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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

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

Support Standards

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

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

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-assessment. At South Hadley High School, a committee of five members with the principal serving in an *ex officio* capacity supervised all aspects of the self-assessment. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included a number of students, parents, central office professionals, school board representatives, and citizens.

The self-assessment of South Hadley High School extended over a period of 26 school months from January 2002 to June 2004. The visiting committee was pleased to note that a number of students, citizens, parents, and school board members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Assessment Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Commission, South Hadley High School also used questionnaires developed by the Office for Research and Education at the University of Maine 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-assessment.

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-assessment became part of the official self-assessment documents until it had been approved by the entire professional staff.

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

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

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

- review of the school's self-assessment materials
- a total of 65 hours of classroom observation
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- shadowing of fourteen students for a half day
- individual meetings with 30 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

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

Quality of the Self-Study

The self-assessment was well done and completed in a timely manner by the professional staff at South Hadley High School. Executive summaries of each standard report were completed and available to the visiting committee. The essays developed for each standard by the South Hadley staff addressed each of the indicators. Strengths in adherence to each standard were identified as were areas of need. Each standard area report was accepted by the entire professional staff at the school. A significant amount of student work was made available to the visiting committee for its review. The student work was well organized and represented work done by students at all academic levels. Student work was also available to members of the visiting committee during the shadowing process and in individual meetings with teachers. The self-study provided an excellent basis for the on-site review by the visiting committee.

Teaching and Learning at South Hadley High School

South Hadley has a clearly developed, written mission statement, and the expectations for student learning reflect the beliefs of the school community and the community at large. Excellent rubrics have been developed to accompany the learning expectations. The challenge now is in using the rubrics to measure the students success in meeting the expectations. The advisory program in place and the emphasis of that program on the mission and expectations is noteworthy. A great deal of time was spent developing the mission statement and the learning expectations, and a number of the stakeholders was involved in the process. There is a need to adopt a formal review process for the mission and expectations that includes representatives of these same stakeholders. Student feedback should also be used in the review process.

A great deal of work is needed in the area of curriculum. Each course offered at the school should have a written curriculum aligned with the learning expectations identified by the school community and that is rigorous for all students. Students in the standard level courses deserve the same rigor and high expectations as advanced placement students are exposed to rigor and high expectations. Curricular coordination is a significant component of district curriculum management, but the high school faculty needs to do what it can to coordinate the curriculum at the high school level until the entire system can be aligned. Ongoing review of curriculum will be necessary in the future, but for now, the major task is the actual creation of curriculum documents.

Most faculty members use a variety of instructional strategies in the classroom. It is clear that in those classrooms where instruction is personalized, where connections across disciplines are being made, and where students are engaged as active learners, students are meeting with success and are achieving the learning expectations of the school. It is equally clear that in those classrooms where only one instructional strategy is employed, where instruction is teacher-driven, and where no authentic learning is in evidence, students tend to lose interest and become passive and not learn very much. The sharing of successful instructional practices should become part of the culture of the school. Faculty members should expect feedback regarding their instructional practices from the administrators who supervise them, and they should solicit additional feedback from students and parents, using the feedback to improve their instructional techniques.

Throughout the school, a wide variety of assessment tools are used. Most students know and can describe teachers' expectations for the classes in which they are enrolled. Teachers also communicate expectations to parents and keep parents informed on the progress of their student. Many teachers use rubrics to ensure that students understand what is expected of them and how they will be graded and to model excellence for them. Little is currently being done to inform the community of how well students are meeting the learning expectations set by the school.

Support of Teaching and Learning at South Hadley High School

There is a strong leadership team in place at South Hadley High School. The collaborative style of the principal affords the teaching staff with an opportunity to be heard and to provide leadership. The focus groups or collaborative teams that have been formed provide a perfect opportunity for faculty members to set the direction for the high school. Lack of time and money and the daily schedule at the high school are often blamed for shortcomings in reaching some of the goals of the school community, so there is a challenge to find the schedule that works best for these students in the school. The climate of the school is positive and supportive, and it is a comfortable place to work and learn. From time to time, the comfort level of the school should be challenged and new ideas implemented that may lead to greater efficiency and a higher level of learning.

There is a number of resources available for students at South Hadley High School, and the variety of extracurricular activities available for students is impressive. The advisory program in place for freshmen and sophomores is outstanding. The library media center is up-to-date and provides students with a variety of materials although the librarian is over-taxed. The technology available for student use is impressive, but a plan must be designed to repair, replace, and upgrade computer equipment and to utilize technology more effectively in the classroom.

South Hadley High School knows how to involve parents in music programs and sports programs, but there is a need to get more parents involved in the school's academics. Parents, students, and school personnel should all have a role in a student's education. The school facilities are more than adequate to meet the goals of the high school. Long-range planning will ensure that equipment and the facilities will be well maintained and replaced when necessary and will ensure that the school community is aware of future staffing needs. As South Hadley High School moves forward everyone in the school community must keep in mind that the mission and the expectations that have been selected are guidelines for all decisions to make sure they are always in the best interests of the students.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

South Hadley is a residential western Massachusetts community with a stable population of 17,000 people. The town is located in Hampshire County on the eastern bank of the Connecticut River. A part of the Greater Springfield area, South Hadley has two neighboring cities: Holyoke to the west and Chicopee directly to its south. Amherst and Hadley are its northern neighbors and Granby lies to its east. South Hadley has a mix of rural, mountainous, and farm regions, along with large suburban residential neighborhoods and smaller areas of light industry. The residential areas located along the major north-south highway, Route 116, begin in the center of town and spread south and east to the borders of Granby and Chicopee. The downtown area has a mixture of residential and light industrial areas.

A central feature of the town is Mount Holyoke College with its distinctive architecture, stately trees, and beautiful old New England setting. Mount Holyoke College is part of the Five College Consortium that includes Smith College, Mount Holyoke College, Amherst College, Hampshire College, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The local accessibility to these institutions affords the townspeople many cultural and academic opportunities that are not available in other communities of a similar size.

The present South Hadley High School building opened its doors in 1955. In 1965, an additional corridor of 15 classrooms and a small gymnasium were added to the back of the building. Another major expansion and renovation was completed in 2001 that added 19,000 square feet to the front of the building. A state-of-the-art library/media center, two additional science laboratories, a television studio, an enlarged band room with choral facilities, updated wood shop and graphics areas, new consumer science and nursery school facilities, two new computer labs with new computers, a new guidance suite, administrative offices, and a nurse's station were included in the latest renovation. The building currently has network data capabilities, cable TV access in most rooms, a satellite dish, and full broadcast capabilities in the TV studio. Additionally, a new boiler with a heating/cooling system, energy efficient windows and lighting, and a new roof were all installed. The high school now has 65 classrooms.

There are two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in the district; 2,280 students are enrolled in these four schools. The school district employs 190 teachers, of which 63 work at the high school. The current high school population includes 660 students in grades 9 - 12; the average class size is 20 students. Student enrollment is projected to increase to 680 in 2003-2004 and to 708 in 2004-2005. Approximately 98% of the high school students matriculate from the Michael E. Smith Middle School. The other 2% enter from area parochial and private schools. In 2002-2003, the number of school choice students coming to South Hadley was 93, and the number exiting the district for school choice was 57. The high school's attendance rate was 93% for 2001-2002. The dropout rate for the same time period was 1.5%. Special education students with Individual Education Plans make up 12% of the total high school population, and 6% of the students have 504 plans. Sixty-one percent of the student body takes

either an advanced placement or accelerated level class. Of the 127 members of the Class of 2003 who took the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the average verbal score was 506 and the average math score was 505. Scores for the spring 2003 administration for the Grade 10 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System tests were as follows:

		Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning
English	South Hadley	15%	57%	26%	2%
	State	20%	41%	28%	11%
Math	South Hadley	22%	32%	39%	8%
	State	24%	27%	29%	20%

The current unemployment rate in the town is 2.6%. For Hampshire County, the unemployment rate is 2.3%. The median family income in 2002 was \$45,957. There are 745 families in South Hadley that earn between \$10,000 - \$ 25,000, while 135 families earn below \$10,000. Mount Holyoke College is the largest employer in South Hadley. There are 228 faculty and 787 staff members employed at the college. The town's second largest employer is Intelicoat Technologies, a manufacturer of coated papers and films, that employs 340 people, 46 of whom are South Hadley residents. The Village Commons, a residential, office, and retail complex is located in the town center, across from Mount Holyoke College. The Commons contains restaurants, a theater, a renowned independently owned bookstore, and many small upscale retail shops.

Recently, there was a major renovation of the downtown area that included repaired and repaved streets, new sidewalks and sewer lines, a new police station, and additional utility lines. This was the first major renovation of the downtown area since the early part of the last century.

The population of South Hadley is 94% white, 3% Afro-American, and 2% Hispanic. This lack of racial and cultural diversity is reflected in the high school student body and staff. The school community recognizes that a strong need exists for better appreciation and sensitivity to multicultural issues.

Approximately 55% of the seniors at South Hadley High School plans to attend a four-year college or university, and another 34% plans to attend a community college, business/technical school, or other post secondary school. Only 9 % does not plan to attend a post-secondary school and will thus enter the work force, while 2% of the student population plans to enter the military.

A number of academic and nonacademic awards are given at the end of the school year; these include 60 academic, 10 nonacademic, and 70 scholarship awards. Additionally, seasonal sports award ceremonies are held for the fall, winter, and spring programs.

The staff of South Hadley High School is proud of the many school initiatives developed in the past several years. They include the South Hadley High School Connections School to Career program and MCAS remediation programs, a component of which is a portfolio option for failing juniors and seniors. Uniform syllabi for all courses and curriculum revisions have been created but not yet fully implemented. A ninth and tenth grade advisory program has been

established, and new class schedule models are under review. Furthermore, the school has made much use of the district's endowment fund that supports innovative teaching practices and programs.

Conversely, the school faces a number of challenges. The district has had several superintendents in the last few years; hence, there has been a lack of consistency in vision and direction. Budgetary concerns include dealing with unfunded federal and state mandates and the difficulty of maintaining the physical plant and keeping the technology current in a time of deep fiscal cuts. Teachers also feel that there is a lack of common planning time for teachers to facilitate interdisciplinary instruction.

South Hadley High School has established partnerships with several area colleges that include Mount Holyoke College, Springfield College, Westfield State College, and the University of Massachusetts. Student teachers from these schools have contributed current educational thinking to various departments. Select South Hadley students are able to enroll in courses at Mount Holyoke College at no cost to the high school or student. Articulation agreements exist with Holyoke Community College and Springfield Technical Community College that allow South Hadley High School students to be exempt from taking introductory level courses there.

For FY'02, the high school's annual per pupil expenditure, which includes all special education programs, was \$6,949 although the per pupil expenditure for regular education students attending the high school was \$5,426. Local taxation funds 91.4% of the school budget, 1.1% by state sources, 3.8 % by the federal government, and 3.7% from other sources. The school budget represents 62% of the town's available expenditures. The local numbers above represent the budget appropriation, not the actual expenditures. These figures represent the local appropriation from town meeting to the school committee, including revenue from state aid and local taxes. Like many local communities, parents of school age children are asked to pay user fees per child per sport to supplement the athletic budget. The South Hadley School District has spent about \$900,000 in state grants for the 2002-2003 school year.

The total school budget for all South Hadley schools for FY'03 was \$15,969,930. The budget for the high school was \$3,487,814. Highlights of the high school's budget in fiscal year 2002-2003 include the following:

Professional salaries	\$2,346,997
Instructional supplies/textbooks	\$72,000
Athletics	\$131,000
Library/educational media	\$4,000
Vocational tuition	\$582,268
Nonprofessional salaries/supplies	\$261,807

Mission and Expectations
South Hadley High School
A Community of Lifelong Learners

We pledge to create a challenging and supportive academic community in which each member strives to develop to his/her potential, to become a lifelong learner, and to act as a responsible citizen in a diverse and global society.

The South Hadley High School Student will

- E1: read, write, and communicate effectively.
- E2: define, analyze, and solve complex problems and communicate results.
- E3: study and work productively both independently and in groups.
- E4: demonstrate personal, social, and civic responsibility.
- E5: acquire, apply, integrate, analyze, and synthesize knowledge.
- E6: understand, create, appreciate, and critique artistic and literary expression.
- E7: understand and apply the principles of health and wellness.
- E8: identify and apply appropriate technologies.
- E9: take responsibility for career and life choices.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

**MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS
FOR STUDENTS**

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD 1: Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

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

1. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning and the purpose of the school and be consistent with the district's mission statement.
2. The school shall have established expectations for student learning that:
 - reflect the school's mission statement;
 - identify high expectations for all students in academic, civic, and social areas;
 - specifically state what all students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from the school taking into account the skills, competencies, concepts, and understandings identified by district, state, and national standards and by professional organizations.
3. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the faculty, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
4. The school shall utilize a variety of data to regularly review the mission statement and expectations for student learning to assure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state standards.
5. There shall be a separate document developed by the faculty that defines the school's academic expectations for student learning in specific, measurable ways, describes specific levels of performance, and indicates which level is the indicator of successful accomplishment.
6. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.

Conclusions

The South Hadley High School Mission Statement reflects the community's fundamental values and beliefs that all students can learn and are capable of performing to their potential. The mission statement is consistent with the district's mission. Feedback at school gatherings, open houses, and day-to-day communications with the school community supports the notion that the mission reflects the views of the community. Parents' requests that the school provide a wide variety of academic courses, co-curricular activities, sports, and work-related study further support parents' desire for their children to reach their full potential. The town of South Hadley also provides opportunities for students to participate in social and civic events, indicating that the community supports the expectations articulated by the high school mission. School board members and parents speak of their fundamental beliefs that students' learning is the key mission of South Hadley High School. In samples of student work, the mission and learning expectations are referred to and noted on some assignment sheets. With the support of the entire community in the form of funding and of the school will continue to develop toward challenging all students and toward achieving the mission's goal of enabling each student to meet his or her potential. (self-study, panel presentation, school committee)

The school has established expectations for student learning that align with district, state, national, and professional organization standards and have been developed by input from faculty members, administrators, and the community. Expectations are posted in classrooms, in the hallways, and in the cafeteria. Students conduct themselves respectfully and generally meet the expectations of good citizens. The learning expectations are not currently listed in categories as academic, civic, and social, although there are two expectations that address civic and social issues. During the recent mock election, students were genuinely interested in casting a vote that mattered, and it is clear that South Hadley High School promotes citizenship and responsibility. (students, teachers, classroom visits)

The mission statement and expectations for student learning have been developed by the school community and approved and supported by the faculty, the school board, and the school leadership council. A cross-section of the community, including parents, school administrators, and teachers developed the mission statement over an extended period of time by utilizing faculty meeting times and half-day workshops to hone the language and develop expectations. As the school continues to reach out to the community and welcome its input for mission criteria, it will foster the spirit of mutual support for the betterment of all. (school committee, student shadowing, self-study, teachers)

The school does utilize a sampling of data to regularly review the mission statement and expectations for student learning to assure that they continue to reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state standards; however, the data is limited and does not reflect a formal review process. As yet, few of the surveys sent to parents via a summer newsletter have been returned, and few substantive changes are suggested. A more formal survey given to parents at an open house to ensure fuller return could allow a more representative sampling. Students are engaged in informal discussions of the mission in the fall and are asked for their suggestions although a tool that aligns mission and learning expectations

with current class expectations or goals could be used by students to offer more substantive feedback to the staff and entire school community with regard to the mission's reflection of current student needs, and community expectations. These processes may be particularly helpful when substantive changes are to be made to the mission. Thus periodic review will ensure that the mission and student expectations for learning will continue to be an accurate reflection of the school and community's expectations. (teachers, student shadowing, school committee)

There are separate documents in the form of school-wide rubrics that have been developed by faculty members to define the school's academic expectations for student learning in measurable ways, describe specific levels of performance, and indicate which level is the indicator of successful accomplishment. These school-wide rubrics were begun in fall of 2003 by small groups of faculty members from several departments. Each group was assigned one learning expectation and developed the language to reflect measurable outcomes. These groups have established performance standards that reflect realistic and attainable levels of achievement, and rubrics were developed for each learning expectation as a result. The professional staff at South Hadley High School is in the discussion phase of implementing these rubrics and working to achieve consistency in school-wide assessment. Samples of current student work reveals little, if any, use of school-wide rubrics and little use of attaching specific learning expectations to assignments, however. The faculty is to be commended for the advisory program initiative, using the advisory time to discuss with students real ways in which they are meeting the learning expectations and gathering portfolio evidence to support the mission. In the advisory program, sophomores are working to create their individual plans to meet each expectation prior to graduation. Part of the advisory program could also focus on the discussion and revision, if necessary, of school-wide rubrics. Student input may help to refine rubrics, create a sense of ownership of rubrics for students, and further support the value of authentic assessment. These rubrics could then be used in the daily classroom setting and reflect the mission, fully. As faculty members implement rubrics school-wide, and continue to review the mission statement for validity year-to-year, the mission of South Hadley High School will attain rigor and relevance. (self-study, student shadowing, student work, teachers)

The mission statement and expectations for student learning guide procedures, policies, and decisions of the school in some areas and are sporadically evident in the culture of the school. The mission is used by the school council to guide decision-making and is placed on the table and referred to during meetings. The principal and parents reference the mission statement when addressing needs to the school committee. The school committee references the mission statement when advocating for new or existing programs that support students' needs. Some modes of instruction support the expectations for student learning and some faculty members offer clear expectations for their students. In some classes, expectations were clearly evident and referenced to the mission and expectations for student learning, while in others, no connections were made. Rubrics are used in several classes and nonexistent in others. Students feel this disconnect, and it is clear that they know that expectations for some teachers are connected to the mission, and others are not. The rubrics used were not consistent within, or across, departments and not consistent school-wide. Therefore, students can not assume that the expectations are the basis of learning and the rubrics a true school-wide measure of them. (students, parents, teachers)

Peer leadership programs, sportsmanship workshops, clubs, and organizations provide evidence of the empowerment of students. Students feel that the staff genuinely encourages them to follow their convictions. However, of the 562 student respondents to a survey about the mission, only 57 % understands it. While the advisory program stresses the mission and expectations of the school, more work needs to be done to ensure that students collectively understand what the mission is and why it should drive the school. When the mission statement and learning expectations are owned by students, guide the school's assessment, and create an atmosphere that supports rigor, then the mission of South Hadley High School will be fully ingrained in the school culture. (self-study, students, teachers)

Commendations

1. Involving 9th and 10th grade students in knowing and evaluating the mission through the advisory program
2. Participation in and the development and promotion of the mission and expectations for student learning by school committee, teachers, some students, administrators, and some parents
3. Posting expectations in all areas of the school
4. Development of school-wide rubrics to measure student success in achieving the school's academic expectations

Recommendations

1. Involve students in the refinement and development of the mission statement and its assessment to provide student ownership of the mission and expectations for learning
2. Implement school-wide rubrics across disciplines
3. Review the mission periodically and formally at all levels (student, faculty, parents), collect substantial data, and analyze it on an ongoing basis
4. Develop and implement a more formal way of getting parental input when reviewing the mission and expectations document

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD 2: Curriculum

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other educational experiences as described in the program of studies, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links what the school believes and expects students to learn to its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon staff commitment to and involvement in a dynamic process of review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on the school's expectations for student learning.

1. From the document that defines the school's academic expectations, each curriculum area shall identify those expectations for student learning for which it is responsible and shall have clearly articulated learning standards in support of such expectations.
2. Written curriculum documents shall be aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and shall guide content, instruction, and assessment.
3. The curriculum plan shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of the school's academic expectations for student learning.
4. The content of the curriculum shall be intellectually rigorous and provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall be appropriately integrated and shall emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities to extend student learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.
7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district to ensure the expectations for student learning are being addressed.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment and supplies, and staffing shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. There shall be ongoing review and evaluation of the curriculum that takes into account the assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations for student learning.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the review and evaluation of curriculum.

11. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the development and revision of the curriculum.

12. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusions

The course syllabus developed by each teacher is the document that identifies the learning expectations for which each course or department is responsible. Nearly ninety percent of the courses offered at the high school has a course syllabus, but only about twenty percent of the syllabi are in the prescribed district format. Some courses have curriculum guides and curriculum maps that describe specific learning expectations and opportunities designed to give students practice on the expectations. This is true in those courses that have been revised to align with the Massachusetts State Frameworks. Development of curriculum guides was begun in earnest under the direction of the district curriculum council, but the council has not been funded in the last two years, and curriculum development has suffered a setback. Recently, funds were provided and released time made available for members of the high school faculty to continue curriculum development, and an action plan was agreed upon that has not yet been completed, so many courses are still without curriculum guides or syllabi. As a result, without clear curriculum guides in all areas, content, instruction, and assessment are inconsistent, students face inconsistent expectations, and teachers do not have guidelines that assist new faculty members and assure opportunities to all learners.. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

The Curriculum Action Plan of 2003-2004 established deadlines for the development of curriculum documents and accompanying syllabi for all courses by June 2004. The plan required all departments to use a standard school-wide document format that allows for clear connections between course content and school-wide expectations. The document format also calls for recommended instructional approaches and recommended assessment methods. While some progress has been made in creating these documents, much remains to be done. Science, math and English have some curriculum related documents that are connected to the student learning expectations. Some existing curriculum maps do make reference to appropriate instructional approaches and assessment methods for the course. Until these documents have all been finalized, course content, instruction, and assessment will be inconsistent. (teachers, administrators, self-study)

The curriculum plan at South Hadley is intended to provide all students with the opportunity to engage in meaningful learning activities that address individual needs and interests when it is implemented. The curriculum format provides students of varying abilities options for meeting the core curriculum of the school. There are four levels of study in many academic areas. The South Hadley High School Connections Program connects students with the working environment. Some students participate in a vocational program through the Lower Pioneer Valley Education Collaborative. Special education students have the option of enrolling in academic tutoring as one of their six courses. MCAS preparation courses are offered, and credit is awarded to students taking courses on-line, for night school courses, and for summer

courses taken at alternative locations. These many and varied offerings allow all students to meet the expectations set by the school community. (teachers, students, self-study)

The content of the curriculum of all levels should be written and defined in all learning areas to ensure rigor and high expectations for students in every course. There is no appropriate rigor for each of the different levels. The advanced placement, accelerated, standard and alternative levels of courses are treated differently, but rigor is not clearly evident in each level. Special needs students are scheduled based on their individual education plans, but there is little evidence of integration of special needs students into upper level classes, leaving the special needs students with inequitable offerings. Special needs students need to be afforded the opportunity to participate in all levels at the school. Thus, curriculum documentation must provide all students with appropriate challenge through curricular rigor at all levels leading to authentic, engaging assessment for all students. (teachers, self-study, school leadership)

There is no planned integrated curriculum at South Hadley. Students aren't provided with the best classroom opportunities to practice and demonstrate mastery of the learning expectations although extracurricular activities are rich with such opportunities. A strategy has been adopted by many teachers throughout the school allowing students to redo work in an attempt to increase understanding and knowledge, providing students with more opportunities to master the material but not necessarily providing alternative assessment of skills. Two of the traditional 47 minute blocks have been combined into one block with the intent of increasing time on task and allowing more in depth exploration of various topics. Unfortunately, many teachers don't take full advantage of this additional time; the time is used as a regular class period with an additional study hall, rather than being used for project work or other more meaningful exploration of content. Effective use of the double block could improve student learning and provide students with extended learning opportunities and interesting on-task activities. Curriculum content needs to be written and applied to challenging learning experiences. All students are not asked to apply knowledge in the higher order thinking skills, including but not limited to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, compare/contrast. Some observations indicated student-driven conversations, portfolio development, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and peer leadership in the classroom. These were refreshing exceptions and were not specified in the curriculum. Connections, the school to career program, offers opportunities for some authentic application of knowledge. The Interactive Math Program (IMP) incorporates authentic learning experiences and performance assessment in the form of student leadership in the classroom, portfolio presentation, and practical application of the course syllabus. The art club, math league, journalism class, Environthon and Superbowl of High School Calculus are additional examples of authentic application of knowledge. The Tiger Times is a student-run news program that coordinates training and hands-on experience with the local cable channel. Without consistent design and application of curricular documents, however, all students can not reach their full potential, or the learning expectations. The few designed curriculum documents that do exist indicate use of essential questions and project-based learning, but there is little evidence of the application of strategies outlined in the documents. With the elimination of the district curriculum council, the reduction in resources for stipends and release time for curriculum development, the continuation of curriculum revision to emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage is in abeyance. Without interdisciplinary and depth-oriented curriculum

designed or implemented the students can not reach the learning expectations as adopted by the school. (classroom observation, teachers, self- study)

School-to-career opportunities have been made available through the Connections program since 1996. Several teachers and staff members voiced support for a fully-funded program of service learning. Vocational training and follow-up is coordinated with the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative. As the student activities handbook describes, there is a myriad of student activities that greatly augment the classroom experience. Co-curricular activities are outlined in the student activity handbook as well, and the offerings are extensive and impressive as listed in the previous paragraph. Student interests and needs are addressed and served. (classroom observation, students,, teachers)

There are few examples of effective coordination and articulation between and among academic areas within the school. Some efforts at coordination have been made through the leadership team of department chairs and administrators. Coordination with the middle school is also very limited. The lack of coordination makes it difficult to ensure the students an effective continuum of curriculum and to be sure that all basics are provided. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators)

Without a complete written curriculum for all areas it is difficult to judge whether or not instructional materials, technology, equipment and supplies, and staffing are sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum. Textbooks being used to support the existing program are current and in good repair. Recently purchased textbooks in the social studies and the foreign language areas have been selected to align with the understood curriculum in those areas. Computer support for the program is evident throughout the building. The state-of-the-art television studio and the computer aided design lab also support learning at the school. Class size is appropriate in most cases, and the current staffing level is sufficient to implement the program currently in place. The availability of these resources allows teachers and staff members to deliver the current program effectively to the student body. (students, facility tour, teachers)

There is no regular curriculum review cycle although the Data Sheet for Curriculum Indicators shows intent to review curriculum that was not carried out after the demise of the District Curriculum Council. The curriculum action plan is there to guide the review and creation of the curriculum at the high school level. During the panel presentation opening remarks, individual teachers and some department chairs spoke of using Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System data, final exams and Scholastic Aptitude Test trends to design and inform curricular direction. To more fully inform this process, and relate to the school's academic expectations, data derived from the use of school assessments based on the existing school-wide rubrics must be collected and analyzed. (panel presentation, self-study, teacher interviews)

There are some release times and summer stipends to support individual design and review of the curriculum. For example, grade level groups may request time and resources to work together to coordinate and integrate their lesson plans and activities. Additional resources in the form of coordination and leadership would greatly enhance the current efforts and the

former initiatives. Currently, there is sporadic leadership in coordinating faculty efforts to ensure that the curriculum is created, revised, and reviewed regularly, but there is no one in the high school administration clearly responsible for the coordination and integration of curriculum. Without strong leadership in the area of curriculum revision and evaluation, a consistent program will be difficult to achieve at the high school. (teachers, leadership team, self-study)

The professional staff has had little involvement in the development and revision of the curriculum. Most curriculum design and revision has been addressed by department heads, with some of them having more input from their staff than others. The department chair structure needs to be reviewed to address the special subject areas that are currently assigned to core areas such as art with foreign language and technology with math. There are no current formal initiatives focused on developing and revising curriculum across the district. The former district curriculum council was primarily responsible for the vertical alignment of the curriculum in grades K-12. This initiative has been cut from the budget and no further development of K-12 curriculum has taken place. The district's curriculum action plan provides vision and a work plan to address instructional and assessment strategies related to curriculum throughout the high school for the 2003-2004 school year. This plan needs to be extended and broadened to allow input from all faculty members into the curricular review process. Time must be made available for departments to meet amongst themselves along with the opportunity to share information with other departments and the middle school. When the staff is involved in the analysis and modification of curriculum, the school will see ownership of the final product which will provide equity for all students. (teachers, self-study, leadership team)

Professional development activities do not support the development and implementation of curriculum. The entire district lacks a cohesive vision related to its professional development activities as there is no formal professional development plan that connects initiatives back to the district's and school's mission, guiding principles, or goals. Professional development initiatives appear random, and external options aren't available to all teachers throughout the year as requests are processed on a first-come/first-served basis until money runs out. The district has two full-day and two half-day professional development days with an optional day at the end of the year. This limited time needs to be used for two primary activities - providing curriculum-related professional development and giving time to teachers and departments to write curriculum documents. In order to achieve these two important initiatives, more time throughout the year must be provided. There is no process to determine what professional development opportunities are needed nor how to measure their effectiveness.. With a cohesive vision and comprehensive plan for professional development and curricular review, teachers will develop skills necessary to write and deliver curriculum. (teachers, self-study, leadership team)

Commendations

1. The curriculum action plan
2. The work of the district curriculum council before it lost funding
3. The many and varied offerings for all students
4. The rich variety of extra-curricular activities for students
5. The Connections program
6. The state-of-the-art television studio and the computer aided design lab that supports learning at the school

Recommendations

1. Write curriculum documents that are aligned with the academic expectations in the mission and that guide content, instruction, and assessment practices for all courses
2. Provide adequate leadership for the development, review, coordination, and articulation of curriculum
3. Provide professional development, resource sharing, and common time to ensure the implementation of the curriculum action plan and the coordination between and among departments and grade levels
4. Collect and analyze school-based assessments of student achievement of expectations for student learning using school-wide rubrics to provide data for curriculum revision
5. Review and coordinate curriculum district-wide
6. Provide a leadership representative to coordinate curriculum design in the applied and fine arts, physical education, technology education, and library information services
7. Implement a process to design and write curriculum in every discipline area and review those on a regular basis

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD 3: Instruction

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting expectations for student learning and is the link between curriculum, learning expectations, and student performance. Instructional practice must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Consequently, teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional practices and participate in professional dialogue with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies and practices shall be consistent with the school's stated mission and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall include practices that personalize instruction, make connections across disciplines, engage students as active self-directed learners, involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding, and provide opportunities to demonstrate the application of knowledge or learning.
3. Teachers shall provide formal and informal opportunities for students to assess their own learning.
4. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources such as other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
5. Teachers shall be knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches and reflective about their own practice.
6. Discussion of instructional strategies, practices, and student work shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
7. Adequate time and financial resources shall be committed to ensuring the continuous improvement of instruction.
8. Technology shall be utilized to support instruction and to improve student learning.
9. The school's professional development programs shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional practices and be guided by identified instructional needs.
10. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

Conclusions

In the majority of classes, instructional strategies and practices are consistent with the school's mission and expectations. Teachers and many students know and understand the mission statement and expectations. In some cases, teachers address the mission and expectations in their lesson plans, syllabi, and rubrics although this is not consistent in classes across the discipline. By choosing appropriate instructional strategies, teachers make it possible for students to succeed in meeting the learning expectations of the school. (observations, student shadowing, teachers, panel presentation)

Many teachers at South Hadley High School consistently use strategies that foster personalized instruction, allowing for increased individual academic growth of students, but the collective lack of common planning time does not allow for strong interdisciplinary connections. As a result, students miss the opportunity to learn how different subjects have unique perspectives and relate to each other. The advanced level history classes are a strong example of students engaging as self-directed learners. Students in these classes are given motivation and direction to expand their assignment and encouraged to be risk-takers in presenting their ideas. Consequently, students are empowered to be more in control of their learning and able to put a personal stamp on their educational process. This allows the student to understand that connections can be made between the classroom and real life experience. In many courses students are frequently required to rewrite their opinion and research papers after correction, allowing them to demonstrate analysis and self-directed learning. In some areas rote memory and lecture appear to be the instructional strategies selected by the teacher, however, limiting the ability of students to participate fully and to develop critical analysis skills. (observation, student work, self-study, teachers, students)

The instruction process includes evidence of adequate opportunity for students to assess their own learning through the use of cooperative group work in and out of the classroom, through which students are able to utilize self-assessment and peer assessment strategies. Examples include brainstorming, peer editing, project development and presentation, role-playing and newspaper format compilation of photographs. The work reviewed showed evidence of self-assessment. By being involved with self-assessment students feel more responsible for their work. (observations, teachers, students, self-study)

Teachers receive the majority of their feedback from the student body. South Hadley teachers find that they are given an inadequate amount of time allotted for collaboration with colleagues, so teachers rarely observe other classroom teachers. Formal observations and evaluations are conducted by administrators and department chairpersons and sometimes by mentors. The constructive criticism given in post-evaluation sessions is quite helpful and consistently implemented in future instructional strategies. Unfortunately the time and frequency of these evaluations are not consistent. Teachers sometime receive feedback from parent phone calls. The calls from the parents will sometimes go directly to administrators and the teachers will receive feedback from those administrators. Plan and grade books are collected at the end of the year, but feedback is rarely given then. As a result, the instruction is improving because of individual efforts not because of effective systems of gaining and using feedback. (observations, self-study, teachers)

Many teachers at various career stages continue to be involved in keeping current with educational practices by pursuing college courses. Consequently, new information about current instruction practices from outside sources is available to the faculty. There is very little time available for professional development with a focus on individual instruction practices and interdisciplinary collaboration. As a result, the faculty is less able to develop interdepartmental lessons and to stay abreast of current instructional practices. Some teachers regularly reflect on the effectiveness of student learning in their classroom environment, however. As a result, some teachers individually achieve improved methods of instruction in the classroom. (observation, self-study, teachers, students)

Teachers do, informally, share experiences in effective classroom practices, and this sharing is primarily done during department meetings and occasionally during workshop days. The school department has provided a district-wide course entitled The Skillful Teacher, offered by Research for Better Teaching. Approximately ten percent of the faculty has completed this voluntary program. The examination of student work is primarily done departmentally. During department meetings, teachers are instructed to collectively review final examinations to determine standard requirements for each grade level. During the majority of the time teachers spend together, the focus is on behavior issues with some informal conversation about academic achievement. South Hadley has a district-wide mentoring program that is not fully implemented as a result of funding constraints. There is currently a professional climate at South Hadley that promotes informal mentoring on an individual basis, however. As a result of the limitation of mentoring, instructional strategies are rarely shared. (self-study, observations, teachers, student work)

In many cases, technology is used to support instruction and student learning. Computer aided design (CAD) classes, woodshop, and visual media classes rely heavily on classroom computer use. Every teacher has computer access, and most classrooms are equipped with a workstation that includes a 32" monitor with cable access, a VCR, and a Pentium IV computer with CD ROM and DVD player that is linked to the school network. There are two computer labs with approximately twenty-six computers per room. Teachers can access these labs by signing up in advance. These labs are used almost every period of the day. In addition, the library has twenty computers that are utilized frequently throughout the day. There is also a mobile laptop cart that can be accessed by teachers in the building. This technology has enhanced classroom instruction by expanding students' ability to research and present information, as well as reinforcing skills. All mathematics classes are equipped with Texas Instrument graphing calculators that allow students to address sophisticated problem-solving techniques. (facility tour, student shadowing, self-study, observations)

There is a strong and ongoing need to provide professional opportunities that allow teachers to devote time to investigate various teaching strategies and practices. This need is compounded by the lack of common planning time throughout the school. As a result of the lack of such time, staff members are much less able to share strategies and insure the continuous improvement of instruction. Inadequate funds have been allocated for building-wide and individual teacher professional development preventing consistent and equitable access of all teachers to development opportunities. There is potential for staff development in instruction using programs similar to the Skillful Teacher training program, web-based instruction, and

seminars on standards-based education and assessment workshops. Because few of the staff have been involved in these programs, opportunities to expand teaching strategies have not taken place. The district recognizes the need for staff members to enroll in courses for professional development and for staff reimbursement for these courses. There is very little money allocated for this, and funds are awarded on a first-come first-served basis resulting in a system of payment that is not equitable. (teachers, self-study, central office administrators)

The document “Performance Standards and Evaluation Procedures for the Professional Staff” developed in 1997 outlines procedures used by the principal to evaluate faculty members working toward professional status. The process of using pre and post evaluation conferences, monthly walkthroughs, and brief observations by the department chairs is an effective plan, but not all staff members receive the six required observations over the first three years. This results in faculty members losing opportunities to receive feedback on their teaching strategies in a timely manner. Supervision on a weekly basis varies by department resulting in inconsistencies in the evaluation process. (teachers, observations, self-study)

Commendations

1. Strategies and instructional practices in many subject areas are varied and used to connect the school’s mission and expectation to student learning
2. The efforts to make connections between classroom learning and real life experience
3. The frequent use of technology to support classroom instruction
4. Feedback between students and teachers is often used to enhance learning
5. Those teachers who are exemplary in their course design, student involvement, differentiated instruction techniques, individualized assessment (including authentic assessment and portfolio) and high expectations for all students
6. The informal sharing among teachers of effective classroom practices

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a plan to provide faculty members with more formal opportunities to share instructional practices
2. Provide adequate funding for implementation of professional development
3. Initiate and implement a plan for formal opportunities for staff members to facilitate connections between disciplines
4. Coordinate the staff evaluation process to insure all members receive equitable evaluation
5. Provide adequate resources to implement the existing mentoring program

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD 4: Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust their instruction to better respond to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates the growth and competence of students to parents, school officials, and the public. The results of student learning must be continually discussed and used to develop short-term and long-term strategies for improving curriculum and instruction.

1. Teachers shall base their classroom assessment procedures on clearly stated expectations for student learning.
2. Specific learning criteria based on specific expectations for student learning shall be the basis for grading and reporting.
3. Teachers shall use a variety and range of classroom assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
4. Teachers shall use the results of classroom assessment of student learning to evaluate and revise the curriculum.
5. Teachers shall use the results of classroom assessment of student learning to improve their instructional practices.
6. Teachers shall meet to discuss and share student work and the results of classroom assessment for the purpose of revising the curriculum and instructional strategies.
7. Teachers shall communicate to students and their families how student work and progress are being assessed.
8. The school's professional development programs shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop a broad range of assessment strategies for classroom use.
9. The administration and faculty shall use agreed upon levels of performance, indicators of successful accomplishment, and other data to assess the progress of students in achieving the school's stated academic expectations for student learning and regularly report the findings to the public.
10. The administration and faculty shall use assessment data to determine student success in meeting the school's stated civic and social expectations and regularly report the findings to the public.

Conclusions

Many teachers base their classroom assessments procedures on clearly stated expectations for student learning. Many syllabi include detailed explanations of desired outcomes related to the unit material, primarily in the science, English and math departments. Rubrics used by some teachers for a portion of their assessments further specify expectations related to particular assignments. Building-wide adoption of rubrics to assess student work would ensure that students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them as well as how they can improve. (teachers, self-study, student work)

Specific learning criteria, based on specific expectations for student learning are not generally used as the basis for grading and reporting. While students may receive general information regarding grading policies, the use of rubrics and other grading criteria for individual lesson plans and projects is not extensive, and only sporadic use of rubrics was found in many courses. Standardized rubrics have been created for lab reports and open response questions in the sciences, yet no initiative has been taken to expand the use of rubrics throughout the curriculum of the high school. Students would also benefit if teachers communicated high expectations for learning. When students are aware of the teacher's learning expectations and when the expectations are set high, students can evaluate their own success and achieve at high levels of learning. (teachers, self-study, student work)

Teachers use a variety and range of classroom assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies; however, there is no purposeful assessment of student growth over time. A combination of authentic, cumulative, and performance assessments such as PowerPoint, oral presentations, flyer, video projects, lab reports, test/quizzes, and portfolio development are just a few of the numerous assessment strategies used by teachers across the curriculum, giving the students the ability to demonstrate knowledge using several skill sets. All assessments are focused on specific subject matter while some are expanded to include the school's learning expectations. The advisory program was instituted during the 2003-04 school year, and students in advisory are collecting samples of their work in a portfolio. The purpose of the student portfolios is to collect student work that is representative of the school's learning expectations; so far, no assessment or analysis of this work has taken place. While the advisory program is an excellent tool to allow students to collect examples of work that address these learning expectations and discuss the expectations, no process is in place to review or assess these materials and to provide feedback to the student on his/her progress. Thus, this process must be completed to have real value to the student. (teachers, students, student work)

Teachers have begun to use the results of classroom assessment of student learning to evaluate and revise the curriculum and improve their instructional practices. When classroom assessments are reviewed and evaluated, the results are primarily used to address instructional issues within the classroom, however, rather than concerns that may exist within the context of the curriculum or course offering. Individual teachers consistently monitor student assessments to gauge the effectiveness of their lesson plans and content delivery methods. Adjustments are made and shared with other department team members. The science department has begun a

review of final exams to determine changes that need to be made in its curriculum. Although systematic reviews of MCAS and other standardized tests result in changes made to the curriculum, classroom assessments need to be included in this evaluation. The process of evaluating both internal and external assessment results needs to be more formal throughout the school and district to ensure that instructional practices, curriculum, and learning expectations are fully aligned. (leadership team, teachers, self-study)

Teachers rarely meet to discuss and share student work; therefore, there is little use of the results of classroom assessment for the purpose of revising the curriculum. At this time, the analysis of the standardized MCAS test has driven curricular decisions to implement new courses in the math and English departments. South Hadley High School has received a grant to fund remediation so that courses such as MCAS English Preparation, MCAS Math Preparation, and MCAS Math are now offered to students. These courses were designed for students who received failing scores on the MCAS and need remediation in math and/or English and/or test-taking skills. Emphasis is placed upon revising individual lesson plans or instructional strategies to address the range of student learning styles, but it may be necessary to revise the curriculum as well. Departmental curriculum revisions are not made frequently, but when they are, they are made by department chairs. (self-study, panel presentation, teachers)

Throughout the school year, teachers at South Hadley High School communicate to students and parents/guardians as to how student work and progress are being assessed. Teachers provide students with a course syllabus that clearly describes student-learning expectations and outlines the teacher's grading policy. Many of the teachers' course syllabi must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the teacher to ensure that this information was communicated to the student's home. At the beginning of the school year, a parents night is held to provide information about courses, curricula, expectations, and grading policies. Other opportunities to communicate and assess student progress include: progress reports, quarterly report cards, parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, and the high school website. Most parents agree that the school communicates effectively with parents. Through communication of expectations to students and parents, teachers hold students accountable for their learning, and parents/guardians are aware of student progress and opportunities for their child's success. (observations, self-study, student work, teachers)

District-wide professional development opportunities are limited. Some professional development activities have been geared towards improving assessment strategies; the Regional Education Business Alliance offered one sequence of training. In addition, The Skillful Teacher, Parts 1 and 2 workshops, offered by Research for Better Teaching, provided faculty members with opportunities to examine assessment practices. However, only 10% of teachers participated in these workshops, no follow-up activities took place, and teachers were not provided with the opportunity to share this learning with their colleagues. Where teachers have been able to choose an area of focus for one-day and half day workshops that are developed by colleagues, many of these offerings have involved assessment. External, district-wide professional development opportunities are sporadic, and the practice for distributing these opportunities is not equitable. Frequently, expenditures allotted for external professional development activities are spent early in the school year. Professional development activities are not continuous or presented in depth, but most teachers agree that the professional development programs available to the faculty have

helped to develop assessment strategies. The faculty has limited time to collaborate or share ideas about curriculum and assessment strategies as department meetings are used for this purpose, but there is no time provided to develop curriculum and assessment strategies across the curriculum. It is necessary to continue to focus school-wide efforts on providing both formal and informal professional development in the area of assessment to ensure the use of a wide range of assessment strategies in all classes. As a result, faculty members would learn and utilize a variety of assessment strategies that would evaluate different learning styles and provide pertinent feedback to students that would increase student learning. (panel presentation, school committee, teachers)

The administration and faculty of South Hadley High School has developed a set of rubrics to assess the progress of students in achieving the school's stated academic expectations. However, these rubrics are not currently being used so assessment reports cannot be communicated to the public. Assessments results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction. (self- study, panel discussion, teachers)

Currently, although the school and community often publicly recognize student success, the administration and faculty do not use assessment data to determine student success in meeting the stated civic and social expectations, so a report cannot be communicated to the public. Data for a comprehensive discipline report is collected by the vice-principal each month, and some of this information is used for a state report. The principal and vice-principal informally discuss and refer to this data. The intention is to analyze the data to improve school conditions, but currently this practice is not being implemented. The advisory program promotes civic and social expectations, and many co-curricular clubs deal with civic and social expectations, and the success of these students' achievements are communicated through displays, newsletters, and community newspapers. The school is in the process of establishing rubrics for assessment of the school-wide learning expectations dealing with civic and social expectations. The plan is to begin to use civic/social assessment rubrics during the 2005-06 school years to provide a means for monitoring students' successes and needs (self-study, teachers, vice-principal)

Commendations

1. MCAS test scores are reviewed and lead to specific plans to develop strategies to improve curriculum and student learning
2. The use of a wide variety of classroom assessment strategies by the majority of the staff providing students with the ability to choose methods of demonstrating and understanding their knowledge
3. The use of MCAS data to improve instruction
4. The effective communication of student progress from the school to parents

Recommendations

1. Provide more time in the school schedule for teachers to collaborate about student work and assessment strategies
2. Create a universal rubric for civic and social expectations, regularly analyze and report the findings of this assessment tool
3. Develop performance indicators for the civic and social expectations in the mission
4. Expand the advisory program to include an assessment component that evaluates student progress toward achieving the learning expectations over time
5. Expand the use of rubrics and other grading criteria throughout the curriculum
6. Provide professional development on varying assessment techniques
7. Provide more opportunities for students to engage in self-assessment

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
SUPPORT STANDARDS**

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD 1: Leadership and Organization

The manner in which a school provides leadership, organizes itself, makes decisions, and treats its members profoundly affects teaching and learning. Faculty and administration must be clear and reflective about and responsible for the decisions and practices they have implemented in organizing and structuring their programs and in creating a culture that supports learning for all students.

1. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
2. Teachers shall provide leadership essential to the success of school improvement.
3. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and authority to guide the school in its mission and in meeting the school's stated expectations for student learning.
4. The organization and structure of the educational program shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, and be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning as well as current educational research.
6. The schedule shall support the school's mission and expectations for student learning and should be designed to provide the most effective implementation of curriculum and instruction.
7. School leaders shall accord meaningful roles in the decision-making process to students, parents, and members of the staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables him/her to provide sufficient attention to the needs of individual students.
9. The school shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate within and across departments.
10. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
11. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.

12. The climate of the school shall be positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.

13. The professional culture of the school shall be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about student learning and well-being in both formal and informal settings.

Conclusions

The continued growth of education reform at South Hadley High School owes much to the leadership and professional dedication of the principal who provides strong leadership for the school community. His management style is collaborative, relying heavily on building consensus for decision-making. His “open-door” policy encourages teachers, students, and parents to communicate regularly. The administrative team provides a mechanism for the exchange of ideas and the examination of policies. Monthly newsletters as well as quarterly report cards keep parents informed. As a result, the school is well managed, teachers feel listened to, and parents have an opportunity to present concerns or input. The school has a shared common mission that is communicated effectively to all members of the school community. (leadership team, self-study, teachers)

Teacher leadership essential to the success of school improvement is pervasive throughout the school although many faculty members are not financially compensated for their leadership roles. Teachers regularly take on extra-curricular activities as the need arises. Student groups such as the National Honor Society, Peer Leaders, Students Making A Change (S.M.A.C.), and the Gay/Straight Alliance exist specifically to improve the school environment. As a result, South Hadley High School is a safe environment, tolerant of individual differences. Teachers provide workshops for peers during professional development days, and teachers have taken on leadership roles as committee members of collaborative focus groups investigating issues resulting from a needs assessment. (observations, teachers, students)

The school committee and superintendent give the principal autonomy to guide the school in its mission. A process is in place for the principal to initiate new programs. Under the principal’s direction, graduation requirements will increase from 104 to 128 credits over a two-year period, an increase of four courses. In concert with the faculty, this change will assist in meeting the challenging academic expectations as seen in the mission and learning expectations. While budgetary responsibility falls to the school committee, the principal is able to craft a budget that he and the administrative team have endorsed. While the school committee has not provided sufficient funding for many staffing or program expenditures, the principal is able to express his vision and priorities in the budget process. As a result, the principal’s vision and autonomy have built credibility with the faculty for his leadership and attempts to improve the educational program. (self-study, teachers, leadership team)

The organization and structure of the educational program promotes the school’s mission and expectations for student learning in some areas. The administrative team has a positive impact on the promotion of the school’s mission and expectations for student learning through decision-making. One such example is the Freshman Advisory Program. This program clearly

assists freshmen and now sophomores with understanding the expectations for student learning over a two-year period. The program appears to be in financial jeopardy, yet it is integral to the school's meeting its responsibility to students. Failure to continue this program would be viewed as a substantive negative change at the school. Work began in 2002-2003 to write and align South Hadley High School's mathematics and English curricula with the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks as well as with the South Hadley High School Mission and Expectations. However, this work has not been continued within the remaining disciplines. The result is that some departments have curriculum that has been aligned, some are in the process, and others have no written curriculum. This lack of consistency in the overall curriculum as it relates to the mission and expectations prevents the school from moving steadily forward.. (self-study, teacher interviews, teachers)

Student grouping patterns often reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, and are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning, as well as current educational research. The school leadership council has provided an educational environment that allows students to enroll in courses regardless of their individual learning ability. Students are expected to meet the curriculum challenges of higher level courses if they choose to enroll in courses that are not recommended by the school. Additionally, support is provided for students through team teaching of courses where possible, academic tutoring for special education students, after school extra help sessions, and the National Honor Society Tutorial Program. South Hadley High School provides a program that attempts to meet the needs of all students and allows students to make major decisions within that framework. (self-study, student shadowing, teachers)

The schedule consists of a six-period day with a double block rotating through each period over a six day schedule. Although one of the stated intents of the double block is to provide for in-depth instruction, lack of professional development and lack of commitment to the longer block results in inconsistent use of time scheduled for meaningful instruction. Double block periods interrupted by lunch reduce potential effectiveness. The faculty has reviewed a number of alternate schedule models over a two-year period yet has been unable to arrive at consensus. The current schedule provides little time for common planning. The six period day limits both student access to electives, teachers' ability to vary instruction, and causes internal scheduling conflicts within those courses. Consensus needs to be found for either a new schedule model or more productive use of the current schedule to support the mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, observations, teachers)

School leaders often accord meaningful roles in the decision-making process to students, parents, and teachers. Issues directly affecting students such as the daily schedule and student parking are being handled by the principal with input from the school committee, school leadership council, and the student council. Teachers, students, and parents are also included in the hiring process for administrative positions at the high school as search committee members and through informal interviews with finalists. The student advisory committee, as a sub-committee of the student council, meets with the superintendent four to five times during the year to talk about specific concerns. This inclusive approach provides meaningful involvement to the various stakeholders and results in a feeling of shared ownership in the school. (self-study, panel presentation, teachers, parents)

Opportunities for teachers to collaborate within and across departments are limited. Teachers of art, music, technology education, and family and consumer sciences should be linked in a meaningful organizational structure. Teachers are provided with monthly department meetings and two full and two-half day in-service professional days as possible opportunities to collaborate. This time is insufficient for teachers to plan collaborative and/or interdisciplinary units for students in addition to other responsibilities. Consequently, students are rarely given the opportunity for interdisciplinary experiences. (self-study, teacher interviews, teachers)

The climate of South Hadley High School is supportive and respectful of students. Faculty members are directly involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students. Teachers make personal connections with students both formally and informally. Faculty members support a tremendous number of clubs and activities. Faculty and staff members and administrators are all actively engaged in creating a positive learning environment. The student load of each teacher is equitable yet challenging. Student needs are identified and supported through a variety of programs and school personnel. Students embrace this positive climate and environment. There is a sense of pride evident in the displays of work and awards in the building as well as in the demeanor of students. Students feel valued and appreciated for their work and success. (students, teachers, observations)

Student success is recognized through the literary magazine, the school newspaper, local newspapers, annual award ceremonies, sports banquets, and congratulatory letters to students. Student work is frequently displayed in the classrooms and corridors. Student artwork is visible at the school entrance and in art exhibitions. Students are provided positive reinforcement for their success, and they experience pride in the school, one another, and their own accomplishments. Recognizing the accomplishments of some students provides motivation for others to succeed. (observation, teachers, students)

The professional culture of the school is marked by the dedication of the faculty despite financial limitations. Substantive programs have been initiated to improve the school's ability to meet its professed mission statement. Programs like the advisory system for grade nine and ten students as well as the former district curriculum council focused on formal discourse on matters impacting the attainment of the learning expectations. These programs need to become part of the school's permanent offerings rather than sporadic, short-term initiatives that must compete for funding annually. Significant improvements in MCAS scores are in part related to curriculum development and remedial offerings. These efforts assist the creation of a positive culture. The expansion of these efforts in other discipline areas would continue the potential for thoughtful professional dialogue and reflective discourse. A long term commitment to such initiatives would aid in the raising of standards and expectations throughout the school program. (teachers, self-study, leadership team)

Commendations

1. Teacher involvement as advisors in the substantial number of extra-curricular offerings
2. The advisory program for grades nine and ten linking students to the school's mission and expectations
3. The principal's use of a collaborative decision-making process resulting in a sense of active involvement by faculty members and students
4. The public recognition of student success in classrooms, hallway displays, and ceremonies
5. The positive school culture created by the faculty and administration and embraced by the student body

Recommendations

1. Ensure the daily schedule of the school supports student learning and is designed to provide the most effective implementation of curriculum and instruction
2. Provide time for teachers to collaborate within and across departments
3. Provide staff development to maximize the effectiveness of new programs and initiatives
4. Examine the current department head structure to more effectively align the elective curriculum areas
5. Develop, provide resources for, and implement a comprehensive professional development plan

SUPPORT STANDARD 2: School Resources for Learning

The school's student support services include guidance and health services, special education, personal, career, and social counseling, and access to outside referrals along with library/information services. Student learning is dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and to support the school's mission and expectations.

1. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's stated academic expectations for student learning and to participate in the educational program.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve stated civic and social expectations.
3. Each student shall have an adult member of the school community who serves to personalize that student's educational experience.
4. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student support and library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and involved in its implementation, evaluation, and revision.
6. All school resources for learning shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
7. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
8. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communications with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and about identified student needs.
9. The school shall provide and maintain library/information services program and materials that are fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program and are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
10. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to utilize various school and community information resources and technologies.

11. A wide range of materials, technology, and other library/information resources shall be available to students and faculty in a variety of formats and utilized to improve teaching and learning and be reflective of the school's student population.
12. Library/information services shall include, but not be limited to, sufficient certified professional personnel.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
14. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.
15. Student records shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.

Conclusions

The development and implementation of services that provide all students with an equal opportunity to achieve the school's stated academic expectations for student learning is evident at South Hadley High School. By design, the grade nine and ten advisory program increases student awareness of the school's expectations for learning, makes them active partners in the learning process, and provides them with the support to assess their potential to become life-long learners. The Connections Program, a school to work program, and an independent study option offered by the history department, ninth grade MCAS prep class, and an intensive MCAS prep class for tenth graders are other examples of programs that respond to the needs of the students at the school. The implementation of inclusion in academic settings for special education students is limited. Teachers are aware of special education and 504 accommodations and are expected to collaborate with the special education department for the implementation of appropriate accommodations and modifications. Insufficient funding for co-teaching staff members keeps some special education students from full access to the regular education environment. This limits the opportunities for these students and does not allow them an equal opportunity to achieve the school's mission and learning expectations. (teachers, self-study, student presentations, school support staff, facility tour)

There is a wide variety of programs and organizations available that provides students with the opportunity to achieve the stated civic and social expectations. The Diversity Club, Students Making a Change, and the Gay Straight Alliance are aimed at issues of equality and respect. The Oral History Project, Memorial Day and Veterans' Day services and Town History Days allow students an opportunity for community service stressing civic responsibility. These clubs and programs are voluntary, and thus they do not ensure that all students have the opportunity to meet the expectations of the school. The freshmen and sophomore classes participate in a full day of team building at Springfield College designed to help build self-

confidence and cooperation. Students who take advantage of these opportunities are able to fulfill the civic and social expectations of the school. (facilities tour, shadowing, students, teachers)

Most students believe there is at least one adult at South Hadley High School who cares about him or her, but in the higher grades, there is no formal program in place to ensure that every student has an adult assigned to him or her solely for the purpose of personalizing his or her educational experience. The ninth and tenth grade advisory program was created to make students aware of and understand the mission and expectations of their school, and some students see the ninth and tenth grade advisory program as a means for interaction with a teacher mentor and small group discussions. The Connections Program counsels students and supervises individualized work contracts among the student, parent, school, and job or volunteer site. The guidance staff provides individual counseling to students. The school nurse is available to assist students with health concerns, and many students find activity advisors and coaches to be available for individual guidance. This personalized reinforcement of the purpose of the school is an effective way to persuade students to buy into their own education. (panel presentation, self-study, teachers, students)

The support services strive to be consistent with the school's mission and expectations. The guidance staff assists students in planning an appropriate educational program that will lead a student to meet his/her full potential. The special education staff insures that appropriate individual education plans are developed for students with special needs. The library media center provides resources for students to succeed in their academic programs. Student wellness is fostered by the school nurse and by the wellness instructors. The combined efforts of these support services provide opportunities for students to achieve the mission and learning expectations of the school. (support staff, self-study, panel discussion)

The librarian is knowledgeable about the curriculum and is involved in its implementation through her purchases based on faculty requests and her assistance to teachers with classes in the library doing research. The librarian maintains steady contact with department chairs concerning curriculum issues, particularly when ordering library materials and scheduling the library for classes. The support staff, the nurse, the librarian, and guidance and special education staff members, although they are knowledgeable about the curriculum and its implementation, are not directly involved in curriculum evaluation and revision. Provisions should be made to allow the support staff to participate in curriculum evaluation and revision so that they can better assist students in achieving mastery of the learning expectations of the school. (teachers, panel discussions, self-study)

The guidance staff gives a "feedback" questionnaire to students to evaluate the guidance program. It is working on a similar form for the parents. The guidance program is on a five-year cycle of evaluation which is done by the director of guidance and the principal. The special education services are evaluated by the director of special education on a yearly basis and audited by the state. However, although the librarian reviews the collection, a formal, systematic evaluation of the library's role in the improvement of student learning is absent. Periodic formal evaluation of these programs will ensure that the programs continue to meet the needs of the student body. (support staff, principal, self-study)

At South Hadley High School, the nurse, special education teachers, and counselors interact and work cooperatively with administrators to address student academic, social, physical, and emotional needs. The weekly student assistance team made up of these support personnel seeks the assistance of community resources to help address student needs. The student adjustment counselor keeps an updated resource listing of agencies for student referrals. Special education teachers work with agencies such as the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and New England Business for transition planning. The guidance staff invites area college representatives to meet with students and assist in financial aid nights. The Connections school to career program has established a wealth of business and community liaisons for student internships. Student learning is enhanced by the cooperation between school and community resources. (support staff, self-study, student panel)

There is an adequate system for effective and ongoing communications with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel. Parents may request weekly progress reports. Parents and/or teachers may use telephone conversations or person to person meetings to discuss student progress. Each student with an individual education plan (IEP) has an assigned liaison, a special education staff member, who regularly maintains contact between the regular teachers and the special education department. This person monitors student progress, maintains contact with parents or guardians, writes quarterly reports and conducts an annual review of the student's individual education plan. For communication of general information, the guidance department includes information in the school newspaper, newsletter, and website. Additionally, there is an automated call system. Teachers need to utilize the e-mail accounts that have been made available to them for better communication. Although teachers have telephones, they don't have voicemail. Traditional methods of communication are available, but the use of newer technology would greatly enhance and simplify communications, especially with parents. (support staff, parents, self-study)

The school provides and maintains a library/information services program and materials that are integrated into the school's curriculum and instruction program and are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The library at South Hadley High School was newly constructed during the recent renovations and currently houses a wide variety of print and non-print materials as well as an up-to-date computer center with Internet access. While the collection is adequate, there has been a severe decline in funding since the renovation. Less than 200 titles have been purchased in the past three years, and this falls short of the Massachusetts School Library Media Association (MSLMA) standard. The standard is an annual expenditure of 5% of the high school's non-salary budget. The materials in the library are purchased based on teacher requests, department suggestions, and curriculum needs that are communicated to the librarian. Teachers use the library facility often for both print and Internet research, but the librarian's limited involvement in curriculum development and limited funding do not assure the continued availability of that integrated materials. Funding must be provided for the continuous updating of the collection to meet the learning expectations of students and curriculum changes. (teachers, librarian, support personnel)

The library/information program fosters independent inquiry and enables students to utilize various school and community information resources and technologies. The library is a

member of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System and has direct access to interlibrary loans. All computers in the library have Internet access. As a result, students can utilize computers and print material for independent research. (students, teachers, observations)

There is a range of materials, technology, and library/information resources available to students and faculty members in a variety of formats. During the 2001-2002 building addition, moneys totaling \$80,000 were used to upgrade library books and materials. An additional \$25,000 was used to upgrade library technology to include 23 new computers. Teachers utilize these materials to improve teaching and learning, and the materials are reflective of the school's student population. There is also a journalism room and yearbook office off the library that are utilized daily by the journalism teacher. However, the system needs a long-range plan for maintenance and replacement of technology. (teachers, students, evidence box)

The library is staffed by one full-time certified librarian. The library is currently covered by a member of the teaching staff one block a day and is closed during first lunch. Student aids are provided through the Connections career program. Students have no scheduled study halls so for many, their only library access is during lunch or before and after school. The librarian arrives early and stays until 3:00 PM most days, but this is voluntary. The staffing at South Hadley High School falls short of the MSLMA Standards. The standard for a school of this size is two paraprofessionals to allow the library to be adequately staffed during the entire day and after school. Lack of staffing makes it difficult for the librarian to perform tasks such as weeding, evaluating, purchasing, and cataloging materials. (teachers, support staff, evidence box)

Students, faculty members, and support staff have regular and frequent access to the library/information services facilities and program as an integral part of the education experience before, during, and after the school day. The library is set up and often used as a supplementary site for classes. Teachers from a number of subject areas use the library regularly. The library computers are in constant use by students and faculty members. The entire library collection is available throughout the school as well as at home via Masscat on the Internet. An "Acceptable Use" policy for the computer and the Internet has been developed for the school system and is disseminated to students through the student handbook. Access is limited during lunches, but it is made available before and after school as the librarian volunteers to arrive early and stay until 3:00 PM most days. Continuous coverage in the library would be beneficial to all students. (teachers, students, self-study)

An annual student, faculty, and parent survey is administered and used to make changes and also to produce a long-range library plan. The book collection is evaluated statistically via circulation records each year, and unused materials are removed; requested materials are added as budgets allow. There is also a form for challenged library materials available for parents in the student handbook. Students and their parents must also sign an acceptable use contract in order for the student to have access to the school computers. Penalties for unacceptable use are clearly stated. (library personnel, self-study, evidence box)

Student records are maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law. Records are kept in locked cabinets in a room that is accessible to staff

only. All Massachusetts regulations governing student records are followed and after many years, these records are archived at the New England Archive. Those records that are accessed through SASI, the school's computerized student information system, are doubly secure. Also, records in the main office are kept in secure locations with specific policies in place regarding who may have access. Student health records are kept confidential, locked in the nurse's office and access to the records is in accordance with Massachusetts State Regulations. Information is discretely shared with teachers as needed and requested. Students and parents are assured that student information remains confidential and secure. However, there are no security measures in place to guarantee student and teacher privacy and security of data when using network resources (self-study, support staff, observations, teachers)

Commendations

1. Numerous opportunities exist for students to be involved in a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities
2. The ninth and tenth grade advisory program creates a supportive and caring atmosphere which fosters close relationships between staff and students
3. The library/information services program
4. The cooperation between school resources and community resources
5. The use of the library as a supplementary site for classes

Recommendations

1. Ensure adequate and continuous funding for the advisory program as well as other initiatives that meet the school's mission
2. Expand the advisory program to include the entire school
3. Include the support personnel in curriculum evaluation and revision
4. Implement a process by which the library is available and adequately supervised for the entire school day and before and after school
5. Expand the library collection to meet changing student and curricular needs
6. Institute a network security plan

SUPPORT STANDARD 3: Community Resources for Learning

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

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

Conclusion

South Hadley High School provides a variety of opportunities for parents and students to become engaged as partners in students' education and to participate in school programs. Two ninth grade orientations are held for parents and students, one in the spring of eighth grade and one prior to the start of school in the fall. An open house is held for parents early in the fall to meet teachers. A monthly newsletter, which includes a schedule of events, is mailed to each family and is posted on the school web site. An automated phone messaging system is used to alert all families of important information and events. A parent information series provides parents with discussions concerning current teenage issues. A special education support group meets monthly and acts as a forum for speakers. Progress reports and report cards are issued each quarter. Weekly progress reports are available for special education students and for other students through guidance. Annual arts night, concerts, and drama performances are widely attended by parents. The guidance department invites parents to a meeting to participate in a student's selection of courses and also meets with parents during a student's junior and senior year to discuss post-secondary education planning and financial aid. Parents serve on the school council, support the music program through the South Hadley Music Parents Association, and support the sports program through the Booster Association. Although some parents avail themselves of these opportunities to be involved in the school, there is a frustration that more parents are not involved. Therefore it is important that the staff continues to explore strategies that will help parents to become more connected with the school community. (parents, self-study, teachers)

South Hadley High School has fostered a number of productive partnerships with business/community/higher education. A school-to-career program at the school called Connections enables students to explore careers both at the school and in the community. During the course of the year, about one hundred students work at jobs within the school while thirty to forty students do job shadowing in the community. The school has been an active member of the Regional Business and Education Alliance for the Pioneer Valley (REBA) and the Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC). Both of these programs provide a variety of programs and resources that support teachers in improving student learning. Research for Better Teaching (RBT) is another organization that the school has contracted with to provide training in skillful teaching practices through professional development. An agreement with the University of Massachusetts allows teachers to pursue advanced degrees and professional development through the UMASS Integrated Day Program that meets in South Hadley schools. A partnership with Mount Holyoke College allows a small group of exceptional students the opportunity to take classes free of charge while still in high school. Articulation agreements with Springfield Technical Community College and Holyoke Community College allow students completing Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) to receive college credit. The numerous area colleges provide the school with a steady supply of student teachers. All of these partnerships provide experiences and resources that enhance and support student learning. (self-study, teachers, observations)

South Hadley High School recently completed a renovation and construction project that significantly enlarged and updated the facility. Newly constructed spaces include two general classrooms, a family and consumer science area, a student activity room, a library/media center,

an administrative office suite, bathrooms, a television studio, a child care center, a band room, a nurse's suite, and numerous storage areas. Also addressed was an enlargement and restructuring of the parking areas in front of the school. This allows for an uninterrupted bus loop in front of the school as well as for separate parking lots for staff and students. Areas receiving a complete renovation include all classrooms, two additional science labs, two computer labs, the guidance suite, private conference rooms, faculty work area, auditorium, and music program spaces. Other spaces that were upgraded include the hallways, graphics facilities, woodworking shop, cafeteria, gymnasium, training and fitness areas, locker rooms, and coaches' offices. In addition, the athletic fields were also upgraded. This massive project has provided the school and the community at large with facilities and spaces adequate and appropriate for the implementation of the educational program. (self-study, teachers, observations)

Students, parents, and teachers indicate that they believe that the school facility is safe and a good place for students to learn. The school plant and equipment are currently being maintained, but there is no formal long-range plan for repairs and replacement of equipment. Health and safety issues are communicated to the head custodian or principal and are addressed immediately. Routine maintenance and repair issues are reported to the head custodian through a written maintenance request, and he responds to them as quickly as possible as he is the only custodian in the building during the school day. Repairs beyond the scope of his training are referred to private contractors as the school district does not employ maintenance personnel. The head custodian is also responsible for managing staff, purchasing supplies, and creating the schedule for routine building cleaning. The actual cleaning of the facility is accomplished after school hours under the supervision of one of the cleaning crew. There is some on-going concern over the effectiveness of this system of cleaning. A formal, long-range plan for the maintenance and repair of equipment plus a plan that assures more reliable cleanliness of the building are necessary to ensure that these issues continue to be addressed in the future. (self-study, teachers, facility tour)

The recent renovation and additions to South Hadley High School clearly indicate that there has been a plan for capital improvements to the facility. However, there is no evidence of ongoing planning to address future capital improvements, programs, staffing, facility, or technology needs. The strategic plan that has guided the efforts of the school over the past few years has been focused solely on addressing the expectations of The New England Association of Schools and Colleges. There is no long-range technology plan in place that prioritizes needs and therefore there is no line item in the budget for technology and no guarantee of continued maintenance and replacement of equipment. (self-study, teachers, leadership team)

South Hadley High School is in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws as well as with local fire, health, and safety regulations, thus ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for all students. (self-study, custodian, observation)

The newly renovated facilities with updated technology and equipment have provided the students at South Hadley High School with a positive learning environment. There is a pervasive perception among parents, students, and staff members that the present funding levels are inadequate. This is evidenced by the reduction of the school budget in 2004. Additionally, school personnel were cut due to budget constraints. Strategies need to be developed by the

school community to provide adequate annual funding for schools to ensure that all students are given an opportunity to succeed in accomplishing the learning expectations of the school. (survey, self-study, teachers)

The budget development process at South Hadley High School begins in November with departmental meetings to solicit staff input. Department chairpersons are responsible for producing individual budgets based on staff input, and they then submit these budgets to the principal for inclusion in the building-based budget. The principal compiles all the department budgets and all the general facility budgets into an overall high school budget that he submits to the superintendent. The principal then shares an overview of the budget with the entire staff to keep them involved and informed. Once the budget is finalized, the principal then shares those numbers with the department heads who are then responsible for ordering materials. Specific learning needs are another factor in shaping the budget. Funding for MCAS preparation and remediation courses has resulted in response to low MCAS scores. A commitment to upper level and advanced placement classes has resulted in the funding of these courses despite low enrollments. This process of responding to departmental and program needs ensures that needed instruction materials and staff are annually reviewed and identified. (teachers, principal, panel)

South Hadley High School has the necessary equipment to meet instructional and facility needs at this time, in large part, due to technology and equipment upgrades included in the recent renovation project. The computer systems, departmental equipment, and school furnishings are in generally good condition because most of them are recent purchases. Department specific equipment is purchased, inventoried, and maintained by each department. It is the responsibility of the office administrative staff to monitor the school's copiers, fax machines, and other office equipment. These are maintained by service agreements with local providers. The district computer coordinator is responsible for all of the school's computers and peripherals. When equipment and facilities are adequate, the chances of student success are enhanced. (staff, teachers, principal)

The South Hadley School District has procedure and policy manuals that are located in the high school principal's office. The contents of these manuals are shaped by decisions of the school committee. Faculty members and staff are provided with a faculty handbook that contains high school specific policies and practices that reflect those of the district. The faculty handbook is updated annually to ensure that all policy directives are current. Updates are made as the school committee approves revisions to the handbook or generates new policies. Faculty and staff members are required to sign a statement each year indicating that the updates have been received. Students are issued student handbooks at the beginning of each academic year. The student handbook outlines expectations, opportunities, and responsibilities of being a student in the school. Both students and parents are required to sign a statement each year indicating that they received and read the student handbook. When all members of the school community know and follow the rules and accept their responsibilities, the school environment is more supportive to student learning. (Self-study, teachers, principal)

South Hadley High School and its governing body, the school committee, share a complimentary mission statement. As a result, the policies and decisions of the school committee are generally in alignment with the school's mission and expectations for student

learning. The school committee is supportive of the recently created advisory program and the MCAS preparation program. There is, however, no long-range plan for maintenance and repair of the building and equipment, no long-range plan for implementing the mission and expectations for student learning, and no long-range technology replacement plan. Long-range planning provides members of the school community with a map of what is to come and when initiatives will be implemented. (teachers, leadership, self-study)

Commendations

1. A significantly renovated facility provides an environment that is supportive of the school's curriculum and programs
2. The many partnerships that support student learning
3. The commitment of the community to pursue and follow through with facility improvement
4. A budget process that actively involves building administrators and faculty

Recommendations

1. Create and implement a long-range maintenance and capital improvement plan
2. Create and implement a long-range technology plan that provides for future purchase, maintenance, and repair of technology
3. Investigate and implement strategies that will increase parent involvement

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

The Commission urges the school officials to establish a formal follow-up program at once to review and implement all findings of the self-assessment and valid recommendations

identified in the visiting committee 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-assessment. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and report requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by the Commission staff following the on-site visit.

In closing, the members of the South Hadley High School Visiting Team wish to express their appreciation to the entire school staff, students, and community for the hospitality that was extended to the team during its visit to the school. The team found all members of the school community to be receptive to the process and open in their comments on the strengths and needs of the school. All recognized the process as valuable to the continued growth and improvement of South Hadley High School.

ROSTER OF TEAM MEMBERS

Evaluator	School
Robert Fitzgerald	New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Bedford, MA
Jane Obshatkin	Methuen High School Methuen, MA
Paul Acheson	Lewis S Millis High School Burlington CT
Anne Adams	Lunenburg High School Lunenburg, MA
Julie Bisbano	Portsmouth High School Portsmouth RI
Donald Brown	Rocky Hill High School Rocky Hill, CT
Judith Burr	Coventry High School Coventry CT
Barry Cahill	Ipswich High School Ipswich, MA
Mary Contino	Northbridge High School Whitinsville, MA
Georgia Grubb	Stafford High School Stafford CT
Donna Harlan, Ed.D	Oxford Public Schools Oxford, MA
Dean Healey	Narragansett High School Narragansett, RI
Karen Knapik	Uxbridge Public Schools Uxbridge, MA
Frank Morrill	Millbury High School Millbury, MA
Alice Shilling	Woodland High School Beacon Falls, CT

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has a negative impact on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of a substantive change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact of the change on the quality of education in the school. Examples of substantive change areas include the following:

- available programs, including fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance
- level of funding
- school day and/or school year
- administrative structure, including the number of administrators and supervisors
- number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- number of support staff
- student services
- educational media services and personnel
- student enrollment
- grades served by the school
- the student population that causes program or staffing modification(s); e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency