time during some inservice days to work on curriculum alignment within their subject areas across grade levels. Examples of curriculum documents provided to the faculty for this work include exemplars and templates to frame and share their coordinated efforts. Transformational learning community meetings support coordinated efforts among faculty and staff from different departments. Department members frequently consult with each other informally and formally in department meetings. Interdisciplinary projects employ elements from multiple disciplines without redundancy because of a clearly defined curriculum. There is a great deal of engagement in various professional groups that build and implement the curriculum. Currently, there was no defined curriculum review cycle. Curriculum revision and review occur on an as-needed basis. Some freshmen report that their high school learning built upon their middle school experiences demonstrating the existence of vertical alignment from grade 8 to grade 9.

When the district continues to dedicate more time and training focused, not only on horizontal curriculum throughout the high school, but also vertical articulation with the middle school, students at Souhegan High School will benefit from a more seamless transition to high school including the development of deeper learning in core subjects.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

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

The school has impressive resources, and benefits from a high level of generosity among members of the community in providing resources that enhance students' experiences. Of particular note was the broad and eager expression of appreciation for these resources from students and staff. The furnishings of the school are clearly chosen to support the school's core values of respect, trust, and courage. Classrooms and common areas are arranged to promote collaboration and to express trust.

Each classroom has well functioning technology and white boards. Science classes such as biology, chemistry, anatomy, marine biology, earth science, physics, and engineering are taught in labs containing the necessary materials and tools to perform experiments. There is a black box theater as well as an auditorium outfitted with state-of-the-art sound and lighting equipment to support the various activities and programs in the school and community. Spacious art studios are available for painting, sculpting, drawing, pottery, and other media. A digital photography lab and dark room support photography courses. Souhegan High School provides several computer labs containing both PC and Mac computers, and the computers are loaded with different operating systems and software serving a variety of purposes and curriculum needs ranging from vex robotics to videography, digital publishing, and graphic design. Printers are also located in all labs.

Health and wellness classes use a number of spaces. The main gymnasium area provides a place for basketball, volleyball, and other hardwood sports. A climbing wall is located in the mini-gym and gives students exposure to both climbing and wellness activities. Life skills uses a kitchen that is supplied with ovens, microwaves, refrigerators, kitchen utensils, and food for use in the course. Business education uses computer labs and software specific to the curricular goals and objectives of the program. Students enroll in career and technical/vocational courses off campus at different schools within the southern New Hampshire region, such as Milford High School and Alvirne High School. Athletic fields surround the school and are used for lacrosse, soccer, field hockey, football, softball, baseball, and track. A newly installed multi-season, turf field is also available for multiple purposes. Wooded trails are used for cross-country practice, races, and training. A high ropes course is also located on the property. The school is equipped with a staffed weight room that contains free weights and some fitness equipment.

There are 84 co-curricular clubs at Souhegan High School and the students report that the school is very supportive when it comes to starting a new clubs citing that all they need to do is find an adviser and the club will run. Students express broad-based appreciation for not only the number of clubs, but also, the respect they are shown when wanting to initiate a club no matter how small the size or unique the focus. This unified support is yet another example of how students come first and is a significant contributing factor to the consensus among students regarding how they feel respected, valued, and known by the adults in the building with whom they have established positive and productive relationships.

By design, Souhegan's library/media center, referred to as the "info center," is located at the center of the school building. The info center provides print and digital resources including digital cameras, digital recorders, overhead projectors, and speakers. A staffed writing center remains accessible to all students, and is located in the main building. A common learning area provides computers, whiteboards, movable tables, chairs, printers, and Wi-Fi access. Music and band classes are taught in a well-equipped music room with state of the art acoustics. In addition, software programs allow students to play, record, and edit music. A choir room is a dedicated performing space available for groups to gather, to rehearse, and to perform. Effective in the 2019-2020 academic year, all students will be provided with personal laptops conducive to the digital eco system in place at SHS and completing the projected 1:1 computer-to-student ratio. Currently, students in ninth through eleventh grades have school-issued computers. In addition to the classroom materials and computers, the info center

provides a wide range of instructional materials including videography equipment, computers, and audio recording devices that enhance the curriculum. Students are encouraged to access these materials throughout the school day and the school year. The info center is also the central distribution point for class textbooks and books for English classes.

Teachers reported that the budget effectively meets their instructional needs. However, they also reported that the budget process timelines happen too early during the school year, impeding their readiness to bring forth ideas for new programs and courses, thus reducing opportunities for teachers to gain support for new initiatives and materials. Despite the timing of the budget process, the building administration reallocates funds when necessary to find the materials and books for new courses. The SAU 39 business manager reports that only once in the last 18 years have the taxpayers voted down a budget. All other budgets generally pass without question. While Souhegan benefits from a well-supported budget to provide many resources, the teachers and administrators acknowledge that the science labs, built when the school was new in 1992, do not meet current state standards and may hinder the school's ability to fully integrate the Next Generation Science Standards. As part of Souhegan's strategic plan known as the Souhegan 2.0 plan, the inadequate science lab areas will be remodeled and reconfigured and will be brought up to current state standards for safety, square foot area, and state-of-the-art equipment.

In the last 5 to 10 years, the school population has decreased. As a result, teachers are teaching classes out of their respective content areas, ones which they have not taught in the past; also, there are fewer sections of the same class. These factors have resulted in a more restrictive student schedule, slightly larger class sizes, and teachers who are teaching a greater variety of classes at one time. On the Endicott survey, 81 percent of parents agree that their sons and daughters have been provided with the materials needed for their classes in the form of textbooks, computers, equipment and supplies. While the school has what is needed, reduced enrollment has a direct correlation, putting new and different stresses on the delivery of content. Building administrators indicated that the secondary schools are carefully watching enrollment bubbles and emerging patterns in the lower grades and integrating those factors into their long-range planning. The results of the Endicott survey reveal that 75 percent of staff agree that the school has sufficient professional staff to implement the curriculum including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities and 50 percent of the staff agree that co-curricular programs are adequately funded. Faculty and leadership are cognizant of the impact of larger class sizes as well as greater student load on weakening the foundational principles of the essential schools which stress an 80:1 ratio and place emphasis on the central importance of knowing each student well.

As a result of the consistently sufficient funding of staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities, students at Souhegan High School are supported in their achievement of the school's academic learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- student work
- teachers
- students
- parents
- community members
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

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. The professional staff has adequate time to devote to curriculum coordination and articulation, and professional development has been consistently targeted to meet school curriculum and assessment goals.

Teachers express both an appreciation for the time they are given while voicing a need for more time to fully engage in curriculum work. On the Endicott survey, 59 percent of staff agree that teachers have sufficient time to be fully engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision. The school board and the leadership team have supported a professional development plan that allows teachers to grow and move across the salary schedule yearly as they meet the professional development goals laid out in their individual plans. The monthly transformational learning community meetings held during the staff's normal work day have been reported by the staff to be a significant source of collaboration. In addition, curriculum development and review also is incorporated in assessment, grading, and rubrics committee meetings, in work studies practices, and departments.

At the district level, the curriculum coordinator is responsible for overseeing the coordination of the curriculum in the district. At the school level, the department level and team level leaders oversee the coordination of the curriculum. The TLC groups meet monthly providing time for cross-disciplinary work. In addition, various yearly staff development time such as the STEAM institute gives more intensive time to the development of curriculum. Teachers and administrators report a continual emphasis on making changes to all aspects of school life based on current data and research. Results from assessments inform the faculty about changes that may need to be made to the curriculum. For instance, the science department reports that information from 8th and 9th grade assessments informed them on some reworking of how they implement the Next Generation Science Standards. The curriculum is monitored at the building level and adjustments are made in consultation with the teachers. In addition, the curriculum is informally evaluated at the school level.

Due to the provision of sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research, students benefit from a continuous cycle of improvement and revitalization of units of study.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The school's masterful design and implementation of academic learning expectations as the school's translation of its core values and beliefs into actionable and measurable steps and communicated through curriculum

Commendation

The well-designed units of study framed with essential questions, academic learning expectations and measurable, well-documented criteria

Commendation

The school's unified focus on depth of understanding and application of knowledge evidenced in classroom learning as well as through extended learning opportunities

Commendation

The high level of collaboration between and among staff in creating cross-discipline connections and focusing on deeper thinking

Commendation

The strong commitment to ensuring the curriculum as well as the co-curricular activities support and develop the school's foundational principles as articulated through the ten essential principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools

Commendation

The school's commitment to teacher-initiated professional development through the well-organized and funded design teams

Commendation

The school's commitment to teacher-initiated professional development through the well-organized and funded design teams

Commendation

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Commendation

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Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a timeline to map the measurement of academic learning expectations through common templates

Recommendation

Ensure vertical articulation from middle to high school and throughout high school

Recommendation

Update the science lab to support teaching and learning more closely aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and state standards

Recommendation

Provide resources to address faculty concerns regarding common planning time as it impacts curriculum and the potential to ensure shared experiences for students within and across departments and grade levels

Recommendation

Establish a process to address faculty concerns regarding common planning time as it impacts curriculum and the potential to ensure shared experiences for students within and across departments and grade levels

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey results, 81 percent of staff agree that teachers continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, and 66 percent of parents feel that teachers personalize instruction to support student's achievement of the school's learning expectations. Instructional practices are examined at the team meeting level and the department level. Faculty members are on individual three-year growth plans designed to improve and adjust instructional practices. Among the key elements of the instructional coach program is to increase student learning by enhancing teacher effectiveness. The role of the coach accomplishes this by supporting all faculty and staff in implementing research based practices, reflecting on their curricular and instructional decisions and to make necessary adjustments in content and pedagogy.

Souhegan is deeply immersed in the process of transitioning its curriculum, instruction, assessment, grading, and reporting system to a mastery-based system aligned to competencies and standards. This work began a number of years ago when the New Hampshire Department of Education selected Souhegan to be one of four districts in New Hampshire to pilot Performance Assessment in Competency Education (PACE). Guiding this process, the school built on its strengths in the areas of teacher leadership, student agency, quality performance assessment, and demonstration of mastery. Souhegan is now redesigning its school-wide academic learner expectations to align more with discipline-based state standards and competencies. The work underway reflects its commitment moving forward to curriculum, instruction, and assessment more clearly aligned to discipline-based standards, as well as a shift toward standards-based grading, and competency-based reporting.

The school's core values of respect, trust, and courage are pervasive in all aspects of instructional design. The school's academic learning expectations serve as the school's 21st century learning expectations. Not only are the ALEs embedded into all facets of teaching and learning, they are measured and communicated to students and families on a regular basis. The academic learning expectations are as follows: knowledgeable person, complex thinker, effective communicator, self directed learner, collaborative worker, and responsible citizen. As clearly articulated in the student handbook, referred to Student's Owner's Manual, rubrics are used to communicate expectations and performance relating to the Souhegan academic learner expectations. The rubrics describe the level of proficiency.

The core values and the academic learning expectations are living and vibrant documents which are widely known and deeply valued. Teachers continuously adjust their instructional practices. Specifically, in a math class, three different ways of factoring the same equation were offered for students of different learning styles. In a language class, students' choice in topics resulted in a high level of student engagement. Numerous faculty detailed ways instruction was construed to reflect and to support the school's core values and learning expectations including through the Division 1 Exhibition and the senior projects. Faculty design instruction with the core values and academic learning expectations as their guideposts. Students report that their teachers adjust their instructional practices to help them understand the material. They provided numerous examples of teachers extending themselves before, during, and after school. Students were particularly appreciative of their teachers willingness to offer sessions outside of class, creating a process to help students improve comprehension, knowledge, and understandings by going through assessments with teachers. Assessment informs instruction in multiple ways at Souhegan High School.

As a result of the school's continuous examination of instructional practices, these practices reflect a deep and unified allegiance to the core values and academic learning expectations among staff and students at Souhegan High School.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- 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, 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, and integrating technology.

Teachers personalize instruction to some extent. According to the Endicott survey results, 66 percent of students agree that teachers provide them with opportunities to assess their own work, and 53 percent of students agree that their teachers spend one-on-one time with them, with 36 percent of students in agreement that their teachers personalize their instruction. The percentages were much higher in staff responses with 93 percent of staff agreeing that they personalize their instruction to support the achievement of the school's learning expectations.

Parents gave examples of how teachers, especially in math, supported their students and also challenged them with honors opportunities. Parents talked about teachers asking students what they need in order to be successful. Students stated that teachers change their approach in a lesson if students do not understand. Students noted that their teachers meet with them one-on-one after school to offer support. Students agreed that teachers adjust their instructional practices to help them understand the material. Students provided numerous examples of how teachers set up help sessions outside of class and created a process that addressed improving comprehension through the use of assessments as learning tools. In classrooms, hallways, and work areas teachers consistently act as coaches, walking around in and outside the room, meeting with individuals and small groups. A school-wide example of personalization is 10th grade winter-session, a week-long program in which groups of faculty and students explore a specific topic or theme, project, or adventure typically in an off-campus setting maximizing expeditionary learning.

Some courses at Souhegan High School are co-taught and cross-discipline. For example, civics class is taught by both an English and social studies teacher. Forensics is taught by a science teacher and school resource officer. The schedule allows for more cross-disciplinary classes in Division I than in Division II. At this time, mathematics teachers express concern that they do not have the time to meet with science teachers in order to plan interdisciplinary lessons or classes. Teachers are engaging students to be active, self-directed learners. Students are trained as tutors to work in the writing center, and some English teachers teach these techniques to all students to help with peer tutoring in their classes.

Division I Exhibition for sophomores is an example of engaging students as active self-directed learners applying their skills in order to create their learning goals for their Division II years at Souhegan High School. Students must collect, review, and reflect on their work, define strengths, and identify areas in need of improvement in the core classes. They then present their findings in a round table format to their parents and teachers. Additionally, the senior project, a capstone required of all students for graduation, affords students the opportunity to be active, self-directed learners choosing, designing, and executing a year-long project along with a reflective essay documenting how the senior project aligned with the school's core values and academic learning expectations. Students receive support from their advisory teachers and external mentors while developing the skills enabling them to become self-directed learners.

In many classes, teachers are emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking by asking questions such as, "What was the significance; What are the factors affecting the evidence; What kind of judgment are we making that will change the narrative?" In Socratic seminars, students are connecting two or more texts to essential questions. According to the Endicott survey, 83.6 percent of parents and 98.8 percent of teachers agree that teachers are using inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking.

Many courses make use of authentic tasks to engage students. In the Forensics class, students are studying actual crime scenes and writing arrest reports. In other science classes, students are studying actual chemical spills, and/or determining which fertilizers to use at the local golf course. In ninth grade English/social studies

classes, students are asked how they would each improve Souhegan High School. They design a strategy and bring it to the Community Council. Also, through many essay assignments, students are asked to connect themes from literature to real-world events. In addition to the Division I Exhibition and the senior project, students have many opportunities to reflect on and assess their work including widespread use of formative and summative assessments.

On the Endicott survey, 66.7 percent of students agree that teachers provide opportunities to assess their work. In many math classes, students work in teams and have the opportunity to evaluate their individual and group work as they discuss how they could improve on the next task. After most projects, students reflect on their progress and final product in the form of a journal entry or reflection paper.

Teachers are effectively implementing technology into lessons and using a variety of mediums to effectively communicate course content to students in their classrooms. On the Endicott survey, 84 percent of students agree that teachers expect students to use technology in their work. In many classrooms, the tech support email is posted along with the Remind homework account for the teacher. During interviews, students noted that there are too many and often inconsistent learning management platforms in use throughout the school. Specifically, they reported multiple applications for humanities, Google Classroom for STEM, One Note for world languages. The students commented that the use of digital platforms would be better if all teachers used the same one for their instruction and assessments.

Because teachers' instructional practices include personalized instruction, cross-disciplinary learning, emphasis on inquiry, problem-solving, and the development of higher order thinking, application of knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engagement of students in self-assessment and reflection, and integration of technology, students are more likely to become self-directed, engaged learners.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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

On the Endicott survey, 90 percent of staff agree that teachers adjust their instructional practices by organizing group learning activities, and 83 percent of staff agree that teachers use differentiated instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all students. When asked through the Endicott survey, 59 percent of parents agree that teachers modify their instructional practices based on students' progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, and 64 percent of students agree that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies in their courses. Teachers employ and use a wide-range of formative assessment to measure student learning during class using effective question and answer techniques to quickly assess student knowledge of content that was presented during the lesson, handouts that provide a step-by-step process, and substantial dialogue with individual students and groups. Teachers consistently review what was taught during the lesson.

By strategically differentiating, teachers provide additional support and alternative strategies within the classroom through the use of collaborative work, question and answer, discovery learning, student self-reflection and the use of technology to quickly assess student knowledge and understanding of course content. Souhegan High School is deeply committed to co-teaching throughout the school, heterogeneity with honors challenge, Socratic method, seminar models, project-based learning, experiential learning, and differentiated instruction and assessment. Consistently, instruction is varied with research-based formative and hands on components.

Often teachers shift from whole-class instruction into groups and provide provocative pieces that lead students to understanding an overarching concept. Adherence to the components of cooperative learning was evidenced throughout all mathematics classes including individual and group accountability. Students advocate for their group and present findings to the class. Instruction purposefully captures interest and attention directly involving students in the discovery process. Students are assessed and given feedback on their abilities to work in groups. The vast majority of faculty observed used groups to work collaboratively and synthesize data into formative responses.

Due to the willingness of teachers to adjust their instructional practices, deliberate use of formative assessment during instructional time, strategic differentiation, organizing group into learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, teachers are meeting the needs of each student.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members

- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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 other teachers and supervisors, examining current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

On the Endicott survey, 88 percent of teachers agree they are using student achievement data to improve instruction. Specifically, they are using standardized testing data such as NWEA scores to design interventions for students in the areas of reading and mathematics. Division I teachers at Souhegan High School use their common planning time to discuss instructional practices designed for ninth and tenth grades. For instance, in the World Literature course, the team of teachers meets to evaluate student essays. Teachers report the lack of parent feedback and student feedback relative to improvement in instructional practices. At this time, there is no formal process for parents and students to offer feedback to teachers about instructional practices. On the Endicott survey, 19.4 percent of parents and 41.7 percent of students agree that teachers have asked for feedback.

Teachers enrolled in the Career Growth Program are expected to integrate research relevant to their focus area. The Career Growth Plan often leads to teachers seeking and applying professional development to their instructional practices over the three-year process defining their Career Growth Plan. As reported in the Endicott survey, 97.7 percent of students and 67.7 percent of parents agree that teachers maintain expertise in their content and instructional practices.

Due to dedicated time and resources, teachers, individually and collaboratively, using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, examining student work, using feedback from a variety of sources, including other teachers and supervisors, examining current research, engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, the result of these efforts is improvement of instructional practices.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

Teachers at Souhegan High School are engaged in ongoing professional development and professional growth. Each school year, teachers meet with a member of the leadership team in establishing a professional growth plan which is aligned with the school's core values as well as the foundational Coalition of Essential School principles. Many teachers choose to engage in a Career Growth Plan, a three-year professional growth plan which provides staff with the opportunity to design and to complete an innovative and personalized initiative of their choosing. Teachers presented evidence at the themed reception detailing projects undertaken by faculty during their three-year Career Growth Plans. Examples include an ELA teacher sharing and implementing an engaging literary task that connects to the college essay, a science teacher's participation in grant writing practices that prompted authentic learning tasks, a language teacher whose professional development work in curriculum became the standard for the languages department and inspired three years of collaborative curriculum development.

Through reflective practices, teachers are encouraged to be adult learners advancing in their content area and beyond. As evidence of the school's commitment to adult learning, an academic dean is dedicated to providing ongoing training, access to research, and professional development. Professional development is a priority at Souhegan High School as the school continues to honor teacher voice and choice in both ideas for and leadership of professional development. For example, teachers submit proposals to design and lead the summer design studios. Approval for the design teams is based on alignment of the proposed focus area with the core values and beliefs of the school. In addition to teacher-led workshops and focus groups, the principal and the deans provide access to research-based opportunities for continuous adult growth. As reported in the Endicott survey, 97 percent of the staff agree that teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, and 78 percent of students agree that their teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Members of the Souhegan faculty are frequently invited to present at national conferences where they speak on a variety of topics including strategies which have emerged to preserve the special characteristics of their school and how it grew from its founding in 1992 as a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools.

Teachers receive support from the instructional coaches in the area of curriculum in several ways. Specifically, the curriculum coaches support teachers in using content and standards to guide student outcomes, assessment, and instruction while building consistency and coherence across classrooms, grade levels, courses, and schools. The coaches are intended to be catalysts of change prompting teachers to reflect, question, and engage others in exploring new possibilities for student learning.

In order to continue to offer the breadth of course offerings listed in the program of studies, some teachers have been asked to teach outside their content areas. Some staff expressed concern about this emerging pattern. Many of these issues have been addressed by the school refocusing teaching assignments to their certified areas with the shift moving forward to further interrupt this trend while balancing the nuances of the master schedule. As is the mantra for all decisions at Souhegan High School, the schedule places the student at the center of the decision-making process.

Due to Souhegan High School's systematic support of teachers as adult learners and reflective practitioners and to maintain their expertise in content-specific instructional practices, the school is modeling its commitment to its core values while underscoring its definition as a learning organization.

Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The school's widespread use of pedagogy demonstrating fidelity to the school's core values of courage, respect, and trust and the integration of these values into all aspects of teaching and learning

Commendation

The personalization of instruction and cross-disciplinary teaching in Division I

The exemplary level of faculty involvement and accessibility to students who see their teachers as partners in learning

Commendation

The highly effective cross-discipline learning such as Forensics, Ethics, World Literature, and American Studies

Commendation

The demonstrated positive impact of instructional coaching in developing strategies and tools which will strengthen the consistency between the written and taught curriculum in all academic disciplines

The school's commitment to developing self-directed learners, and sustaining its emphasis on higher order thinking and problem-solving

Commendation

The provision of timely and current information to the internal and external communities and authentic opportunities for students through the video production program

Commendation

The commitment to providing student choice and developing student agency through multiple avenues including senior projects and winter-session

Commendation

The school's commitment to the preservation of heterogeneity and its associated provisions for honors challenges

Commendation

The consistency among faculty regarding formative feedback and encouragement given to students to resubmit

work and to focus on areas identified as need for improvement

Commendation

The widespread use of assessment and looking at student work (LASW) to inform and to alter instruction including recognizing, affirming, and maximizing individual student learning styles

Commendation

The dedication of professional staff and professional development toward resources and research regarding adult learning

The school's Career Growth Plan available to teachers as an example of the school's focus on continuous adult learning

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Provide resources to provide faculty in Division II with common planning time in order to continue the benefits of collaboration in areas of personalization, cross-discipline connections, strategies to engage students, continued emphasis on higher order thinking skills, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, and integration of technology

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process for students and parents to provide feedback on instruction including feedback on the use of tools for digital learning

Recommendation

Provide resources to sustain the work underway on embedding school-wide protocols to ensure consistent focus on developing deeper thinking in all classes in conformance with the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop and communicate clear and consistent policies and practices for the implementation of competency-based learning

Recommendation

Provide resources to sustain current work in identifying and implementing digital learning platforms with the goal of enhancing a supportive and manageable digital learning environment for students

Recommendation

Ensure that identified students, including students with special needs, have the support necessary to ensure success in all appropriate curricular areas

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The professional staff formally and informally employs a 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.

Souhegan High School uses its academic learning expectations (ALEs) as their 21st century learning expectations. As reported in the Endicott survey, 87 percent of the staff affirm an understanding of the formal process based on the use of criteria for success, such as school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving learning expectations, and 74 percent of staff affirm that they use school-wide criteria for success, such as analytic rubrics, when assessing student work. Students are able to articulate the academic learning expectations with impressive familiarity and insight relative to the role these academic learning expectations play in the students' experiences at Souhegan High School. Students report that while teachers measure the ALEs, there is uniformity in the 1-4 scoring system which translates into 1- Not Met, 2- Not Quite Met, 3- Met and 4- Exceeded. Students reported that they get a high degree of satisfaction when they receive a 4 on an ALE and benefit greatly from teacher feedback on the ALEs. Students frequently refer to the academic learning expectations. A student described how the test they had just taken would be graded and how that would be correlated to the academic learning expectations. It is expected that the work underway with PACE assessment maps and the faculty's growing familiarity with Marzano's Critical Concepts Scale will bring about increased consistency in both instructional and assessment practices.

Each year, students are expected to engage in performance based assessments which demonstrate progress towards achieving the school's ALEs. The Division One Exhibition represents the students' hard work and learning in the 9th and 10th grades. The exhibition consists of a portfolio which provides the opportunity for the student to collect a sampling of the work they have completed over 9th and 10th grade years and examine the work for areas of growth and reflect on these areas through discussions and writings to make connections to the SHS Learner Expectations. In the 10th grade, students will present themselves as a multidimensional learner to a Roundtable consisting of the advisor, a staff member, a peer advocate and parents. The presentation will focus on their knowledge both past and present, their accomplishments, and their thoughts or plans for the future. The Junior Research Project (JRP) is a requirement for World Studies/ World Literature and consists of three incremental steps. They are trimester one skill builder, trimester two skill builder and trimester three completion of the JLP. All the skill builder steps are guided by the ALEs. The senior project is a public demonstration of personalized learning and is a graduation requirement. The senior project requires students to demonstrate their progress on ALEs and reflect upon their learning. Students have access to comprehensive senior project packets, informational videos on senior project, sample essential questions, and 8 project checkpoints in addition to internal and external mentors.

Many teachers are using content-based rubrics in their classes. In most assignments, teachers are using ALEs along with the content rubrics. The ALEs are used to develop and assess students Work Study Practices (WSP) or Habits of Work (HOW) rubrics, which will be consistent across the school in the next year. Students receive the expectations prior to assignments along with content-specific rubrics for assessments. Teachers are using Performance Assessment in Competency Education (PACE) to help align their work to standards while using the results of PACE to help inform practices. The school has an assessment, grading, and reporting (AGR) committee to help the school develop and align content competencies. The district and SHS is committed to transitioning to a mastery-based system. Teachers expressed a need for time to calibrate what a score of 3 or 4 means for school-wide mastery. Teachers from Division II indicated they need more common planning time to review rubrics, assessments, and grading practices. Teachers agree that calibration and collaboration consistently happens during Division I team time. According to school leadership, the school is currently transforming the ALEs, focusing on identifying essential learning goals and composing corresponding school-wide rubrics.

When the professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual

student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, students at Souhegan High School will benefit from shared experiences and instruction informed by assessment.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school's professional staff intentionally 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.

Parents expressed their high level of satisfaction with the school's multiple pathways of communication. On the Endicott survey, 72 percent of parents agree that the school provides them with a formal report, in addition to course grades, which explains their son's or daughter's progress in achieving the school's academic learning expectations. Prior to this year, students had access to online grading in the use of a blackboard forum. The parent portal afforded family access to progress reports at the midpoint, and report cards at the end of each trimester. Now, Souhegan High School has moved to a two semester grading and reporting system utilizing a narrative form for semester updates and numerical grades for end of semester report cards. Currently, the new system does not provide real time data for families and students. This feature for live reporting will be included once the school moves to the EMPOWER Management reporting system which will be implemented school-wide next year. The EMPOWER system is currently being piloted.

Performance Assessment in Competency Education (PACE) evaluations and assessments are used to help communicate student performances to the school. Teachers in the ninth and tenth grades meet regularly to discuss and share student work as well as grading practices. The Endicott survey reports that 72 percent of parents feel that teachers provide them with a formal student report.

The school is currently piloting the rubrics modeled after the ALEs, and checking to ensure that all applications of the academic learning expectations are true to the foundational platform of Souhegan High School. The current work involves trimming the existing academic learning expectations down while analyzing their impact. The leadership team expresses its assurance that any newly revised academic learning expectations will be based in research and fully implemented next year after feedback from students and staff is processed during the current school year.

Since the school's professional staff intentionally communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families, the parents feel informed about about the student's progress.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The professional staff at Souhegan High School is developing consistent protocols guiding their efforts to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

Only 53 percent of staff reported collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Teachers meet in transformative learning communities (TLCs) monthly for two hours during which they review student work and assessments. Special education teachers are integrated into classrooms with ninth and tenth grade content teachers in a co-teaching model. Special educators use data from a variety of sources, Northwest Evaluation Assessment (NWEA) as well as formative and summative assessment data to help make targeted interventions for students. Special educators use this data to make targeted interventions for students who need support in reading and math. (Redundant, simplify) The student support team (SST) meets weekly to review progress of those students needing tiered supports.

The examination of data varies across departments. For example, the math and English departments look at the SAT data. In looking at the K-12 NWEA data broken into four quadrants of students, the administration found that the lowest performing students were having the highest growth (78 percent growth), and the highest quadrant students had the lowest growth (40 percent growth). The superintendent asked the teachers to consider if it were opposite how would they respond to inequities in student achievement. Teachers at grade level review data from NWEA to look for gaps and discuss options for implementation of the lessons. On the Endicott survey, 76.7 percent of teachers agree that they have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practices. Seventy-two percent agree that they improve their instructional practices using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. NWEA, SAT, and PSAT are the standardized tests currently being used by the school to find areas of targeted interventions. Division I teams meet regularly to discuss common assessments and rubrics. Division II teachers feel they needed more common meeting/planning to analyze student achievement data. Creating Performance Assessment in Competency Education (PACE) assessments allowed teachers to see the benefit of collaboration, aligning to state standards, and calibrating grading. Pace is used as common assessments.

As a result of the professional staff's efforts to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and to respond to inequities in student achievement the dedicated application of assessment data will continue to develop and reinforce the work that Souhegan High School holds at its very core.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

Currently, there are some content-specific rubrics. However, they are not consistently implemented school-wide at this time. Some rubrics are created from the academic learning expectations (ALEs). Rubrics on Habits of Work (HOW) are part of Performance Assessment in Competency Education (PACE) assessments which measure student's 21 century learning expectations. On the Endicott survey, 63.6 percent of students believe teachers explain learning expectations before the unit of study, and 62.4 percent of parents believe expectations are communicated to students prior to the unit of study. On the Endicott survey, 80.2 percent of teachers say that they communicate these expectations to students. Teachers and students indicate that feedback is timely and differentiated. Teachers use formative assessments, those assessments may not be clearly identified as such. Students indicated they know how they are being assessed and are given content-specific rubrics prior to the assessment. The ALEs are the common language for 21st century learning expectations. The school has defined the dimensions of the ALEs. The faculty is still working on common rubrics to assess the seven academic learning expectations. These ALEs serve as the spine for the design and delivery of the senior project, a graduation requirement at Souhegan High School. When students do not pass their senior project requirement on the first try, they are given supports and the opportunity to present again. Teachers are using essential questions when designing and implementing performance assessments. Essential questions are posted in the classrooms so that students can clearly see the essential question being discussed.

Because most teachers consistently communicate to students prior to each unit of study, the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed, students are able to perform with confidence and competence at all levels of mastery.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

On the Endicott survey, 69.5 percent of students agree that they understand the criteria or rubrics used by the teachers, and 72.2 percent of parents are familiar with and understand the school-wide criteria for success. Seventy-nine percent of students agree that their teachers use clear criteria, such as rubrics to assess their results. There are clearly communicated expectations using exemplars and analytic rubrics issued to students prior to summative assessments. Rubrics are written to target high levels of achievement and provide clearly defined high expectations for student work. While the presence and use of rubrics are clear, there are lapses in consistency regarding what constitutes a score of 2, 3, and 4. During the 2018-2019 academic year, teachers are continuing to review student assessments and grading practices. At this time, the instructional coaches are working in collaboration with the teachers to embed consistent use of school-wide rubrics and/or other measurable criteria for success with the goal to ensure deeper learning systems. However, the work study practices group (WSG), a study team, is dedicated to the task of gathering input and processing the research regarding rubrics. There is a healthy and ongoing discussion at the school which does not deny the value of rubrics, but rather reflects concerns about imposing school-wide rubrics on practices which pride themselves on being in conformance with the school's core values and beliefs. The WSG is expected to roll out a draft of rubrics to be used in a consistent manner school-wide for the 2019-2020 school year. The school started implementing the use of formative assessments in the last few years, and is developing an understanding of the function of formative and summative assessments and how they differ. Teachers are providing essential or driving questions to students.

While teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, so that students understand what is expected of them, when the school also has consistent use of school-wide specific and measurable criteria for success and well calibrated understanding of those criteria, students will be able to identify and strive for high levels of achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

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

Many teachers ask students to demonstrate what they know through performance assessments. Based on the Endicott survey, 93 percent of teachers agree that they use a variety and range of assessment strategies. In one class, students were asked to communicate knowledge in real time to the instructor, and the instructor was able to address common misunderstandings, errors, and correct responses. Teachers gave adequate wait time in this activity to allow students time to think. In an engineering class, students were asked to produce a trebuchet to demonstrate knowledge. Teachers asked students to demonstrate the use of auditory, kinesthetic, and visual learning. A math teacher used a skill tracker sheet for students to assess their understanding for content at multiple times during the formative work. This teacher stated that it made studying for an assessment much easier for students and allowed teachers the opportunity to have powerful conversations about student success. Students often self-assess their own learning prior to, during, and after assessments are given. Some of the options included small groups, classroom discussions, play writing, and role modeling. Demonstration of skills included the completion of portfolios and senior projects. Teachers give team tests as well as individual tests in math. Students are asked to write a letter to the editor in ninth grade.

Because teachers consistently employ a range of assessment strategies in each unit of study, students are engaged in the classroom, can see the evidence of their learning, and know what and how they need to prepare and perform on assessments.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey results, 79 percent of teachers affirm that teachers meet formally to discuss and improve both formative and summative assessment strategies. Division I teachers collaborate to create, review, and discuss student performance on both formative and summative assessments. At this time, teachers in content areas in ninth and tenth grade are developing and reviewing common summative assessments. This orchestrated process is less consistent in Division II as teachers in the eleventh and twelfth grade do not currently have common planning time to develop and to analyze formative and summative assessments during the school year. While Division II teachers continue to explore ways to find time to collaborate, they expressed a need to implement a scheduling pattern allowing dedicated common planning time. Currently, teachers discuss curriculum at their monthly department meetings and use transformative learning community (TLC) professional development time to investigate and discuss how assessment informs and enhances student learning.

Teachers meet during professional development days during the summer institute to develop common assessments. Summer institute is a paid opportunity for teachers to develop common assessments. Teachers expressed an appreciation for this focus on assessment data while noting that there is not sufficient time set aside during the school year for teachers to discuss the impact of assessment and student results. The exception is the teaming in Division I where teachers work together on both the design of assessments as well as the analysis of results. According to the Endicott survey, 76.7 percent of teachers agree that they have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practices, and 72 percent agrees that they improve their instructional practices using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. Learning specialists also use assessment data to help design intervention strategies for students in the areas of reading and math.

When all teachers have the opportunity to employ protocols such as those in place in Division 1, and all teachers have dedicated time to collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, there will be a positive impact on student understanding and achievement throughout all grades.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Teachers at Souhegan High School provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

At this time, teachers use course-specific rubrics and HOW rubrics to provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback enabling students to revise and to improve their work. Teachers provide feedback in class through technology-based assessments as well as through teacher and student discussion to provide feedback so that students can correct and revise their work. Teachers conference with students to review student learning, check for understanding, and support mastery of course competencies. Science teachers are working in teams to create, pilot, and implement norms in grading practices across their classes so that students can improve their work. Feedback is provided in both verbal and written formats. When students indicate a need for improvement, teachers describe the process of revision through collaborative conferencing with students and teachers working as partners. Students appreciate the accessibility and willingness of their teachers to engage in conversations focused primarily on learning and understanding versus solely on grading. Projects throughout all four years at Souhegan High School have checkpoints along the way. This is particularly evident with the Division I Exhibition, junior research project, and the capstone senior project. When completing the senior project, students meet weekly with a mentor who gives them regular feedback on the project. A similar feedback loop is offered for the junior research project for which students meet with their humanities teachers gleaning feedback both on their research design as well as their writing. According to the Endicott survey, 70 percent of the students agree that teachers offer suggestions to help them improve their work, and 66.8 percent of parents agree that teachers provide timely and corrective feedback to assist students as revising and improving assignments.

As a result of teachers providing specific, timely, and corrective feedback, students are more likely to revise and to improve their work.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

At this time, teachers in some academic disciplines at Souhegan High School use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

Teachers in a wide range of disciplines make use of formative assessment in classes to assess the student understanding of content. The types of formative assessments vary and include technology-based assessments, check-ins, and checking for understanding through question and answer formats. Examples of formative assessments used by the teachers include Quizlets, Kahoots, individual student white boards, and exit tickets. Teachers review instruction and assessment data in teams. Time is provided through the transformative learning communities to assess the relationship of instruction and student understanding of content as measured through data gleaned from assessments. Teachers invite students to self-assess prior to and after receiving feedback through assessments. Currently, through formative assessments and check-ins, teachers are informing and adapting their instructional practices to improve student learning. According to the Endicott survey, 66.7 percent of students agree that their teachers provide them with the opportunity to assess their own work, and 72.1 percent of teachers agree that they use student data in formative and summative assessments to improve student learning.

When the use of formative assessments becomes consistent school-wide and more teachers use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction, more students will receive support to improve their learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

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, and survey data from current students and alumni.

According to the Endicott survey, 73.3 percent of staff agree that teachers and administrators examine a wide range of student work including common course assessment and common grade level assessment. Souhegan High School is using Performance Assessment in Competency Education (PACE) assessments to create the opportunity to use common assessments and corresponding rubrics. Teachers identified several common assessments used in science, as well as common assessments in place throughout teams in Division I. While the staff is committed to the purpose and benefit of common assessments, there is some concern that the upper grades are not able to develop more common assessment outside of PACE, especially in the social studies content where PACE has not provided templates and exemplars. Teachers in some academic areas are implementing PACE common assessments that are developed locally. There is an emerging increased use of common assessments in Division II.

Teachers are using assessments that incorporate and measure student understanding of the school's academic learning expectations. Teachers in some disciplines are using common assessments to measure student learning. Teachers in English and social studies are using common summative assessments to measure student learning and understanding of essential questions. For instance, world languages is using common assessments in the Spanish 3 and French 3 classes where all students were assessed in the use of command verbs giving directions. Learning specialists review standardized testing results. Educators use Northwest Evaluation Association, PSAT and SAT data to inform targeted interventions in both reading and math. Central office personnel confirm the school administrative unit (SAU) is committed to standardizing the use of competency assessments. Also, teachers meet monthly in TLCs to review their educational practices to improve learning outcomes for every student. Departments also meet monthly and are working on common assessments during this time.

Counselors have been working to connect with the alumni for the purpose of using their feedback to revise curriculum and instruction, but not assessments. At this time, there does not seem to be a formal process outside of using National Clearinghouse data to gather post-secondary feedback. SHS has recently added a feature to the Naviance program designed to assist in the tracking of longitudinal data specifically regarding percentage of students attending college, percentage of students completing college in four years, and students who transfer from one college to another. Parents and school board members made particular reference to feedback received from professors who teach Souhegan graduates relative to how impressed they are with the student's mastery of the academic learning expectations such as complex thinker, self-directed learner, and effective communicator.

As a result of teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examining a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, the staff at Souhegan High School is engaged in data-informed decision-making to assess the growth of each student as measured by examining student work, analyzing common course and common grade-level assessments, charting individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations analyzing data gleaned from standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions and survey data from current students and alumni, resulting in the revision of curriculum and ongoing and responsive adjustments to instructional practice.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

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

On the Endicott survey, 78 percent of parents believe teachers grading practices are aligned with school's core values and academic learning expectations. There are multiple teacher-led study groups in place contributing to the school's strong and multi-faceted commitment to regular review of its practices as well as grounding that review in current research on best practices. For instance, the transformation learning committees (TLC), PACE summer institutes, design teams, and the assessment, grading and reporting (AGR) committee are reviewing and developing rubrics from the unique perspective framing each particular group. These study groups complement one another and afford maximum staff involvement. Teachers review rubrics and assessments to make certain those are aligned with the school's core values and learning. During TLC meeting time, teachers review student work together and review grading procedures checking for consistency and clarity. Students are assessed using formative, summative, and performance-based assessments. Souhegan High School AGR committee was formed in 2016 with the goal of articulating a grading philosophy, aligning assessment and grading within a competency system, and designing a reporting method that effectively communicates the status of student achievement to all stakeholders. The AGR works toward aligning and measuring district standards for all students pre-K-12. Staff reported that the current software only reports out at progress report time and the end of the semester. Currently, the student management portal is not live, but the school is looking at how best to report student progress live through student and parent portals. Currently, the school is piloting the EMPOWER, a student management program, that would accommodate alignment with the school's core values. Students stated that grading and reporting on the academic learning expectations (ALEs) is timely and clearly communicated. Students are very familiar with the school's academic learning expectations and affirm that they clearly reflect the school's core values about beliefs and learning. Students are assessed on the ALEs through the use of formative and summative assessments. Students spoke enthusiastically about how much they rely on and appreciate the faculty's diligence in providing feedback on the school's ALEs.

Because grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, students and teachers are able consistently communicating expectations tied to the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The weekly meetings among Division I faculty focused on assessing and communicating student progress

Commendation

The use a variety of standardized assessments to collect data, including SRI, NWEA, SAT, PSAT, and SMI in planning interventions to assess and to assist students in achieving the school's academic learning expectations

Commendation

The consistent provision of analytical rubrics to students along with summative assessment expectations designed to guide student learning

Commendation

The variety of formative and summative assessments designed and implemented by teachers

Commendation

The specific, timely, and corrective feedback provided to students and supported with granting students the opportunities to revise or improve their work

Commendation

The widespread practice of teachers asking students to self-assess and to reflect on academic progress through the use of student-led conferences and rubrics

Commendation

The use of school-wide rubrics by administrators and faculty to examine student work and corresponding use of common assessments to adjust depth and pacing of units of study

Commendation

The creation of transformational learning communities and their focus on examining student work

Commendation

The progress and focus of the assessment, grading, and reporting committee which has spent multiple years reviewing practices and reporting systems to best communicate student progress to all stakeholders

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Respond to the findings of the multiple study groups currently focused on academic learning expectations as guidelines for implementing school-wide rubrics to provide consistent measurement and reporting on student progress on the school's academic learning expectations (ALEs)

Recommendation

Provide dedicated time for all teachers to collaborate on the review of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practices

Recommendation

Develop consistent scoring methods for the school's academic learning expectations

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community continues to work consciously and continuously to build 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 Endicott survey reports 86.3 percent of students feel safe at school. Students from all four grade levels spoke with ease and confidence about the inclusive school culture. One student noted that students merge at SHS allowing for students to create comfortable intersections of activities and friendship circles citing an easy coupling of being active in sports as well as theater and music. One young woman noted that the entire school community was very welcoming; while another student credited the trust placed in students to assume leadership roles as key to the school's student-centered and inclusive tone. One young woman was particularly exuberant, proclaiming how much she loves the school and stating that, "SHS helps you achieve your interests while embracing your differences." Another student noted that everyone wants to do well, yet she never feels pressure to compete with her classmates. A freshman, who had just moved to the school from out of state, described the transition as "incredible" noting that at SHS, the adults treat students as people they care about while sending messages of positive expectancy in terms of student behavior and achievement. The school resource officer maintains a daily presence and is viewed by parents and students as an active role as a visible and trusted member of the school faculty. The school resource officer co-teaches health and wellness classes and is a key member of the safety teams in place at SHS.

The fostering of positive relationships is evidenced in a variety of ways such as small class sizes, daily advisory, winter-cession, Hope for Gus, Best Buddies, clubs and activities. Respect is a central concept of the mission statement and is demonstrated by members of the community in the hallways, classrooms, community involvement, protocols and purpose of the Community Council, and community service requirements. The Souhegan Six, which serve as the guiding principles of the school, set the benchmark for faculty and students as they navigate through the tenets of the mission statement. Parents report that respect for their children and their learning is evident throughout both the school and external community. The school's governing board, the Community Council, demonstrates shared ownership and responsibility while strengthening and honoring student voice. As a part of their transition into the school, freshmen are placed on teams in Division I. All freshmen engage in a wellness curriculum through which they develop a portfolio that reflects their connection to the school mission. With teacher support, students complete a Division I exhibition designed to help students recognize and acknowledge their progress toward achieving the SHS academic learning expectations. Juniors engage in a research project that demonstrates self-directed learning. The final junior project exhibits their competence in the academic learner expectations. Finally, all seniors complete and present a capstone senior project that embodies all of Souhegan's academic learner expectations, while demonstrating their skills as independent learners. The senior project is a shared experience among all community stakeholders including students, teachers, advisors, community members, mentors and board members. The entire community shares pride in these projects which are collectively valued and celebrated.

Due to the community's work to consciously and continuously build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture, students take pride in their school and develop in an environment that embraces shared ownership and high expectations for all.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview

- students
- parents
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school is an exemplar in its commitment to be 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.

The school is designed around a policy in which all classes are intentionally heterogeneously grouped. Honors is embedded into the heterogeneously grouped classroom curriculum. Advanced Placement classes are offered to all students. Students who enroll are not required to take the AP exam further punctuating the priority of learning as the primary goal. All students are supported to achieve the academic learner expectations (ALEs). For most students and assignments, academic challenges are presented through articulated rubrics on competencies and academic learning expectations. There is a high level of familiarity with and respect for the academic learner expectations among the student at SHS. Students spoke to a sincere regard not only for achieving proficiency in all the academic learner expectations, but also for the enduring impact these expectations would have on their lives beyond high school. Students care deeply about developing the skills and attitudes about learning to be regarded as a knowledgeable person, complex thinker, effective communicator, self-directed learner, collaborative worker, and responsible citizen. During the visit, it was not uncommon for upperclassmen to recite all six learner expectations and to provide a context for each. Students were quick to credit their Division I teachers for inculcating these expectations into the fabric of teaching and learning that defines Division I.

An honors challenge is offered to students who choose to move beyond mastery to advanced levels by fulfilling additional expectations determined by the individual teacher. To ensure equitable and inclusive learning for students who struggle and may not initially succeed in demonstrating proficiency in these seven competencies, the school requires these students to enroll in a skills course or competency recovery course that is self-directed with a teacher as mentor responsible for helping the students achieve and demonstrate mastery in the academic learner expectations. Souhegan offers a variety of differentiated instruction strategies through academic support, ELA support, math support, senior project support, and Saber Support. As reported in the Endicott survey, 93 percent of the Souhegan staff believe that the school is equitable and inclusive. During the student interviews, students described the courses and the workload as challenging, but made a point to credit the faculty for their support in the forms of both clarity of expectations as well as accessibility of extra help and timely and focused feedback.

As a result of the school's policies and practices which support a deliberately designed, equitable and inclusive learning community, 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 academic learner expectations, students at Souhegan High School receive support in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There is a formal, ongoing 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.

The advisory program, which partners students with teachers in small groups by grade, allows for students and adults to build relationships. Advisory meets daily for 25 minutes. Students report that their advisor serves as a trusted adult to whom they turn to for support and celebrations. Students mentioned the value of advisory stating that advisory is the "best thing." It is here that students bond with others who may or may not be in their classes while developing a strong relationship with an adult who plays a central role in helping students achieve success. On the Endicott survey, 83.5 percent of Souhegan students are in agreement that there is a program in place which provides an adult in the school, in addition to the guidance counselor, with whom they meet regularly who knows them well. Teachers expressed that there was a revitalized interest in prioritizing advisory. In addition to advisory, the small class sizes and team teaching structures create opportunities for students and teachers to know each other well and for faculty to assist students in achieving the ALEs. The superintendent spoke to expanding the highly successful advisory model K-12 beginning with the middle school.

As a result of the advisory program, which offers each student the opportunity to know an adult well, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's ALE's. Souhegan High School provides a safe and welcoming school community that is grounded in relationships.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

As reflected in the Endicott survey, 86 percent of Souhegan staff agree that the school's professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and to use skills to improve instruction and assessment. Souhegan High School consistently dedicates time for professional discourse during transformational learning communities, which meet for two hours once a month. During the TLCs, staff engage in focused discussions around curriculum, instruction and assessment sharing work and discussing best practices with their colleagues. In Division I, ninth grade teachers have built in collaborative time to engage in curricular conversations and to plan interdisciplinary approaches. Dedicated time has been created for professional development.

Souhegan is committed to a model of professional development designed to support teachers in remaining current, being inspired, and most importantly growing their capacity to inspire others. Their approach includes over 20 partnerships with business and higher education strategically designed to provide intentional and targeted professional development, and often results in a deployed curriculum maximizing authentic experiences for students. The professional development model is enhanced by the role of the instructional coaches who help teachers identify specific areas where deliberate professional development would enhance their teaching. Throughout the visit, it was evident that SHS balances a myriad of professional development strategies including teacher to teacher, partnerships among teachers and external experts, connections teachers to research, and respect for personal initiatives as well as collaborative ventures. The thread that provides cohesion to these multiple pathways is the school's unwavering commitment to ensuring relevance and purpose for each individual while creating and honoring agency.

Monthly faculty meetings are a time when full-faculty training is provided around the redesign of the components of deeper learning systems. Summer institutes, staff retreats, and in-service days have been established as opportunities for faculty professional development around a variety of topics connected to school-wide, researched-based redesign. Initiated by faculty, teachers may avail themselves of a three-year Career Growth Plan which spawns into an initiative which embodies the school's core values and the Souhegan Six principles. Teachers who choose to engage in the career growth process receive support to apply research-based practices and data to enhance student performance. The inquiry-based career growth process is supported in the budget as is summer professional learning through design studios, an innovative and teacher-led initiative that positions teachers on research teams and focused on a topic or area of their choice, Summer design studios are faculty-created and implemented learning opportunities which foster collaboration and curriculum development. The Endicott survey reports that 54.7 percent of faculty feel that the input from supervisors plays an important role in improving instructional practices. The supervision and evaluation model in place clearly impacts the effectiveness of the professional work around best practices, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

As a result of the consistent and active professional development and discourse the faculty at Souhegan have a culture of continual learning and through research-based practices which creates a dynamic process for continual improvement of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teachers

- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

The intent of the current system, a growth model, is focused on promoting and supporting continuous adult learning. As stated by the principal, Souhegan strives to have "inspiring, expertly trained teachers." The leadership team spoke to the focus and format of the supervision and evaluation process currently in place. All teachers devise a professional growth plan which is seen as a tool to encourage and to expand conversations with staff about agency. The leadership team places emphasis on growth while sending messages that assume positive intentions. When asked how teachers maintain the impressive level of dedication and involvement at SHS, the leadership team strategies and dispositions that discourage complacency, support renewal, and send the message that it is "okay to be tired, but not okay to be weary." One highly effective strategy that promotes re-imagining is the steady referencing to research and the affirmation that the guiding principles that served as the foundation of the school, hold as the steadfast compass point. The shared commitment to the foundational documents serves to soothe inevitable anxiety that accompanies change while providing a telescopic lens to focus on the future. SHS utilizes the Thoughtful Classroom Evaluation model for faculty evaluations which focuses on "Organization, Rules and Procedures, Deepening and Reinforcing Learning, A Culture of Thinking and Learning, Preparing Students for New Learning, Presenting New Learning, Applying Learning, Positive Relationships, Reflecting on Celebrating Learning, and Engagement and Enjoyment."

Teachers are observed through short, frequent visits with a focus on regular and timely feedback. There are five different episode(s) or stages of instruction that determine the tool used for the feedback on the observation. This coaching model is constructed on clear and timely feedback focused on the episode and observed practices. Faculty report that the focus on episode(s) in the classroom is beneficial as the observation tools differ depending on classroom activities. Faculty report that there is a timely conversation regarding the three observations performed and recorded. Additional feedback is through a check box format which is available online. Evaluations are closely connected to faculty professional growth plans. At Souhegan teachers are "in a perpetual state of learning." The evaluation process is consistent and linked with professional growth to inspire expertly trained teachers. On the Endicott survey, 86 percent of staff members say that the school's professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills in instruction and assessment, and 54.7 percent of the staff report that supervisors play an important role in improving their instructional practices. Faculty reported a high level of satisfaction and comfort with the school's supervision and evaluation protocols.

As a result of the carefully planned supervision and evaluation process in place at SHS and its emphasis on relational trust, honesty, and growth, teachers are supported in their adult learning resulting in continuous improvement among their students.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Souhegan High School continues to work on the organization of time to support research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.

While the master schedule provides some time for staff for teachers to examine research and instructional practices through their participation in committees that target specific curriculum initiatives, there is an expressed need for more time during the school day dedicated for teacher collaboration. There are, however, multiple opportunities for teachers to work together through committees and cohort groups. One example is the work study practices committee. Time is provided once a month for teachers to collaborate on curriculum through transformational learning communities (TLCs) where teachers refine curriculum through working with a group of colleagues across grade level and across academic disciplines. Teachers report that most of their assignments are in a constant state or re-articulation as they revisit rubrics and refine learning objectives as a result of TLCs. For Division I, there is a clear priority for teams to have structured meeting times. Ninth grade teachers have common planning periods embedded into the master schedule to provide opportunities for teams to collaborate on curriculum and to share concerns about students. Tenth grade teachers have had some diminished team time due to math being removed from the team. Teachers have expressed concerns about the diminished teaming time as a result of the recent removal of math from the team. Division II does not have consistent common prep time for collaboration. In response to that need, the leadership team is continually working with teachers to address this deficit in the master schedule. The school provides in-service time for collaboration. Division II teachers report that they are concerned about the diminished time to collaborate with their team. The principal is immersed in research-based practices availing the faculty with materials focused on the scholarship in school design. Specifically, he has utilized Marzano's Critical Concepts Scale and references the work of Redesign on Making Mastery Accessible. Charts and flowsheets in the principal's office all include references to resources and research applicable to the work underway at Souhegan High School. The Program of Studies includes courses in English Support, Math Support, Social Studies Skills, Division I Academic Support, Division II Academic Support, and Senior Project Support. Learning specialists are assigned to work with a team in Division I and a grade level in Division II. The master schedules a modified rotating block schedule with a 25 minute advisory period built in each day. The school's website provides parents and teachers with information regarding an array of student services including summer school opportunities, college and career readiness, support resources for students with visual impairments, scholarship opportunities, assistance with FAFSA forms, and coping with trauma and loss.

As a result of Souhegan High School's continued work on the organization of time to support research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and by addressing the expressed concerns of faculty members, the school is in a position to better meet the learning needs of all students.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, 87.8 percent of students and 79.5 percent of parents report that they believe the number of students in classes allows teachers to meet the learning needs of students. Class sizes are appropriate throughout the school. The average class size is fewer than 20 students per class. Class size currently varies from 12 students to 24 students with a cap of 24 students. Faculty members teach 4.5 classes per year. As reported in the Endicott survey, 79.1 percent of staff agree that student load and class sizes enable them to meet the learning needs of individual students.

While the existing student-to-pupil ratio is manageable, there is a growing concern about the direction of the district and its impact on class size. Founded in 1992, Souhegan High School is a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools. The ten essential principles which serve as the foundational document for CES schools, place explicit focus on personalization underscoring the need for all teachers to know their students well. Souhegan High School was founded on a core tenet of keeping total teacher-to-student load under 80 students over the course of an academic year. The faculty and school leadership have expressed concerns about the rising teacher-to-student load which has risen to over 100. One tangible response to this escalating concern was the creation of the mini-team for freshmen approximately three years ago. The mini-team was created in an effort to alleviate class size in freshman classes. A parallel concern was expressed in relation to the negative outcomes of splitting teams or having students taken off team courses in an effort to reduce class size in highly populated academic disciplines. The discomfort expressed by faculty over burgeoning class size is in conformance with the generalized concerns expressed by faculty about deviating from the school's initial mission and its fidelity to the ten essential principles which signal CES schools as distinctly different from traditional secondary schools. This issue is viewed as a legitimate departure from the school's origin, and one which has met with respectful resonance by the principal and the leadership team.

As a result of the sensitivity toward and attention paid to listening to faculty's concerns, honoring the original foundational principles regarding maintaining small class size and manageable student load, teachers are able to meet the learning needs of individual students.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of the Souhegan faculty feel that the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The presence and actualization of the school's core values and beliefs are ubiquitous as all members of the school community are well versed in the academic learner expectations, the foundational concepts identified by the Coalition of Essential Schools as foundational principles, and the Souhegan Six. The principal works with students and teachers on a daily basis to make these values real in the school. They are on banners outside the entrance, and signs on the walls that keep the core values and beliefs omnipresent in the daily routines of students, teachers, and community members.

During the student forum, students report a high level of relational trust that create positive and productive bonds among students and faculty. The principal's leadership style is one of unwavering positive expectancy. He puts forth the assertion that 95 percent of students will exceed the expectations of the mission, and that the school is designed to serve students first. The principal communicated his passion for and investment in working with faculty in ways that ensure the student is at the center of all discussions and decisions. He believes that the best work of students and of teachers happens when we "get out of the way" and let people ask questions and challenge each other. Working closely with the deans and instructional coaches, along with a long list of teacher-led committees, the principal brings the dialogue back to the research. Specifically, he references Marzano's work as well as research on the importance of theory of action. Faculty report that there are many opportunities to provide instructional leadership such as summer design studios, transformational learning communities, work study practices committee members and assessing, grading and reporting committee members. The principal is described by staff as the "architect" who creates conditions that allow for shared instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal is highly respected by teachers and is viewed as the architect of school innovation and advancement. He was awarded Principal of the Year by the state of NH in 2018, an award that illustrates the high esteem in which he is held by his constituents as well as the impact he has had throughout the state as a respected and admired champion for student-centered school design.

Because Souhegan is a school of democracy where the principal works effectively with other building leaders in a shared leadership model, a dynamic school environment rooted in its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations is evident.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

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

Perhaps the most stunning example of the leadership team's shared success is the level of meaningful engagement of all stakeholders whose investment in Souhegan High School is evidenced and strengthened through meaningful and defined roles. One of the most compelling issues at Souhegan High School is defining a balance which encourages teachers, not only to serve as archivists of the past, but also as architects of the future. Teachers express great pride in their school, and place great trust in their leadership team. The preservation of academic freedom is at the core of the staff ethos. They praise their colleagues as well as the leadership team. One teacher stated, "When you get here, you want to be a part of it." Another staff member, noted, "Educators are trusted here." The leadership team creates an environment where the focus is clearly on creating and nurturing a synergy that helps everyone at the school be their best selves. As reported in the Endicott survey, 89 percent of staff agree that teachers, students, and parents are meaningfully involved in decision-making to promote an atmosphere of responsibility and leadership.

A parallel affirmation of shared leadership manifests in the Endicott results from students, as 81 percent of students agree that teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. The Community Council provides all interested groups a meaningful way to be involved in decision-making at the school. The Community Council serves as the school's governing body. Community Council includes student representatives, parents, school board members, and faculty. The Community Council is driven by students who make up the majority of its members. The goal is to develop and to honor student voices. All proposals for institutional change go through the Community Council. The emphasis is on developing student agency while providing students with the opportunity to serve as true agents of meaningful systemic change. Community Council consists of 50 members including students, teachers, support staff, administrators, school board members, and community members. Student representatives hold the majority of seats. As reported in the Endicott survey, 81.5 percent of students agree that students have input in important decisions at their school. The Community Council guides the school's practices in a manner consistent with the school's guiding documents and the Souhegan Constitution. The Community Council meets once a week inside the school day and once a month in the evening to ensure greater involvement from the broader community. Representation of school board, community members, parents, staff, and students is proportional and significant. Recent issues brought to the Community Council include gender neutral bathrooms, school security cameras, and scheduling ideas. All members of the broader Souhegan community participate in school decision-making through the Community Council. The Community Council has a clearly articulated purpose and bylaws. This is the vital organization that brings all the voices of the school community together to debate and to discuss real issues in the school. This collaborative style modeled and encouraged by the principal has resulted in his measurable success at building capacity among staff and students.

Teachers are trusted and empowered at every juncture of school improvement endeavors. When asked to define his role as an instructional leader, the principal works closely with teachers, students and parents in defining his focus as engaging passions and intentions. He described Souhegan not as a school, but rather as a community. He proudly stated, that, "Here, we develop mind, body and heart and seek to make this a magic place to work." One of the avenues which nourishes the commitment to sustaining a vibrant learning community is the clear and consistent intentionality regarding student agency. Shared leadership is valued at Souhegan. Shared leadership has led to a culture where students report a tremendous level of "agency" and involvement in their own learning. Faculty also report that there are many opportunities to provide instructional leadership as transformational learning communities facilitators, work study practices committee members and assessing grading and reporting committee members.

As a result of the teachers', students' and parents' involvement in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making, the school culture is one of shared leadership, distributive responsibility, and ownership creating a community of growth and engagement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

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

Teachers report that Souhegan High School is a "magical place to work." They are working hard to innovate in their classrooms, as evidenced by conversations about lesson plans that have gone through multiple revisions. At the same time, teachers serve as advisors, lead activities, design winter-cession courses, and mentor clubs. Teachers at Souhegan are "lifers," staying at the school for decades with a loyalty to the program and the students. The school culture that they help to define is an environment where everyone goes the extra mile and everyone jumps in "to help in myriad of ways" brought together by the unified belief that the students' needs are paramount and serve as the pivot point for programs, procedures, and protocols.

There are multiple opportunities for teachers to exercise initiative essential to the improvement of the school. Examples include the Work Study Practice Team(WSP) which is a teacher led group working on revising the ALEs and work study practices. Another group is the Assessment Grading and Reporting Committee (AGRC) which includes stakeholders K-12. A sub group, SHS AGRC is a school based teacher led team focused on assessment and reporting out of student progress. There is an Advisory Design Team working to revitalize advisory and to provide support for advisors. There is the Senior Project Design Team, an ongoing team of teachers whose focus is reviewing the senior project process. In addition, there is the Junior Learning Project Design Team, a group made up of students and teachers working on the redesign of the Junior Research Project. Several teacher-led initiatives have come into place through the Career Growth Plans. The highly acclaimed writing lab grew from a teacher's desire to support student writing across all disciplines and to provide support for students in preparing their post-secondary applications. Among other stunning examples was the success of the Claw, a student video team, whose exemplary success eventuated into an invitation to cover the most recent presidential inauguration in Washington DC. Another idea that soared into widespread popularity and visibility is the Souhegan Ethics Forum and its sponsoring student-run organization referred to as HYPE. Most recently, this group has focused on the theme of responsible citizenship. The dedication of this group has led to their hosting an Ethics Forum each year at University of New Hampshire which has grown to over 1,000 student participants among high schools throughout the state. Teachers are equal participants in Fang Fest, and Hope for Gus activities, and spirit week. Many of the programs at Souhegan are coordinated by teachers, including the Division I Exhibition, senior project, winter-cession, transformational learning communities, and the extended learning opportunities program. There are 84 clubs at Souhegan, a direct result of teacher initiative and leadership to provide a rich array of opportunities to increase student engagement and to foster student voice and choice. During the 2017-2018 academic year, 17 SHS students engaged in extended learning opportunities (ELOs) with the guidance of teachers and the ELO coordinator. Courses such as in the computer science and media arts as well as engineering science evolved from teacher initiative and creativity and have proven to be valuable pathways fostering career growth for students.

As noted, there are a myriad of avenues designed to provide informal and formal leadership opportunities and pathways for staff to contribute to the ongoing improvement of the school and to maintain the school's focus on the student. These include department coordinators who are engaged in the ongoing work on Competency Based Education (CBE) implementation, There are team captains who lead their teams in various aspects of CBE and AGRC work. The Community Council has several sub committees including one working on the AGRC. The Teacher Leader Committees (TLC) look at student work to inform instruction and planning.

As a result of teachers consistently exercising initiative and leadership essential to broaden opportunities for students, their dedication has positively impacted student engagement in learning.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The SAU 39 school board, superintendent, and Souhegan High School principal engage in collaborative, reflective, and constructive practices to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of staff agree that the school board, superintendent, and principal collaborate in the process of achieving learning expectations. At Souhegan High School, the academic learning expectations (ALEs) serve as the school's 21st century learning expectations. Currently, committees made up of staff members, community members, and board members are working to rewrite parts of the ALEs. The expectation is that the review project will be completed by 2023. The superintendent spoke about what makes Souhegan a unique learning environment as he talked about student agency, the recently formed and highly successful studio video program, the Claw, the Community Council and students' relationships with their teachers. The superintendent has a student advisory assigned to him, and he meets with the group each day keeping him closely involved with the issues and events defining the school on any given day. He, like the principal, is focused on the future. In their respective leadership roles, they prompt discussions among members of the internal school community as well as the community at large. These discussions are framed in the essential question of "What's next?" Both the principal and the superintendent speak about the school's journey from its beginning to its present. They referenced the past 5-7 years as a period of evolution and their shared commitment to guiding the school forward while honoring its much celebrated past. Both spoke about the advisory as the cornerstone of the essential school model and their shared commitment to ensuring that the culture of the school is constantly recommitting itself to supporting its members. The superintendent expresses his full faith in the principal's demonstrated skill in keeping the conversation focused on positive change and in the trust and confidence he places in the principal to anticipate what will be needed for continuous school growth. Updates on developments are included in a weekly email from the SAU office to school boards, staff, and community. There is a commitment to healthy communication and transparency about this process and these conversations. The current focus on reviewing the school's ALEs reflect that the school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Due to the demonstrated collaboration among the school board, superintendent, and principal, students are supported in their achieving the school's academic learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey results, 75 percent of staff and 78 percent of students agree that the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. Through emails, weekly updates and regular meetings, the school board and superintendent provide the principal and his team with steady support as they serve as instructional partners dedicated to the same goals while maintaining the focus on students. During interviews, the school board members noted that the principal's perspective is weighed as "most important" when considering initiatives that come to the board from the community at large. The board holds the principal in high esteem and respects his expertise and experience. The superintendent gives the principal full latitude to make decisions while, at the same time, works closely with him in a collaborative fashion.

The principal fosters a team-leadership style within the school building and in the broader school community. Throughout the external communities including local, state, and national, the principal speaks eloquently about the unique fabric of Souhegan High School and its deep commitment to students. The principal is the voice of the school regarding budget issues and decision-making governance models. The principal works to keep communication channels open with board members through one-on-one meetings and "coffee chats." Twice a year, the school board and the building leadership teams participate in shared retreats constantly attending to the need to preserve and strengthening the synergy and shared understandings that shape their respective roles. To broaden awareness and understanding of its idiosyncratic culture and unwavering commitment to student agency, the principal has taken on the role of a zealous disciple of the considerable research and creative thinking that characterized the ideology of the Essential Schools. He never assumes that the external public fully understands the core tenets of SHS. Instead, he teaches and reteaches while cultivating a high level of involvement from community members. The principal states that one of his goals is that school board members be able to articulate the school philosophy and objectives as clearly as those gleaned from inside the school building. School board members are brought in to serve on committees including Community Council.

As a result of the sufficient decision making authority vested in the principal to lead the school and his vigilance in keeping the board and superintendent informed and engaged in the workings of the school, the resulting relationship of trust and respect allows for innovation and growth.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- school board
- community members
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The commitment of the leadership team to the mantra of asking people to to be their best selves and to providing them with the resources and tools to do so

Commendation

The impressive and unified support by student and family for the positive and respectful school culture

Commendation

The attention to equity and access for all students as they navigate a broad variety of academic experiences and challenges

Commendation

The exceptional level of trust among students and faculty and school leadership which permeates all aspects of the school's culture and drives its shared decision-making

The school's commitment to innovative, reflective, and teacher-centered professional growth specifically its Career Growth Plan; a vehicle designed by teachers to support continuous growth and engagement with current evidence-based research on teaching and learning

Commendation

The intentional and supported focus placed on faculty involvement in all aspects of professional development specifically the enduring impact of the Career Growth Plans

Commendation

The caretaking of a cultural ethos defined by "*innovation, design, and (r)evolution*" evidenced in thoughtful study of the school's past, careful reflection on its present, and an inclusive and visionary picture of its future

Commendation

The unified focus among administration and faculty on developing student agency and honoring student voice in all aspects of teaching and learning specifically through the paramount focus on student input in the Community Council

Commendation

The explicit focus on and respect for adult learning as an essential component of a learning organization

The school's commitment to innovative, reflective, and teacher-centered professional growth specifically its Career Growth Plan; a vehicle designed by teachers to support continuous growth and engagement with current evidence-based research on teaching and learning

The school's commitment to teacher-initiated professional development through the well-organized and funded design team

Commendation

The courageous patience, impressive insight, keen intellect, and thoughtful attitudes and dispositions modeled by the principal as he sets the tone while engaging all stakeholders in continuous improvement

Commendation

The palpable level of relational trust and support among the superintendent, principal, SHS leadership team, faculty, and school board and community as evidenced by the honest discourse that has become the norm at Souhegan High School

The commitment of the district to the use of technology, including hardware and software, implemented to support students' in their achieving the school's academic learning expectations

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Expand opportunities for professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning specific to navigating intersections between a reverence of the past and re-imagining for the future

Recommendation

Focus on developing strategies to balance the competing priorities identified in the self-study as opportunities to dig into the research and scholarship on long-range learning outcomes of depth over breadth and student-centered instruction while relying on the Ten Essential Principles as beacons

Recommendation

Ensure that student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students while addressing the increase in student load and its consequential deviation from the Ten Essential Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools as well as the impact of teachers teaching outside their content areas

Recommendation

Develop a schedule of ongoing discussions of optimal scheduling patterns which meet the needs of students while supporting a commitment to common planning time for teachers

Recommendation

Recommendation

Ensure equity for all students by expanding opportunities for non-college bound students which include authentic learning and hands-on career exploration

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

While 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 is an expressed need to examine the weakening of the team model in Division II as it applies to timely interventions.

The Endicott survey reports that 81 percent of staff feel the school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students including special education, 504, and at-risk students that support each student's achievement of the school's academic learning expectations, while 68 percent of parents feel that the school has timely and coordinated strategies to meet the needs of all students, and 53 percent of the students feel that the school meets the needs of all students. For grade 9 and 10 students in Division I, a team model is in place which includes school counselors, learning specialists, and other student support staff. This team meets regularly to ensure a holistic approach in supporting student needs built on the opportunity for staff to get to know each student well. Learning specialists for both Division I and II take part in designing instruction and assessment collaboratively with classroom teachers through the team process. The school-wide advisory program ensures that there is at least one adult in the building fostering a relationship that acts both as a source of support and as an additional layer of universal screening for those students who may be at a greater risk. The school implements support programming such as Saber Support, Alternative Services Program (ALP), and content-level interventions across the curriculum to ensure students receive support in their achieving the school's academic learning expectations. Students have the opportunity to receive writing assistance through the writing center. This program is staffed by a teacher and includes peer tutoring after school. Students expressed broad-based appreciation for the writing center pointing out that it offers both additional support for some students as well as opportunities for community services for others.

As a result of the school's timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for most students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations, the students at Souhegan High School receive a wide range of support while developing productive and positive rapport with their teachers.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- school support staff

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

School personnel disseminate information to students and families in a variety of ways. According to the Endicott survey, 73 percent of parents feel the school provides information about available student support services including guidance, library/media, health, and special education to all families, and 76 percent of students responded that they know who to go to for help at school if they have a personal problem. The most prevalent methods of communication between and among Souhegan High School families and faculty and staff are informal emails and phone calls. In addition, parents access the school's website for information. Currently, the parent portal is primarily used to monitor academic progress. School-wide documents such as the program of studies and the weekly parent newsletter are designed to communicate information about course offering, programs, and upcoming events. Support staff members expressed that evening presentations for targeted groups of parents coupled with one-to-one in person meetings are the most effective ways to disseminate sensitive information. The staff at SHS implements all aspects of the universal screening processes. It is through this process that families of students in most need are given information about targeted interventions and available support services.

As a result of Souhegan High School's attention to varied and tiered methods of communication, all families are provided information about available support tailored to meet the unique needs of each child.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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

The school has expressed its commitment to move toward a 1:1 technology platform by the beginning of the 2019-2020 year. School counseling staff uses Naviance software to support the college and career curriculum for students in the eleventh and twelfth grades. Support staff use technology to assist in the scheduling of both school counseling services and academic support services including access to the writing center. Assistive technology is used to help support students whose IEP and 504 call for support in accessing the curriculum across the school. Faculty make regular use of digital platforms products including OneNote, to compile information on individual students. Many classroom teachers use multiple applications of the school's learning management system, itslearning (i39), enterprise Google sites, and other secure web-based programs.

Due to the commitment by faculty and support staff to using available technology, a pervasive use of technology is focused on delivering of an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

School counseling services has 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.

The student services department has five school counselors, a school social worker, and a school psychologist to deliver their written comprehensive guidance program. Additionally, the counseling department includes an administrative assistant and registrar. Student support services personnel indicated that while the number of support staff is adequate, additional support is needed to meet the increasing and varied social and emotional needs of the student body. School counselors meet with their students at least one time per year to review schedules. In addition, they meet with seniors more frequently regarding post-secondary opportunities. Counseling staff indicated they are spending the majority of their time spent on college/career/academic planning. Counselors report that they see 25 percent of their caseload on a regular basis. On the Endicott survey, 29.9 percent of students agree that they meet regularly with their counselor.

The school counselors use the advisory program to deliver aspects of the guidance curriculum several times throughout a student's high school career, and they partner with the school social worker and school psychologist to facilitate groups to respond to emerging needs of the students. The student services department plans evening events to disseminate timely information to students and parents. Examples include College Planning Night and Financial Aid Night. During interviews with SHS parents, families indicated a need for more information and training related to non-college post-secondary options such as trade schools and apprenticeship programs. School counselors are active in team meetings in the ninth and tenth grades where universal screening and interventions are discussed.

Counselors are involved in referrals to school-based services including outside mental health agencies. School counselors participate the student support team (SST), a process through which at-risk students are identified and discussed. These discussion are informed by data gathered from a variety of sources including psychological evaluations, and metrics to measure academic strengths and needs. The SST identifies and recommends interventions for individual students who need support. Student support staff report that they could benefit from access to live grades in order to monitor academic achievement in a more efficient way. The school counseling department has implemented a school-based mental health counseling program with an articulation agreement with the local mental health facility and has already considered expanding that program.

The student services department uses 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 school counselors and social worker use information from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to inform programming offered throughout the school. Based on the information from the YRBS, programming related to vaping was delivered to parents, staff and students. Additionally, the school counseling department has used student survey data to inform its practice in meeting the needs of students on respective caseloads. For example, counselors solicit career interest information from the sophomore class in creating an annual career day in April.

Because of the structured connections between counselors and students, namely the team approach in grades 9 and 10 and the involvement in the advisory program in grades 11 and 12, the majority of students benefit from an adequately staffed student services department that delivers a written, developmentally appropriate program which provides personal, academic, career, and college counseling to all students in support of their achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- students
- parents
- school board
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

At this time, the school's health services does not have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, use an appropriate referral process, conduct ongoing student health assessments, and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. There are times when the office is left locked and unattended.

The school references the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) as best practice research. While the current staffing is within the suggested ratio of 1:750, the national guidelines advise schools to consider the unique nature of their respective student population on a school by school basis when determining staffing. Souhegan High School is an school of inclusion with a commitment to meeting the needs of students with complex needs. Given this status, and its associated demands on the nurse- pupil ratio, SHS currently serves students who require special nursing care and who may have, in the past, been enrolled in a therapeutic setting. The school points out that, at one time, there were 1.5 school nurses serving SHS, but the part time position was reduced five years ago. Since that time, the challenges of providing daily medical assistance for some, as well as supporting the social, emotional, behavioral needs of all students while responding to increased prevalence rates of diabetes, allergies, and asthma can be untenable for one FTE.

The school nurse is perceived by students as welcoming, accessible and responsive to their needs and the physical plant supports these efforts. Responding to the Endicott survey, 77 percent of the students agree that they are comfortable going to the school nurse, and 70 percent of parents agree that the health services personnel provide preventative health and direct intervention services. Discussions with staff included mention of how with the current staffing pattern of one FTE nurse, her ability to participate in strategic meetings and to facilitate focus groups for students on a myriad of health related sensitive topic is significantly impaired by the necessity of her presence in the nurse's office.

The health office utilizes the school newsletter, emails to the school community, and the school website to communicate health related information and opportunities to all stakeholders. Referrals are made to school-based and community health and wellness resources, such as Convenient MD, Nashua Eye Associates, St. Joseph's Medical Center, Dartmouth Hitchcock, local primary care physicians, and the emergency room. Information is managed through the use of the student information system and SNAP (School Nurse Assistant Program).

Souhegan High School has reviewed the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey(YRBS) and responded by added programming to address emerging and expanding social and emotional needs of the students. Additional personnel in the health services office would allow for the nurse to play a key role in more interventions. Given the increased and evolving new demands on the school nurse as documented in her daily visit tallies and implied in the YRBS survey results, there is a demonstrated need for more personnel in the school's health services.

When the school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who have adequate opportunity to provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, the needs of the students at Souhegan High School will be better met.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour

- students
- parents
- school support staff

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

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.

A certified librarian, two full-time library assistants, a circulation specialist and an audiovisual specialist, and four student employees staff the library/information center. The library assistants are responsible for much of the day-to-day operations of the "info center," freeing up the librarian to collaborate with faculty on curriculum development, work directly with students, and co-teach. The librarian participates in curriculum development, implementation of collaboratively developed curriculum via individual and group instruction, assessing student progress and evaluating activities.

The info center is open to students from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Friday. The Endicott survey reports that 91 percent of students agree that the library is available to them when they need it before, during, and after school, and 83.8 percent of students surveyed on the Endicott survey agree that the library staff is willing to help them find what they need. The physical space and flexible scheduling of the media staff allows the ability to anticipate and to respond to the varied needs of the students and staff. The coordinated effort between the teaching staff and the info center staff creates a web of support that meets group and individual needs.

The info center offers a comprehensive suite of services to ensure student access to information, texts, computers, audio/visual (A/V) equipment, writing help, diverse programming, flexible meeting space, and private space. The circulation specialist ensures procedures run smoothly, assists students in locating and using library resources, and monitors student library use. The info center has 23 computers (11 desktops, 12 laptops). This, combined with the school's current transition to 1:1 devices, ensures plentiful access to computers. The info center also offers digital access to online card catalog. The info center provides a diverse and current print collection of almost 13,000 titles and access to DVDs, audio and ebooks, projectors, A/V equipment, computers, and multiple Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM)-related software applications.

The info center staff collects data on student use of the physical space as well as specific equipment and uses that information to guide budgetary requests. Also, there is a mechanism for students and staff to make specific requests for loan or purchase of materials.

As a result of the school's library/media services being integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and the provision of adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff, the students at Souhegan High School are receiving support in their attainment of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teachers
- students
- school support staff

- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (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; and 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.

On the Endicott survey, 82.6 percent of staff agree that the school has adequate, certified support services personnel for identified students, including social education, 504, and English language learners. There is a solid, comprehensive connection between and among the student support services personnel and regular education teachers. This department includes thirteen special education teachers, a special education coordinator, a full-time math instructional coach, a literacy instructional coach whose time is split with responsibilities as the writing center coordinator, a contracted district-wide K-12 English language learner (ELL) teacher, 1.5 full-time therapists providing speech and occupational therapy services contracted as needed, contracted physical therapy services for grades 9-12 and beyond, a special services director, administrative assistant, secretary, one school psychologist, and one social worker.

The student support services department recognizes the changing demographics of the community will result in a need for increased services for ELL students. Faculty commented on the need for the addition of a behavioral analyst to meet student needs. Souhegan High School special education learning specialists caseloads range from 5-14 students with Individual Educational Programs (IEPs). The learning specialists not only support the students on their caseloads, but other at-risk students, or those on 504 Plans.

Students have access to a wide variety of programs such as Read 180, System 44, Wilson, Just Words, LiPs, Reading Plus, V/V, academic/Saber Support, ELA support, math support, reading classes for remedial services, ALT support and social studies skills. To support heterogeneity, learning specialists in grades 9 and 10 push into the classrooms to co-teach and design units of study. Special education teachers collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. The instructional coaches, special education coordinator, social worker, reading specialist, and school psychologist attend weekly Response to Intervention/ Student Support Team (RTI/SST) and student services meetings for students in regular and special education. These interventions include credit/standard recovery, student contracts, counseling, tiered academic interventions (as per Rtl), groups, RENEW, and parent meetings. Data collected by special educators and classroom teachers, including effort grades, work samples, progress reports, standardized testing results, academic grades, and observations are reviewed at meetings. Special education teachers hold regular meetings with paraprofessionals and regular classroom teachers to ensure timely and consistent delivery of accommodations and modifications. Special education teachers meet weekly for 1-2 hours to review a range of services and programming options.

The special education department solicits information from parents in a variety of ways. They facilitate parent groups and teacher and parent surveys on individual student needs and programmatic offerings.

Because of the commitment to heterogeneity and the solid, comprehensive connection between the student support services and general education teachers, students, identified through the IEP, 504 process, and ELL benefit from 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.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies provided for all students, including referrals to in-school and community-based support providers

Commendation

The willingness and demonstrated success of faculty at shepherding students through their journey of self-awareness accompanied by an unfaltering belief in each child's potential

Commendation

The multiple opportunities for students to receive academic and social emotional support through a broad range of services such as classroom inclusion settings, one-to-one educational techs, need-specific small groups, and individual counseling

Commendation

The commitment of the district to the integration of instructional technology, including hardware and software, implemented to support students' in their achieving the school's academic learning expectations

Commendation

The preservation of manageable caseloads for special educators, counselors, and student support personnel

Commendation

The high level of care provided for students and staff cultivated by the school's health services

Commendation

The dedication to and respect for heterogeneity and inclusivity throughout the school sustained by collaboration among content teachers and learning specialists

Commendation

The high level of integration between the info center and teaching and learning throughout the school as a testament to the knowledgeable and supportive library/media staff who work in seamless partnerships with teachers and students

Commendation

The accessibility of the info center to students before and after school as well as throughout the day as one of many avenues of support to students in achieving the school's academic learning expectations

Commendation

The school's consistent use of a broad range of information sharing methodologies in communicating to families regarding student support services and opportunities

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a continuum of timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for Division II to provide ongoing support for students throughout all four years of high school

Recommendation

Pursue and formalize avenues to offer support to students impacted by a wide range of social and emotional issues while making sure that students exhibiting signs of at-risk behaviors are identified and referred for mental health counseling

Recommendation

Provide resources to sustain the productive relationships currently in existence with local mental health resources, with the goal of expanding and supporting school-based mental health services

Recommendation

Increase exposure for students for expanding their awareness and understanding of post-secondary options which may include internships, dual enrollment, associate degrees and transition to employment

Recommendation

Ensure that support services have a sufficient number of personnel in response to the increasing and changing demographics specifically in areas such as English language learners

Recommendation

Ensure sufficient staffing to support for students who would benefit from services focused on behavioral health

Recommendation

Develop and document a plan for including learning specialists in non-core areas, such as world languages, in order to provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom as documented in the IEP or 504 Plan

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and school board 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 and sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

The community and school board consistently approve dependable funding for a variety of programs and services. Professional development is viewed as highly valued as informing instruction and therefore, well funded. Teachers report consistent support for Personal Growth Plans and TLCs. The one-to-one student laptop initiative currently includes freshmen, sophomores, and juniors and continues to be fully funded. Teachers, along with parents and students, indicate that they have sufficient instructional materials and supplies for their classrooms. Teachers indicate that technology support is needed for continued reporting of standards and curriculum implementation. Teachers expressed a specific need for technology integration with MMS, Google Classroom, and curriculum design.

Central office personnel as well as building leadership are studying enrollment projections for both the near and extended future. The past few years have seen staff reductions mostly through attrition. Subsequently, class sizes have been steadily increasing. Ninth and tenth grade team teachers have seen their student loads increase from around 80 to approximately 100 in the past few years. The guiding principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools espouse a teacher-to-pupil ratio of no greater than 80:1 as one of its primary tenets. Staff spoke in earnest about the paramount importance of preserving this ratio.

Staff spoke to a growing need for emotional and behavioral health services at SHS. One response has been strengthening partnerships with outside agencies. For instance, there has been increased access to counseling through Greater Nashua Community Health. Currently, the world languages department has little special education in-class support as learning specialists and paraprofessionals are typically placed in other academic disciplines. The English department noted that the supplies and technology available to them are excellent, but, with the new 1:1 laptops, they have questions around software availability. The overall impression gleaned from the visit is that the recent loss of funding for a full-time drug and alcohol counselor has had a negative impact. While the above examples are genuine indicators of faculty concern, the school is well funded and teachers and students appreciate the broad-based community support. The Endicott survey reports 75 percent of the students agree that the school has a wide range of programs and services.

As a result of continued community and school board support, a wide range of school programs and services are sustainable, professional development and technology integration continues to facilitate 21st century learner expectations, and teachers are prepared to meet their goals regarding student performance including competency based assessments.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

The Capital Needs Assessment analyzes all facets of the facility outlined in a long-range plan. This year the district has implemented an electronic system, School Dude, to process the need for timely repairs and responsive maintenance. The SHS maintenance staff schedules and completes repairs. The level of dedication and pride among the custodial staff was evident not only in the cleanliness of the building, but also in the positive attitude and collegial manner displayed by these employees. Recent staff addition include three FTEs including a HVAC technician/electrician, plumber, and skilled commercial carpenter. Facilities personnel also safeguards accurate records and permits for equipment compliance. On the Endicott survey, 82 percent of students, 94 percent of staff, and 94 percent of parents believe that the school is kept clean on a daily basis.

Some adjoining classrooms make use of divider walls to support flexible instruction. Library and computer lab equipment are in good condition. Additionally, the facilities department is working in tandem with a student as part of a team to address the concern of highly variable temperatures throughout the complex. She became focused on the temperature variances as a worthy cause for her to champion, because she wanted to improve the building ambiance and to create more ideal conditions for learning. This student said that her first change was painting walls different colors. She then followed up by consulting with the facilities department to improve air quality. This was done and approved through the Community Council process as she serves as a shining example of taking the initiative to tackle an authentic issue and in so doing, developing student agency. The temperature inconsistencies were mentioned by several students and teachers noting that these temperature variances adversely impact the learning environment.

As a result of school district's developing consistent planning and funding of programs to ensure the maintenance of the building and school plant, to properly catalogue, repair, and replace equipment and to keep the school clean on a daily basis, SHS provides a physical environment conducive to student learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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

The SHS Program of Studies is updated on a yearly basis. On the Endicott survey, 55.8 percent of the staff agree that the school has a long-range plan to address facilities, future programs, services, staffing levels, and capital improvements. The school discerns enrollment projections and configures staffing needs on those projections. In June 2017 Souhegan High School engaged in a Capital Needs Assessment. In this plan, all facets of the facility were analyzed, and a long-range plan was outlined. The assessment looks at the site on which the building is situated, the mechanical room, building mechanical and electrical systems, the building architectural systems, and program areas. The program areas assessed were the cafeteria, theater, library, administrative offices, kitchen, classrooms, and the gymnasium/locker rooms. As a result of the assessment, an incremental plan was explored to address maintenance needs. The plan addresses Souhegan's needs for the next 20 years up until 2037. The plan takes into account projected costs used to help calculate the future operational budget.

On the Endicott survey, 78.2 percent of the students surveyed believe that the school has a sufficient number of computers for student use. Additionally, 83.3 percent of the students surveyed believe that computers are available to me before, during, and after school hours. SHS is currently implementing a 1:1 laptop program in which all students will have a Windows laptop to use throughout their years at SHS. Currently, all freshmen, sophomores, and juniors have a school-issued computer. On a broader scale, there is a three-year district technology plan for SAU 39. The technology plan includes software, hardware, and device needs to address various curricula throughout all SAU 39 schools. The digital platform is consistent with the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Through consistent community funding and school implementation of a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements, ongoing revision of plans to stay current with programs and service, the school will not only meet the needs of students currently attending SHS, but also provide for future students identified by projected enrollment.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

The development and implementation of the budget is a shared responsibility. Department coordinators meet with the faculty and staff of their respective departments to evaluate and determine their budgetary needs. Department coordinators directly input their budget and purchasing recommendations onto a shared digital document. The administrative team reviews the recommendations and makes adjustments, then submits it to the SAU superintendent and business manager for further review. Faculty express a desire to start the budget process later in the school year giving teachers time to advocate for new programs, new courses, and changes in the program offerings. Faculty appreciate the care taken to involve them in the budget. Their desire to extend the current timeless is in conformance with the school's emphasis on developing adult and student agency.

As a result of the faculty and building administrators' active involvement in the development and implementation of the budget, teachers exercise decision-making power to influence the acquisition of teaching materials to promote student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

In most areas, the school site supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The school site maintains an open, inviting campus thoughtfully designed for many programs and services.

Beyond the school day, the school site is available to local community groups for various functions. While the current facility allows for the effective delivery of food services, due to the anticipated significant replacement cost, a budgetary plan is in place to replace ovens over the next five years on an annual basis until all ovens are replaced.

Special education teachers indicate they have supports as needed, especially in the Division I academic classes which are located in the main building where students may also access student services staff, the assistant dean of students, the library, learning commons and tech support. Division II academic support classes are located on the top floor of the Annex. Consequently, student access for upperclassmen is less proximal to these services. The Alternative Support Program, located in the main building, has easy access to the nurse, student services, and the dean of students. The alternative support space, divided into five smaller rooms, provides areas for students to de-escalate, speak with counselors, or work in a quiet environment. A phone located in a private room allows for confidentiality as needed.

Student services staff report the desire for a mid-sized room for college visits and meetings that are currently occurring in a small conference area. The current space utilized for in-school suspension is also small and hinders the goal to respect student privacy and to provide for confidential conversations during the time the students spend in in-school suspension. The nurse reported that she has enough equipment and space to respond to most student needs. Currently, the nurse's area bathroom is handicap accessible and the treatment room size is sufficient. However, lack of a soundproof space to talk to students as they come in the room may compromise confidential conversations. Tech services staff report that they do have sufficient space available to students and staff. The was concern expressed about the recently installed network switch creates noise in the working environment. Temperature regulation in the computer labs is variable and has the potential to adversely impact equipment. The facilities department reported that it is responding to this concern with a new HVAC vendor.

The school resource officer expressed her concerns about the open nature of the campus which includes students traveling from the main building to the annex during the school day. In addition, upperclassmen have open campus privileges and may use the outside spaces of the school. The school resource officer indicated her concern with an insufficient number of cameras, unlocked doors, and inadequate visitor validations, a concern that was shared by the visiting team. Through Community Council, students and staff were involved in discussions addressing these concerns. These discussions challenged the installation of cameras as many students feel that to do so would be incongruous with the school's core values of trust, respect, and courage. However, cameras have since been installed at entrances, and doors currently automatically lock during emergency situations. While an open campus fosters the sense of community which is cherished at SHS, the decision to move ahead with cameras was made at the Central Office level. There are ongoing discussions as to how to address two separate buildings which pose significant security challenges.

Most areas throughout the school foster high-quality learning academic programs. By design, common prep spaces and close proximity of classrooms for teachers in both buildings encourage and accommodate a high level of professional collaboration. Temperature control and consistency is a concern, and is being addressed with the new HVAC vendor. The science department reports that some labs are too small to interact safely with the number of students and equipment in the room. Some science classes have as many as 24 students, yet the labs were designed and equipped for 20 students. In the annex, the number of square feet is half the minimum required for lab safety. As a result of space constraints in the annex science classrooms, students often use hallway and conference rooms for break-out sessions during class. Science teachers reported leaky faucets, gas valves that move when turned on and off, and one clogged drain in the lab area. Venting in the prep room is being addressed by the facilities department. As a temporary measure, non-potable water

er signs are posted where plumbing is a concern. In the main building science rooms, teachers reported that numerous outlets do not work and cabinet doors do not work. Hazardous chemicals, however, are safely secured. Within the art department, classrooms are large and allow for project storage. There are adequate outlets, sinks and and lighting. The pottery kiln is compliant with safety requirements and pottery wheels are on a floor with drains.

Through continued collaboration, the school facility systematically, in most areas, supports high quality school programs and services; when the school develops a more formalized school security and safety plan, the campus can maintain an open and trusting environment feel, while safeguarding staff and student security.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

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

The school regularly passes inspection as required by the State of New Hampshire Department of Safety through inspections by Amherst Fire and Rescue. The director of facilities maintains accurate records of necessary updated permits and maintenance plans. The school regularly passes Health Inspections, required by the New Hampshire Department of Education Bureau of School Safety and Facility Management. Equipment in the school is well maintained. The state of New Hampshire Department of Safety, Souhegan High School Emergency Operations Plan version 1.1 is in place. Fire drills are held monthly along with three lockdowns each year.

Due to the formal, consistent documentation of maintenance of records, inspections and permits, the school ensures continued safety through compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- school support staff
- 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.

According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of the staff agree that they actively engage parents and families as partners in their student's education and 60 percent of parents agree that the professional staff actively engage them as partners in their son or daughter's education. Professional staff engage parents in a variety of ways. Families receive a weekly principal's newsletter via email highlighting important information and upcoming events. The school website maintains relevant information and events. Souhegan High School frequently communicates through various platforms including an award winning student produced video news program, the Claw, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, school videos, and alumni connections. Events designed to gather the school community include art events, performing arts, Poetry Out Loud, and athletics. The academic Division I team frequently communicates with families as updates are needed via email and/or phone. The ninth grade team maintains an updated Instagram page. A Step Up Night facilitates student transition into the high school. Parents actively participate in student-led parent conferences at progress report time. Teachers maintain specific time slots for parents of students of concern for these conferences. Within the special education department, learning specialists encourage parents to participate in IEP meetings. Student services personnel reach out to parents and meet on or off campus to facilitate parent schedules. When families are unable to attend meetings, notes are sent home. The school also invites parents as guest speakers for Community Service Day and classroom presentations. Learning specialists encourage families to attend the Transition Fair targeting grades 10 to 12 career-bound students. The guidance department organizes a College Planning Night, college fairs, Financial Aid Night, and Career Day. Additionally, college visits and scholarships and Naviance college information are available in the website. Similarly, Division II communicates directly with families, albeit less frequently than Division I. Parents speak very positively about their school engagement and note their satisfaction with communication from professional staff.

On the Endicott survey, 75.2 percent of the students agree that their parents have the opportunity to meet teachers, building administrators, and school counselors. Parents have numerous ways to be involved in their students' education. Parents have opportunities to meet with their students' teachers at an open house in September, followed by parent-teacher conferences in November. These conferences are now student-led. As recently as a year ago, parents received detailed progress reports three times per year when the school was on trimesters. Effective this current academic year, the school transitioned to semester grading and received progress reports and report cards twice a year. Parents attend a Division I Exhibition Roundtable at the end of their children's sophomore year and are invited to senior project presentations at the end of their children's senior year. Frequent meetings for students with IEPs and 504 Plans take place throughout the year, and parents have direct access to each teacher through the school email system. Parents have recently gained access to the grade reporting portal as well.

As a result of purposeful consistent communication from school staff as partners in each student's education, most families are actively engaged in their students' learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff

- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

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

Each of the following organizations represents a strategic partnership developed to support and to enhance the curriculum design, instructional methods, and the creation of an engaging learning organization. These symbiotic relationships are greatly valued by the Souhegan school community. The first group consists of partnerships focused on teaching, learning, assessment and school culture. Among them are the New Hampshire Department of Education specifically its blueprint to scale competency based education, Center of Collaborative Education with whom Souhegan High School develops systemic strategies focused on the core of the teaching and learning process including curriculum, instruction, assessment and culture, the Center for Assessment with whom SHS has joined together to design, implement and evaluate the school's assessments, Council of Chief State School Officers, a partnership focused on developing a next generation accountability system, 2 Revolutions, a national education design lab which served as an instrumental catalyst for the early stages of the PACE initiative, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, an organization that has partnered with SHS on increasing its capacity in the areas of personalized learning, mastery learning, and student agency, the Literacy Design Collaborative through which SHS was able to receive extensive training to develop effective rubrics, University of New Hampshire, a long standing partner in the school's efforts to recruit highly qualified teachers, the Center for Secondary School Redesign with whom SHS worked to implement changes in practice including personalization, leadership models, and school culture, Saint Anselm College Institute of Politics and its collaborative work with SHS centering on enhancing student leadership, ethics, and philosophy education. SHS and Saint Anselms combine to promote student leadership in schools by providing leadership training for partner schools. National Center for Innovation in Education which partners with SHS in designing learning experiences that integrate thinking, feeling and action, while building cognitive skills needed for life long learning, School Retool, a professional development fellowship through which SHS faculty have been trained in research-based practices that lead to deeper learning, Stanford Center for Assessment Learning and Equality and its partnership through which SHS has increased capacity for its teachers to design and to score performance tasks, the Marzano Institute whose technical assistance has benefitted SHS in its development of grading and assessment systems, and the Buck Institute for Education through which SHS has experienced the professional development on how to design, assess and manage projects that engage and motivate students. SHS has connected with the Buck Institute in enhancing performance based learning.

The second group of SHS partnerships is focused on posts secondary readiness. They include the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation with whom SHS has engaged in training to develop a deeper learning environment. SHS partners join Hewlett in the belief that students should master rigorous academic content, learn how to think critically, solve problems, work collaboratively, communicate effectively, direct one's own learning, and develop an academic mindset and ability to grow, Reaching Higher New Hampshire in its commitment to personalized, competency based education, deeper learning and meaningful college and career pathways for all students, and Jobs for the Future focused on embedding work study practices into student experiences at SHS.

Across the school and community, Souhegan collectively achieves collaborative communication and authentic learning experiences to promote student success. The consensus of parents is that their children leave Souhegan with valuable communication and presentation skills which, in part, are developed through the senior project in which the learner is directly connected with a mentor from the community. Souhegan works closely with various community organizations and businesses to support student learning and to offer authentic opportunities outside of the classroom, such as with Citronics and Hitchiner Manufacturing. Through the marketing program, students create a business pitch in early spring and participate in an internal "Shark Tank" competition hosted at Souhegan. The top three teams have the opportunity to attend the University of New Hampshire Paul School of Business' annual BIZ-GEN Competition, where they compete for funding to launch their business idea. Souhegan's partnerships with Citronics and Hitchhiker Manufacturing are designed to expose students to manufacturing careers during Manufacturing month. The past two years, these two companies have sponsored trips for SHS students to visit their facilities for the Engineering, Advanced Engineering and STEAM 3d Modeling classes providing opportunities for 230 students to explore careers in these fields. In addition, Souhegan has

sought participation from the business and alumni communities to support the 10th grade Career Day that has been offered annually for over 5 years. Between 2015 - 2018, over 188 different professionals representative from area businesses, alumni base, and the community have spoken with each sophomore class about students' career paths. The model for the day consists of career panels with 30 community members participating in the program multiple years in a row. In the fall of 2017, 105 college representatives visited SHS.

One example of a highly successful and student generated partnership is the HYPE program. In 2009, Ethics Seminar students at Souhegan High School, asked if they could take philosophy outside of class with other high school students. Student interest and inquiry was the start of a "grassroots" philosophy program called HYPE - "Hosting Young Philosophy Enthusiasts." In 2010, SHS held the first conference with just 3 participating schools and just over 100 students. Since then, the HYPE day has evolved into a New England regional event held at the University of New Hampshire, Durham showing steady growth. From 2016-2018, between 880 and 1150 students attended this one-day event each year, representing 28 schools from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont. Since 2017, the HYPE one-day conference has evolved into a program that now has over 55 high schools involved and multiple events on-going during the year. Affiliated now with both UNH Durham and the Center for Ethics and Business Governance at St. Anselm College, Manchester, NH, the HYPE program has expanded to offer five student mini-conferences on a variety of philosophical topics that are associated with ethics, leadership and citizenry. These topics are formulated by students for students and are held at various sponsoring universities and colleges in the region. According to staff, in the last eight years, HYPE's value has been recognized with numerous awards, sponsorships, and grants, among them the Responsible Governance and Sustainable Citizenship Project Award and the Granite State Award from the NH University System. The University of New Hampshire, Durham has officially integrated HYPE into its philosophy department's programs to bridge pre-college and college philosophical learning.

Additionally, students have the opportunity to earn college credit through Nashua Community College and the University of New Orleans for certain high school classes that meet specific requirements. Currently, there are 37 Souhegan students participating in dual enrollment focusing on STEM based courses. SHS is deeply committed to the concept of extended learning opportunities through a deployed curriculum. Students in the video production class are currently creating videos to be used at Hither for employee training on specific manufacturing skills. This is an example of creating a reciprocal partnership between the manufacturing company and the students. Career tech academic opportunities are available to students, although school bus transportation is limited to one of three sites, Nashua Technology Center. Additionally, programs are offered at Milford High School and Applied Technology Center and the Wilbur H. Palmer School Career and Technical Education Center in Alvirne. Parents expressed concern of the lack of funding for bus transportation for sending students to all three sites.

SHS students are working in the robotics program at Omron, an international company with plants in Amherst/ Nashua area, with whom Souhegan has developed a productive partnership. The principal and his team envision these authentic learning opportunities will become electives. There is an effort to ensure that ELO(extended learning opportunities do not exist in a vacuum, but rather, are designed to provide authentic learning in an authentic setting. Teachers are encouraged to initiate ELOs and build opportunities for a deployed curriculum both inside and outside of the school day. Teachers receive support and encouragement to expand their classrooms to real world settings. The driving principle is that the school does not want innovation to be suppressed due to logistics associated with moving students in and out of the school building during the school day.

Parents are often invited into the school as guest speakers or industry expert in various classes. The Endicott survey reports that 73.1 percent of the parents surveyed believe that the school has effective partnerships with parents, community, organizations, businesses, and higher education to support student learning. The school continues to appreciate existing partnerships and looks forward to strengthening this valued component of the students' experiences at SHS.

As a result of a continued, intentional development of productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships, students are afforded authentic and experiential opportunities to connect their learning with the real world.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- school board
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The informed decision-making and consistent support demonstrated by members of the school board

Commendation

The well-funded professional development that is aligned with the school's core values and beliefs and responsive to staff needs and proposals

Commendation

The well-maintained facilities designed to support personalized student learning and to maximize actualization of the school's vision of student learning.

Commendation

The community's support for extended learning opportunities for students and staff

Commendation

The recently improved security system automatically locking doors which includes security cameras, and blue lights in outside areas

Commendation

The highly effective and well-coordinated communication with families as partners in education

Commendation

The high level of student, staff, parent, school board, and community involvement in the Community Council, the school's governing organization

Commendation

The schools demonstrated success in building business and higher education partnerships that support student learning while providing authentic experiences

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure the budget process allows for a thorough consideration of new and emerging budgetary needs

Recommendation

Ensure the safety of student and staff as they access two separate buildings during the school day

Recommendation

Ensure sufficient tech support services dedicated to the planning for and implementation of standards-based reporting

Recommendation

Ensure there are sufficient and appropriate spaces to conduct confidential meetings for health services, guidance, special education, and to honor privacy for students serving in-school suspension

Recommendation

Ensure that support services have a sufficient number of personnel in response to the increasing and changing demographics specifically in areas such as English language learners

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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: Dr. Ellin Booras - New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Assistant Chair: Roxanne Wilson - SAU 55

Team Members

John Billings - Mascoma Valley Regional High School

Mr. Michael Boucher - Hillsboro-Deering High School

Margaret Caldwell - Hanover High School

Lorraine Connell - John Stark Regional High School

Matt Dion - Pembroke Academy

Celeste Feren - Somersworth High School & Career Technical Center

Ms. Suzanne Filippone - Oyster River High School

Jocelyn Judge - Inter-Lakes High School

Kevin Lee - Kearsarge Regional High School

Chris Morse - Mascoma Valley Regional High School

Donald Picard - Berlin High School

Natasha Reiner - Laconia High School

Jaime Sawler - Exeter Region Cooperative School District

Billie Jo Sweeney - Inter-Lakes High School