

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS



REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Weston High School

Weston, Massachusetts

October 16 - October 19, 2011

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

- Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

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

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

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Weston High School, a committee of 7 members, including the assistant principal and the principal, supervised all aspects

of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. The self-study of Weston High School extended over a period of eleven school months from May 2010 to September 2011.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

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

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 48 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- 16 hours of additional classroom observations
- numerous informal observations in and around the school

- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

This report of the visiting committee's findings will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Secondary Schools that will make a decision on the accreditation of Weston High School.

Overview of Findings

Weston High School is a vibrant learning community that provides an excellent education for its students. It is evident that Weston High School is an academically high performing school environment where higher order thinking and a commitment to high expectations are the norm, but what sets this school apart is the apparent commitment to a personalized learning experience for every student and the structures put in place to ensure that all students needs are met. There is an impressive amount of time during the school day for teachers to work with students and collaborate with one another. There are targeted summer and school year programs to ensure that all students have access and opportunities to high level classes and there are multiple extra-curricular clubs and organizations that give students a place to find their passion.

During the four-day visit, the visiting team met with groups of students, parents, and administrators both at the school and central office level. They observed over 50 hours of instruction and visited the majority of classrooms in the building. They examined hundreds of school artifacts including curricular documents, student work, school handbooks, and the school's self study which was well written and included a multitude of evidence, much of which was used in the report which follows.

Teaching and Learning at Weston High School

Weston High School's core values and beliefs about learning were developed through a collaborative process with all stakeholders participating. The core values of engagement, integrity, resilience and responsibility are certainly reflected in the day-to-day life of the school. The next step for Weston High School will be to use these core values and school-wide learning expectations in a more purposeful way to drive curriculum, instruction and assessment as well as daily decision-making. The school community, including students, parents and faculty, must be able to identify the connections between these school-wide beliefs and their daily activities in order to ensure that all students are meeting these 21st century learning expectations. In addition, school-wide rubrics to measure these expectations must be developed and used by all faculty members to document student progress in meeting these goals.

Weston High School has rich curricular offerings that engage students in inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking. The design of the curriculum allows students to practice and achieve the school-wide learning expectations. Teachers have been afforded time during the school day and professional development sessions, including summer workshops, to develop and refine this curriculum; however, presently, there is not a standard curriculum format for all courses nor a central location where these documents are stored. This lack of uniformity makes it difficult to ascertain whether the taught curriculum is aligned with the written curriculum and whether the taught curriculum is ensuring guaranteed and viable outcomes for all

students. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment and supplies are all sufficient to fully implement the curriculum including opportunities for co-curricular work to support learning in the classroom.

Teachers at Weston High School continuously examine their teaching practices to ensure that they are providing a personalized learning environment for all students. Class sizes are small enough to provide support for all students and teachers differentiate their instruction where appropriate. Professional discourse is seen as a vital part of improving instructional practice and teachers often examine current research in order to improve their teaching. Teachers are reflective learners and maintain expertise in their content areas. Integrating the analysis of common assessment data will further improve instructional practices.

Students at Weston High School are regularly assessed to provide information about whether they are achieving the learning goals for each course. Teachers use a combination of formative and summative assessments and provide timely feedback for students. Teachers and administrators also examine a range of evidence including student work, standardized assessments and common course assessments in some courses to for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. There is currently no system in place, however, to measure student achievement of the school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Weston High School has started to develop school-wide rubrics for this purpose and moving forward, additional rubrics will need to be added and a system must be developed to measure and report all students' progress on meeting these school-wide expectations.

Support for Teaching and Learning at Weston High School

The school culture at Weston High School is safe, positive, respectful and supportive and fosters student responsibility. The school is inclusive and provides equal opportunities for all students. The daily schedule gives students and teachers time to collaborate and work together and the student load and class size enables teachers to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers, students and parents are afforded meaningful decision making roles and the principal is given sufficient autonomy to lead the school. Although there are numerous supports for students in the school, Weston High School does not yet have a formal ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's learning expectations. Establishment of such a program will ensure that all students have an opportunity to meet the school's 21st century expectations for learning.

Weston High School has a large variety of school resources to support students within the school. Numerous programs have been established to assist students with special

needs, health services are available for students on a consistent basis, and the school has counseling services to assist students in academic planning and the college search. The only aspect lacking in student support is a program to service students identified as high risk with social or emotional needs. Funding for this type of program has recently been cut and there is evidence that many students are struggling as a result. In terms of supplies, equipment and technology to support student learning, teachers and students at Weston High School are provided with an ample supply of technology and other resources as to implement the curriculum.

All this would not be possible, however, without the high levels of funding for the school from the Weston Community and the commitment on the part of the town and school district to ensure that students have what they need to be successful. The town recently approved sufficient funding to cover cost of constructing a 20,000 square foot science wing to give students updated facilities and alleviate physical plant impact on program delivery. The physical plant is well maintained and repairs are done in a timely manner. Building administrators are involved in the development of the yearly budget and have the opportunity to advocate for those personnel and supplies they need to support student success. The school should continue its efforts to expand outreach and communication to all families, specifically those who are less connected with the school.

Students and staff members at Weston High School consistently exhibit the core values of engagement, responsibility, integrity and resilience in their behavior towards one another and in their commitment to their endeavors inside and outside of the classroom. They have a strong understanding of the school identity - the school's uniqueness - reflected through the definition of the core values and learning expectations. Students are given opportunities to personalize the learning process by making decisions that drive their educational experience. Teachers are experts in their content areas and provide a high quality education for students. Moving forward, Weston High School will need to establish consistent practices of assessing students in relationship to their achievement of the school's 21st century expectations for learning. Consistency in these assessment practices will not take away from teacher autonomy, but instead, it will strengthen the school's overall mission of living its core values and achieving its stated outcomes for all students.

School and Community Summary

Weston High School, located in Weston, Massachusetts, serves the town of Weston in Middlesex County. Located 12 miles west of Boston and adjacent to the major commuter arteries of Routes 128 and 9 and the Massachusetts Turnpike, Weston is bordered by the towns of Natick, Lincoln, Wayland, and Wellesley, and the city of Waltham. Spread over 17 square miles, Weston is primarily a residential community, with some retail business in the town's center and Biogen Idec, a Fortune 500 manufacturer and marketer of biological medical treatment products, at the intersection of Route 20 and Route 128.

Boston-oriented suburbanization has proven a major factor in the town's development. With a population of 11,475 according to the 2010 census, residents are proud of the town's school system and the attractive homes in quiet, well-kept neighborhoods. Weston has carefully retained significant amounts of open space and maintains over 60 square miles of hiking and horseback riding trails, playgrounds, ball fields, golf courses and cross-country skiing areas.

Weston's form of government involves a board of selectmen, a town manager, an open town meeting, and a school committee with five elected voting members who oversee the schools. In addition, non-voting members of the school committee include a student representative and a METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity) representative who provide key insight into the discussions throughout the year.

In FY '09, median household income in Weston was \$197,587. In 2010, the unemployment rate for Weston residents was 4.9% for a labor force of 5,481. In 2010, 3.5% of the Weston Public Schools student population lived below the federal low-income level and qualified for the free or reduced-cost lunch program, with 3.6% of Weston High School students qualifying.

Weston High School reported a fall 2010 population of 748; Weston Middle School reported an enrollment of 576 students for the same period. The town has three elementary schools: Field, Country, and Woodland. Field enrolls grades 4 and 5 and reported a fall 2010 enrollment of 363. Country and Woodland both enroll grades Pre-kindergarten through grade 3 and reported a combined enrollment of 678 for the same period. There are four private schools in Weston: The Cambridge School of Weston, The Gifford School, The Rivers School, and The Meadowbrook School. Approximately 18% of school-age Weston residents attended non-public schools in FY '09 and FY '10 (535 and 524, respectively).

The Weston Public School district is ranked among the top school districts in Massachusetts in terms of per pupil expenditures, and reported a FY '09 expenditure of

\$18,023 per pupil compared to a state average expenditure of \$13,006 per pupil. Of Weston Public Schools' FY '11 budget, state aid equates to 7.4%, with the remainder funded through local property tax revenue. Weston received an additional \$3 million in state and federal grants in FY '11. Among Weston Public School students, 37 paid nonresident tuition fees ranging from \$25 for children of staff members to over \$18,000 for students enrolled in a life skills special education program and foreign students enrolled through the I-20 process.

Since the early 1960s, Weston Public Schools has participated in the METCO grant program funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. METCO is a voluntary program intended to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity, and reduce racial isolation, by permitting students in certain cities to attend public schools in other communities that have agreed to participate. While some districts have reduced their commitment to this program, Weston actually increased its kindergarten intake in FY '11. Weston's METCO student population rose from 167 in FY '10 to 174 in FY '11. In FY '11, Massachusetts awarded Weston Public Schools a grant of \$790,798, based on FY '09 METCO enrollment, a per student contribution of \$4,793.

Weston High School includes students in grades 9-12, with a total enrollment of 748 students, divided between 378 males and 370 females. The racial/ethnic composition of students in Weston High School for 2010-2011 was 75.4% White, 12.2% Asian, 5.7% African American, 3.7% Hispanic, 2.3% Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic, and approximately 1% Native American. These figures compare to the following state averages: 69.1% White, 5.3% Asian, 8.2% African American, 14.8% Hispanic, 0.3% Native American, 2.2% Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander. During the 2010-11 academic year, 60 students come from homes where English is not the primary language. The average dropout rate for the past two years has been .05%; the average daily student attendance, 97.5%; and the average attendance rate among teachers, excluding maternity leaves, 97%.

In the fall of 2010, the school had 67.2 FTE classroom teachers, 5 special education teachers, 15 tutors, 1 RN/school nurse, 4 full-time and 2 part-time guidance counselors, a 0.5 occupational therapist, a 0.2 physical therapist, and a part-time psychologist. Weston High School has 1 librarian and 10 school aides and paraprofessionals. Full-time teachers in core disciplines teach four classes that meet five times in the eight-day rotation. In the course of a year, all full-time teachers teach the equivalent of twenty out of forty blocks per cycle. In the five core academic areas, the average class size is 19 students. The administrative team includes the principal, 1 assistant principal, 1 athletic director, 1 student activities director, and 9 department heads and directors.

Students attend school for 180 days and for a minimum of 990 hours. Weston High School students are required to complete 120 credits to graduate. Most freshmen

are enrolled in five academic courses: English, mathematics, history, science, and a foreign language. Many core courses are at three levels: college preparatory, honors, or advanced placement. In 2010 - 2011, the AP courses enrollment was 442, the honors courses enrollment was 797, and the college preparatory courses enrollment was 2,808. All students are required to take four years of English and three years of social studies, including two foreign history courses and one U.S. history course. All students must take three mathematics courses, including the successful completion of Algebra II. Students must take three years of science, including biology and either chemistry or physics. All students must take two years of a single foreign language, unless waived for a specific learning disability. All students must take four physical education courses and three health courses. All students must take six credits of visual/performing art courses. Most Weston High School students exceed these minimum requirements. A growing number of Weston High School students partner with Weston High School faculty members for independent study. Students are required to apply for approval to engage in independent study. At the end of the school year, students present and defend their work to a faculty panel for academic credit.

In addition to academics, Weston High School students have extensive opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. The schedule includes an activities block during most school weeks, during which students are engaged in a wide range of community service and general interest activities. After school, students continue in some of the activities that are part of the school day, as well as in athletics and drama. After school, approximately 70% of students are involved in either sports or another extra-curricular activity. During the 2009-2010 school year, 340 students participated in athletics in the fall, 253 students participated in the winter, and 361 students participated in the spring. Approximately 15% of Weston High School students are involved in dramatic productions during the school year.

In the class of 2010, 95.4% of graduates attended four-year colleges, 0.6% enrolled in two-year colleges, 1.7% enrolled in college prep studies, and 2.3% entered the workforce or pursued other opportunities. Graduates choose from a wide variety of colleges, many of them quite selective, such as Colgate, MIT, and Syracuse.

Children with a wide range of disabilities, including mild, moderate, and severe special needs, receive special education services in all Weston schools. Numerous programs are offered to students in special education, including co-teaching by learning specialists, small group instruction, tutorial support, and related services, such as occupational, physical, and speech/language therapy. Learning specialists assist classroom teachers in implementing students' individual education plans (IEPs) within regular classrooms. IEP teams composed of students, parents, and professionals work diligently to develop and implement programs created to respond to the students' special needs and to facilitate their success in school. This 2010-11 academic year, 105 students are served by the special education program at Weston High School. Both

Weston High School and Weston Middle School have implemented the GOAL program (Getting Ready for Academics and Life), a partially self-contained classroom that serves students with intellectual disabilities. The Weston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (Weston PAC) provides additional support by sponsoring speakers, parent networking, library resources, and related activities.

Students with disabilities that impede their ability to access education at Weston High School may qualify for a 504 plan, which allows them accommodations, generally in the classroom routines, and improves access to their education. A team of administrators, guidance counselors, and faculty members review requests for new plans while assessing current plans for possible changes.

Children with intense special needs have been successfully included in Weston's kindergarten through twelfth grade classrooms. An integrated preschool program facilitates developmental skills in preschool children with severe disabilities, as mandated by special education legislation. At Weston High School, the GOAL program, initiated in the fall of 2008, currently serves eight students, two of whom are from out-of-district. Weston makes this program available to students from surrounding communities through a pre-set tuition. Some GOAL students spend most of the school day learning in the GOAL classroom, while others may be integrated in some core classes. All GOAL students are enrolled in elective classes.

Weston High School also offers the services of a regular education learning center to help rectify inequities in student achievement. The Enrichment Center (TEC) is a tutoring center that welcomes walk-ins but also uses a referral process to provide extra support on an ongoing, scheduled basis.

Minuteman Regional High School offers students a vocational or technical education together with a set of regular academic courses. Students from Weston are able to attend Minuteman as an alternative to Weston High School. In addition, Weston High School graduates who do not have immediate college or career plans are able to enroll at Minuteman for post-high school technical training as an extension of their education.

Weston High School has an established internship program in which each senior spends three weeks exploring a specific career in business, education, medicine, science research, and non-profit organizations in the Greater Boston area. In addition, Weston High School partners with local organizations in many different activities, such as food drives, fundraising events for local charities, blood drives, walks for hunger, and performances by music groups at hospitals and for the elderly. Every other year, Weston High School sponsors Career Day, during which students attend seminars and explore possible career choices.

Weston High School benefits from an active parent community. Parents are involved in supporting the schools through the Weston PTO, Weston Boosters, Weston Educational Enrichment Fund Committee (WEEFC), and associated school committees that bring together administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Parental involvement in changing school policies, promoting school drama productions, and adding educational enrichment opportunities has improved all areas of school life.

Weston High School students have opportunities to take college level courses at local and national institutions. Students have completed such courses at Harvard Extension School and Boston University, as well as through Stanford University's Education Program for Gifted Youth. Weston High School has recently set up a formal partnership program with Regis College, which will allow students to enroll in courses there. Weston High School is also a participant in an academic consortium program. Each fall, the Weston High School history department sponsors a semester-long seminar in partnership with three area schools: Concord Academy, The Middlesex School, and Concord-Carlisle High School. Three seniors from each school are selected on a competitive basis to participate in the course, and responsibility for teaching it rotates among member schools. Weston High School collaborates with area businesses in order to offer students academically enriching experiences. For example, biology students participate in the CityLab program with Boston University Medical School. Also, the science department invites many guest speakers from local businesses and educational institutions, including Cubist Pharmaceuticals, Avant Pharmaceuticals, Genzyme, and Harvard Medical School to enhance student learning.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments during annual awards ceremonies. Awards are bestowed for a variety of accomplishments including academic achievement, athletic involvement, and community service. Each department gives out its awards to acknowledge achievement in particular disciplines. In addition, the superintendent and principal present other awards, such as the Ella McNutt Morse Scholarship and the Dana Carter Award, to students who demonstrate competency, engagement, commitment and accomplishment.

Weston High School

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Core Values

- Engagement
- Integrity
- Resilience
- Responsibility

Weston High School is a community of adults and students who engage in school and beyond, act with integrity, practice resilience, and behave responsibly.

- We are Engaged when
 - o We pursue excellence in all our academic, athletic, and artistic passions
 - o We make meaningful connections with others and balance common goals ahead of individual gain
 - o We think creatively and critically
 - o We embrace curiosity
 - o We are open to the opinions and advice of others
 - o We communicate effectively
- We have Integrity when
 - o We act with good intent and are straightforward in our interactions with others
 - o We practice honesty and academic integrity in all our work
 - o We embrace diversity, upholding the dignity of those who learn, think, live, and look different from us
 - o We treat others, their property, ourselves and our school, with respect
 - o We are honest about our own strengths and weaknesses
 - o We consider the impact of our actions on our community, our country, other nations, and our planet
- We practice Resilience when
 - o We set goals and persist in working toward them
 - o We problem-solve
 - o We understand that mistakes are part of learning and that failure can lead to strength
 - o We dare to step outside our comfort zone
 - o We learn new skills and challenge ourselves
- We are Responsible when
 - o We are patient with others and willing to forgive
 - o We own our choices and their consequences
 - o We contribute more than we receive
 - o We are mindful of others' needs and the benefits of compromise

Weston High School 21st Century Learning Expectations

21st Century Skill	Definition (s); What it is and what it looks like
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	<p>Makes complex choices/interpretations/evaluations by using analysis, reasoning, questioning and/or reflective thinking.</p> <p>Incorporates original, creative ideas and thinks beyond what is obvious when analyzing or solving complex concepts and problems.</p>
Initiative, Resiliency & Personal Responsibility	<p>Manages time and workload.</p> <p>Takes personal responsibility for one's education, knowing ones own interests but also being open to new ideas and information.</p> <p>Accepts challenges, asks questions, tries new approaches, risks failing, shows resiliency.</p>
Collaboration, Leadership and Community Engagement	<p>Works effectively with a group by keeping an open mind, listening, delegating and/or taking personal responsibility.</p> <p>Collaboratively pursues academic, athletic and artistic passions.</p> <p>Build consensus through groups cooperation, sharing of ideas and opinions and acceptance of differences and strengths.</p> <p>Demonstrates leadership skills by modeling positive behaviors.</p>
Effective Oral and Written Communication	<p>Is clear, concise, and complete in all forms of communications</p> <p>Demonstrates awareness that style, tone and presentation all convey meaning.</p> <p>Engages a variety of audiences</p>
Global Awareness	<p>Sees oneself within a global context by multiple means, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying how and why individual actions may have an impact on a community, country, other nations, and the planet • Studying one or more languages • Connecting classroom material to a global context. • Considering ideas that are different form one's own • Making meaningful connections with others • Balancing common and individual goals
Effective and Appropriate Use of Media and Technology	<p>Uses technology while maintaining academic integrity.</p> <p>Assesses the reliability and accuracy of sources</p> <p>Uses technology to foster collaborative learning</p> <p>Uses a variety of technological resources to advance learning</p>

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS**

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

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

**ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT
LEARNING**

1 Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

Conclusions

The Weston High School community engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. The core values, beliefs, and learning expectations grew out of group discussion among the faculty, examination of the former mission statement and the study of educational research, such as Tony Wagner's *The Global Achievement* and The Flippen Group's *Capturing Kids' Hearts*. The Weston School District promoted a focus on 21st century learning expectations through a district-wide in-service program in January 2009 while the high school simultaneously engaged in the process of creating its core values. Tony Wagner, author of *The Global Achievement Gap*, spoke to district teachers who then broke into groups and brainstormed ways that his insights could lead to defined expectations for students in relation to 21st century skills. This initial effort informed all subsequent work that the high school undertook in relation to 21st century learning expectations. The School Council (a group of six administrators, teachers, department heads, parents and students) formed a five-member subcommittee that was charged to develop the school's core values and learning beliefs. The process to establish these documents began in the fall of 2008 and was completed in the spring of 2010. The subcommittee met several times in 2008/2009 to draft and revise the core values and beliefs about learning and regularly brought its latest ideas to the full school council for discussion and feedback. The core values were presented to other groups including the student council, the full faculty at a faculty meeting, and members of the PTO. In the spring of 2010, the school committee approved the Weston High School core values and 21st century learning expectations. The four core values identified and agreed upon are "*Engagement, Integrity, Resilience, and Responsibility.*" These values can easily be identified in the schools' self-study narrative. After receiving school committee approval of the new Weston High School core values document, a summer workshop dedicated to exploring the 21st century learning expectations was held in the summer of 2009. Participants analyzed a variety of current research, including information from Tony Wagner and examples from comparable school districts, ultimately creating the draft version of what would become Weston High School's 21st century learning expectations that clearly address academic, social, and civic competencies. That version was presented to the NEASC steering committee who created a new draft that was then presented to the Weston High School faculty for input. The entire faculty broke into groups to revise, edit, and make suggestions. Based on faculty input, the steering committee refined and condensed the document into a draft presented to the faculty in the spring of 2010. From the last review, one further revision was made, adding the concept of creativity to the first category: Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Problem-Solving. A final version of the 21st century learning expectations was brought before the assembled faculty in the fall of 2010 for final approval by the faculty. The formal and inclusive process for

developing core values, beliefs and learning expectations ensures the creation of values that accurately reflect the school community. (self-study, teachers, students, administration, Standard committee, parents, Principal's Improvement Plan)

Weston High School has identified challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students and is in the process of developing a plan for measuring these expectations through the use of school-wide rubrics. As the Weston High School 21st century learning expectations were in the process of reaching finality, the faculty began addressing the need for school-wide rubrics. While Weston High School had, in the ten years since its last NEASC visit, worked extensively on standardizing assessment within departments and had created benchmark assessment tasks that attempted to unify students' experiences in common courses, only one school-wide rubric had been created and implemented, which is the currently-existing public-speaking rubric. To expand this work on school-wide rubrics, the English department held a summer workshop in 2010 focusing on universal qualities of good writing. The group reviewed models of universal writing rubrics from various school districts, pre-existing models, and its own best practices gathered from grades 6 through 12 English classes. The intent of this process was to create a document whose language was broad enough to incorporate the standards of good writing for different classes and grade levels, both within and beyond the English department. The first draft of the resulting universal writing rubric was presented to the English department in the fall of 2010 for review and revision. A second draft was then formalized, and all grade levels in the English department agreed to pilot its use at some point in the 2010-2011 academic year. Simultaneously, the finalized version was presented to the steering committee and department chairs to elicit initial suggestions for its implementation across the curriculum. During the fall of 2010, a universal rubric assessing creativity was created. The 21st century learning expectations related to creativity were used as the foundation for this rubric. Students in two art classes were shown these expectations, and they were asked to brainstorm descriptors for how a teacher might assess a student in any class in relation to those expectations. These results were shared with a committee of teachers from various departments who worked to revise and polish the rubric prior to presentation to the full faculty for approval and implementation. On December 16, 2010, the universal writing rubric and creativity rubric were presented for the first time to the entire faculty. In addition, the public speaking rubric was re-introduced; subsequently, in the years since its creation, not all new teachers had been made aware of it and its use. Teachers were asked to volunteer to use any and all of these rubrics across all disciplines sometime during the 2010-2011 year. A wide range of teachers participated in the piloting of these rubrics representing faculty from all departments in the school. These teachers were asked to document the outcomes of their assessments, as well as to consider ways that the rubrics should be revised to better meet the needs of different departments. A summer workshop was held in 2011 to assess the results of these rubric trials and to make appropriate revisions. As the work progressed, the Weston High School Curriculum Cabinet (principal, assistant principal, department heads and

department directors) met to discuss revisions to the current Weston High School graduation requirements. This group focused much of its discussion on ways to better reflect the 21st century learning expectations in their graduation requirements, and from those discussions and final decisions about changes, a better understanding of how best to expand their practices to assess these expectations should emerge. Although a number of school-wide rubrics have now been established at Weston High School, the rubrics are used inconsistently throughout the school and are not universally accepted by faculty members. There is limited evidence of their use in classrooms and the school has not yet identified a targeted level of achievement for each school-wide expectation. 81.2% of students report that they are familiar with the school-wide rubrics; however, examination of student work and classroom visitation evidence shows that the use of school-wide rubrics is not yet a routine part of the school's practice. As a result of the inconsistency of the use of school-wide rubrics, the school does not have a formal process to assess whether all students are achieving the 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, observations, self-study, teachers, students, administration)

There is a shared vision of values and expectations among the students and faculty at Weston High School; however, not all members of the school community connect these shared values with the school's official statement of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. When asked about the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, many students, faculty, and school committee members had difficulty articulating them in specific terms or indicating exactly how these values and beliefs about learning impact them on a daily basis. Conversely, in a school-wide survey, 86.1% of students and 94.2% of staff say they are familiar with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. This data is reflected in the daily work at Weston High School where teachers frequently speak of "excellence", "accountability", and "responsibility" in their classrooms. Students know they have to "do their best", and are "being well prepared for the future". Formal interviews with the parents also indicated an authentic understanding of the official core values, beliefs, and learning expectations as part of the culture of Weston High School and 90.1% of parents believe that they are familiar with the school's core values and beliefs. Without prompting, parents were able to express that "the teachers work to engage students in creative ways", "kids are expected to be responsible and self-advocate", and "kids have the opportunity to be global learners." While it is clear that the school community shares values and beliefs about the educational process at Weston High School, promoting the language of core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations will ensure that all students connect these ideas to stated commitments and goals. (Endicott Survey, teacher interviews, student interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing, evidence folders)

Weston High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and

assessment and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The values are commonly represented in academics, in the arts, in athletics, and in community involvement. The student handbook, program of studies, and school website display the core values and learning expectations and allow students to be responsible for part of their educational experience. Creativity and problem solving was observed in many classrooms. Across disciplines, Weston teachers engage their students in complex tasks that require critical and creative solutions. When not in class, students are expected to show initiative, resilience, and personal responsibility during their free periods or "*frees*" to which they are commonly referred. Also, students must be responsible for their time and learning when a teacher is absent, as Weston does not rely on substitute teachers. Weston maintains the "First Wednesday" tradition that engages kids during a school-wide assembly the first Wednesday of every month. At the assembly, the principal recognizes students who are nominated for the "Caught Doing Good" award, which recognizes students who show responsibility, resilience, integrity, and engagement. Weston also runs a senior internship program where all seniors complete a three-week professional internship at the end of senior year. Seniors are responsible for securing their own internship and must display resilience and integrity while on the job. Weston High School has a thriving enrichment center (TEC) which provides consistent support for students needing help with organization and study skills and enabling them to be fully engaged in their classes, particularly focusing on students who may need additional support but do not qualify for SPED services. Weston High School demonstrates responsibility for its students with severe special needs through its GOAL program (Getting Ready for Academics and Life). The program allows special needs students to engage in the community and the curriculum and to remain integral members of the WHS community. (self-study, classroom observations, evidence folders, student shadowing, panel presentation, teacher, student interviews)

The student/parent handbook clearly defines expectations for academic and social integrity and for student responsibility. Effective and appropriate use of media technology was observed in various classrooms and throughout the building through the use of electronic white boards, projectors, document cameras, laptops, iPads, computer labs and various other specialized technologies. The school has just begun an iPad pilot initiative that will enable teachers to use a set of iPads for a defined unit of study. Also, students are able to access and use their own technology in the school. Most teachers regularly use web resources such as Google Docs, HomeworkNow.com, and Teacherweb.com. Teachers use the online service Naviance to write and send recommendations to colleges while students use the system to begin the college application process. Weston accurately identifies as a school that values global education and awareness by sponsoring a Global Education Program, which provides students with extensive travel/study options to China, Brazil, Uganda, Eastern Europe, and France. Mandarin has been added to

the foreign language department's offerings and the English and social studies departments offer an interdisciplinary World Studies course. In addition, faculty may apply to the Schoen Travel Scholarship, which provides an opportunity for summer travel related to work in the classroom. Both the Video Production and Creative Cooking programs at the school clearly and effectively utilize the four core values of Engagement, Integrity, Resilience, and Responsibility by offering student real world application of skills and content. The school community honors academic and artistic initiative and resilience through the drama program, which fosters original student written theatrical productions. Collaboration, leadership and community engagement is fostered through US Government course's community service requirement. Weston High School has established a culture that clearly reflects its stated core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, classroom observations, evidence folders, student shadowing, panel presentation, teacher, student interviews)

Weston High School has made some specific changes to its curriculum, instruction and assessment in response to its commitment to the new core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Newly adopted universal rubrics for writing, speech, and creativity reflect the school's value of effective oral and written communication. The foreign language department developed a series of common comments to be used as feedback for assignments. Some classrooms displayed social contracts devised and signed by the students that utilize the language of the core values and learning expectations. A new social studies class called "Race, Class and Gender" was developed in response to the core values. The concepts and questions of bias, discrimination, privilege, and choice are considered in this course in order to engage students with the challenging issues relating to race, class, and gender. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment, when tied to the stated core values and expectations, will promote greater student understanding of the learning expectations, accessibility to the curriculum by all students, and lead to greater student achievement. (evidence folders, teachers, classroom observations, program of studies)

Weston High School has made moderate changes or adaptations of school policies, procedures, and decisions resulting from examination of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Most notably, in 2010, Weston adopted an Anti-Bullying Policy that clearly defines the policy in accordance with the school's core values and the Massachusetts anti-bullying law. The policy is imbedded in the student/parent handbook, and both the principal and the assistant principal have spoken to each class about the bullying policy and about appropriate online behavior. In addition, teachers, coaches and parents have all been informed about the new policy and received training where appropriate. Also, to promote equity and integrity, the school has begun a uniform grading scale to which all teachers must adhere. As core values and learning expectations are adopted into school policies, they will hold a more authentic place in the school culture allowing for student and parent understanding of

values and expectations. As a result, students have a better understanding of the expectations on them set forth by the school. (school administration, student/parent handbook, self-study)

The school committee provides adequate resources to support the school's core values, beliefs, and its 21st century learning expectations. Funding is available for PLC (Professional Learning Community) work in the summer and for the development of curriculum such as the new course titled, "Race, Class and Gender." In addition, the school board continues to fund technology initiatives that meet the technology expectation. Sufficient allocation of community resources provides opportunities for faculty to create initiatives around core values and beliefs and helps teachers, students and parents to better understand the school's core values and learning expectations. (school committee interview, administration, self-study, teachers)

A formal process for future review of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations has been proposed to ensure that the core beliefs continue to reflect Weston High School's learning philosophy and culture as they grow as a school and community. The core values will be reviewed prior to future NEASC reports in two and five years. The review process will incorporate committees that are inclusive of parents, faculty, students, and community members to include the School Council, Principal's Advisory Committee, Curriculum Cabinet, and the full faculty, who approved the core values in 2010. Data to be analyzed will include, but not be limited to, a survey of faculty, professional learning community data, the Student Performance and Participation Report, and the School Improvement Plan. Analyzing school data, such as standardized tests and common assessments, will provide evidence of student achievement of 21st century learning expectations. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that a review of the inherent values in the community and how they are imbedded in the curriculum, assessment, and instruction will be ongoing. Teachers frequently and enthusiastically participate in summer PLC's to discuss and revise curriculum. The principal and curriculum cabinet are participating in an ongoing review of curriculum to support the inclusion of core values and 21st century skills. Departments meet twice a month to review the curriculum, make appropriate revisions, and discuss best practices. Furthermore, teachers have the professional trust of adopting curriculum that they believe allow students to meet the standards and piloting it in their classroom. By participating in an ongoing and formal process of revision for the school's core values and beliefs, students are ensured the inclusion of core values and 21st century learning expectations in all aspects of their school experience. (principal, teachers, classroom observations, self-study)

Commendations

1. The thorough and inclusive process for developing core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. The identification of measurable, observable learning expectations that meet the needs of 21st century learners
3. The many authentic illustrations of core values witnessed throughout the building
4. The energy, enthusiasm, and dedication of students, faculty, and staff for their participation in activities that reflect core values and beliefs
5. The consistent support for teacher training and professional development in creating curricula and pedagogical methods to support core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
6. The development of a number of school-wide analytic rubrics for the learning expectations that is practical for wide use by multiple disciplines

Recommendations

1. Develop school-wide rubrics for all 21st century learning expectations so that students' attainment of these expectations can be measured
2. Identify the targeted level of achievement for each academic expectation and ensure that teachers and students are aware of these targets
3. Increase student and faculty awareness of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations and ensure that students and faculty connect their daily activities to achievement of these standards

2

Curriculum

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

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
 - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
 - the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - instructional strategies
 - assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
 - inquiry and problem-solving
 - higher order thinking
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
 - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

Conclusions

The curriculum at Weston High School gives students opportunities to actively practice and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. These learning expectations were formally adopted last year, and although the curriculum was not purposely designed with these skills in mind, it is evident that these skills are an integral part of the taught curriculum. Individual curriculum areas have not assumed responsibility for specific learning expectations and these expectations are not yet documented in the written curriculum. However, in reviewing student work samples, 28 out of 32 samples demonstrated critical thinking and problem solving, and higher order thinking was formally observed in 28 out of 32 classroom visits. The majority of students observed in classrooms were engaged and took personal responsibility for their work. Students also engaged frequently in collaboration and demonstrated effective oral and written communication skills. A variety of technologies such as interactive white boards, iPads, and personal computers were used in classes. Global awareness was present in the foreign language department offerings in French, Spanish, Latin, and Mandarin as well as included in interdisciplinary courses such as 10th grade World Studies, 1800-Present. In addition, students have many opportunities for study in several different countries (Brazil, France, and China). According to the Endicott Survey 73% of staff and 92% of parents feel the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the schools 21st century learning expectations. While it is evident that the taught curriculum is purposely designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve the school's 21st century skills, assigning these expectations to specific curriculum areas and updating the written curriculum to reflect these changes will ensure that these skills continue to be incorporated into the taught curriculum. (classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, student work, teacher interview, department heads)

Weston High School's written curriculum includes a variety of documents and formats that vary among grade levels and content areas. There is no central location for curriculum documents; therefore, it is difficult to assess the quality or consistency of these documents. The last time the entire curriculum was revised and the format was standardized was in 2001-2002, an outcome of the last NEASC accreditation. At that time, the district undertook a Standards-Based Education Initiative and revised all curricular documents using a common format. Each department developed a detailed list of big ideas to be taught in each grade including a standards and benchmarks document for all grades K-12. Since then, individual teachers and departments have made additions and modifications to the curriculum, but that work has not been reflected in the formal written curriculum. Currently, only 45% of the faculty members believe there is a common, written curriculum used in all subject areas. The school's self-study explains, "Due to the high school's asset of having teachers so involved in curricular development and modification, many of the curricular guides established ten years ago by a school-wide initiative, although still reflective of the spirit, essential

questions and general overview of the courses they represent, have not been kept up-to-date with recent curricular changes.” The self-study goes on to explain that, “The changes made, however, are without exception documented either in summer workshop documents, syllabi, course descriptions and other relevant course documents.” Although Weston High School’s official written curriculum does not include many of the changes made over the last several years, there is evidence to suggest that these changes are documented by individual teachers and within departments. The foreign language department has curricular guides stored in binders and on a shared faculty server. The science department and the art department house curriculum documents in a shared network folder. The health and wellness department has recently finished an accurate curricular guide and corresponding syllabus with standards and benchmarks in a format easily available to teachers, parents and administrators. When examined, most departments’ individual curriculum documents do show evidence of essential questions, concepts, content, instructional strategies and skills; however, the written curriculum documents used by departments do not yet show consistent evidence of ownership of the 21st century learning expectations. While a significant effort has been made in the past year to broaden the use of school-wide rubrics, only a few content areas have incorporated these into their curriculum documents. Individual teachers do give clear expectations of assignments and provide a mixture of assignment rubrics and criteria-lists. Eighty percent of parents agree that expectations are communicated in their students’ classes. Because of the inconsistency in curriculum format, it is difficult to determine whether all curricula include essential questions, instructional strategies, assessment practices and connection to the school’s 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott Survey, teacher interview, central office personnel, self-study, classroom observation)

Students of Weston High School are routinely challenged to deepen their understanding and solve authentic problems using critical thinking skills. In 28 out of 32 classes observed, students used high-order thinking skills. Ninety one percent of parents surveyed also believe their students are challenged to pursue depth of understanding through 15 AP offerings and numerous honors classes, extensive writing projects, and individual research assignments on topics of student interest such as National History Day projects. A minority of teachers (46%) and limited number of students (53%) see regular cross-disciplinary curriculum connections. Only three out of 32 student work samples showed evidence of cross-curricular connections. Several examples of interdisciplinary learning based on teacher initiatives have emerged including the Harlem Renaissance project connecting art and music, the use of art as a window into the Byzantine Empire in World History, and the Modern World Studies program that strives to integrate curricula from the traditional English 10 and tenth grade world history. In addition, the junior year English, history and health courses have recently aligned around a common theme related to the study of race as a main topic. Student interviews revealed that at times, American Literature courses and US History courses are examining the events and writings of the same time period;

however, it was the student, not the teacher, who identified these common threads. The organization of the English/history department office and the math/science department office is a source of opportunity for developing cross-curricular connections. Strong evidence exists that student inquiry and problem-solving requiring higher order thinking is prevalent in the curriculum which prepares students for challenging academic and career paths. Authentic learning opportunities are prevalent in the classroom and outside the school through project-based learning, service learning, field trips, global outreach trips, and the senior's capstone project, which involves a three-week internship in the community. The guidance department's curriculum includes the exploration of career opportunities, job application, resume writing, and interviewing skills. The DNA Science and Biotechnology course has engaged students in virtual portfolio management of biotech investment. A wide range of technologies are utilized across the curriculum for teaching and learning: personal computers, digital projectors, interactive white boards, and portable computing devices (iPods, Kindle, iPads). Both students and teachers seamlessly utilize computing technology throughout their day to facilitate communication, collect data, and create content. As a result of the inclusion of inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking and authentic learning opportunities in the curriculum, students are enjoying an education rich with deep understanding and application of the knowledge and skills they are learning. (Endicott Survey, self-study, students, classroom visitations)

Because of the lack of a consistent format for documentation of written curriculum, it is difficult to accurately assess the alignment between the written and taught curriculum. This data is consistent with the Endicott Survey, which indicated that only 45% of teachers agree there is a common, formal curricular format that is employed in all subject areas. Seventy one percent of teachers, however, did feel that the written and taught curriculums are aligned. Curriculum documents are universally stored on a shared faculty server. According to the self-study, curricular guides including essential questions, benchmark assessments, key concepts, content and skills exist for almost all courses in the high school; however, these documents are not frequently referred to during the year and do not always reflect recent changes to curricula. There are differences between departments with regard to the documentation and updating of curriculum. In the English department some of the curricular guides are out of date and do not parallel what is taught; however, classes have common syllabi, common learning goals and skills, and common assessments. The English department is currently developing benchmarks and 21st century learning goals for senior English electives. In the math department, benchmark teaching guides and unit guides are available on the server and common assessments are used. In the health and wellness department curricular guides were updated in the past few years, and each course has a current curricular guide and syllabus with clearly delineated standards and benchmarks. In the science department an effort is made to be sure that curriculum is in line with the state frameworks, course syllabi are used to guide curriculum and unit exams are standardized. In the history department some courses

have changed significantly since the curriculum guides were last updated in 2001. In the foreign language department the curriculum documents were last updated eight years ago. Across disciplines, a significant amount of curriculum has been revised, developed and implemented as part of summer professional development and PLCs, however, curriculum guides have not been updated to reflect this. In all departments there are many living documents such as syllabi, course descriptions, and summer curriculum work that provide evidence for taught curriculum. While it is evident that significant time has been devoted to revise, develop, and implement new curriculum, most of the curriculum documents have not been updated to reflect current practices. Updating the written curriculum to match the taught curriculum will provide a framework to which the school can align and personalize the school's 21st century learning expectations and will help students to achieve the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. (self-study, teacher interview, central office personnel, evidence folders)

There are mechanisms and procedures in place at Weston High School to ensure effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. Weston School District has a clearly identified curriculum review cycle, which includes time to develop, review, and evaluate curriculum. The curriculum cabinet which consists of the principal, assistant principal, department heads, and the assistant superintendent meets 10 times per academic year to consider curriculum-related topics including course content, development of new courses, and scheduling issues. The department heads have responsibility for grades 6-12 or K-12; therefore, they are able to clearly articulate curriculum between the elementary, middle, and high schools. The school board approval of funding for curriculum review is based on resources and numbers of students. Presently, there is a seven-year review cycle for major and minor courses, and specific departmental curricula are reviewed each year; however there is not sufficient evidence that the formal written curriculum has been updated at this pace. External reviews of curriculum are also done by outside professionals hired by the district. The district is in the process of revising and developing 6-12 curriculum guides. The health and wellness curriculum has complete K-12 curriculum guides that clearly illustrate coordination and articulation. The assistant superintendent has plans to complete K-12 curriculum guides for all subject areas. Ideas for new curriculum typically come from teachers and are brought to the curriculum cabinet by department heads. Each fall, department heads ask teachers to suggest changes in the program of studies, and these are voted on at the department level. In some cases, new curriculum is developed in response to student or parent requests. For example, several years ago honors classes were added to the English department as a response to input from parents. Development of new curriculum typically takes place during summer professional development. Teachers can propose ideas for summer workshops to their department heads that then vet the ideas with the curriculum cabinet. Once an initial idea is approved, the faculty member(s) submits a proposal to the principal. Then the district

leadership team, comprised of principals and central office administrators, review all proposals and determine priorities based on the needs identified by the principals at each building. As a district, Weston allows for approximately 950 days of summer professional development and in the summer of 2011 more than a dozen curriculum initiatives came from the high school such as revising the freshman health evaluation curriculum and the French AP curriculum. Funding for curriculum development increased 63% from 2008 to 2010. The involvement of teachers in new curriculum initiatives and the resources for summer professional development has resulted in a purposeful curriculum that engages students. There are scheduled meetings to discuss curriculum at the 6-12 level, though the frequency of meetings varies. The English department meets three to four times each year, the science department meets one to two times per year, the history department meets two to four times per year, the art department meets three to four times per year (K-12). In the math department and the foreign language department, communication takes place primarily through the department head. Within the high school there is a significant amount of curricular coordination within departments. In each department, at least two teachers for each course meet once per eight-day cycle during a designated block, to discuss course specific issues such as schedules, assignments, and assessment. During the school year teachers have 30 hours for PLCs, which are used departmentally to revise or evaluate curriculum; however, there is limited collaboration across content areas. According to the Endicott Survey 46% of the teachers surveyed felt that the curriculum emphasizes cross-disciplinary learning and 56% of students surveyed felt that teachers include topics from other areas in their courses. In response to student feedback that race was being discussed in several classes at the same time, a new course "Race, Class and Gender" has been added to the program of studies. The English and history departments offer sophomores the option to take "World Studies", a class that integrates topics and themes covered in English and history classes. Many departments/classes collaborate with the art department; for example, in anatomy and physiology students used the clay studio to create models of the human form and students in Spanish created sculptures as part of the Spanish art unit. While effective coordination exists within departments as a result of strong departmental leadership, additional opportunities for cross-curricular coordination will more effectively enable students to meet the 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, self-study, teacher interview, evidence folders, department heads, central office meeting)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to meet student-learning expectations. Observed and reported class size is small with a median of 20 students, with no core class exceeding 28. The majority of teachers report that they have sufficient materials and supplies for their classrooms. Technology, instructional equipment, and supplies are refreshed regularly. The library/media center has an extensive catalog of current text and electronic resources needed for students to complete critical research. While the majority of learning spaces are more than sufficient for the population, there

are several areas in which classroom space is an issue. Students in the physical education classes may not have equal opportunity to access the curriculum due to limited space in the gymnasium and the weight room. Multiple academic departments described not having conference rooms sufficient to collaborate with colleagues or meet privately with students. In addition, the music department reports that additional small group/individual practice rooms would further benefit ability for individual practice and formative assessment. A new 20,000 ft science wing is currently under construction to address the issues with current labs. The new wing will ensure the most up to date science facilities for students and free up needed class space to accommodate classes currently housed in other areas of the building. In addition, the new wing will house a distance learning technology center where students can go to participate in discussions or classes with instructors and students from different parts of the country or the world. As a result of having sufficient staffing, instructional materials, technology, and supplies, students and teachers are successfully able to achieve the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. (self-study, class observation, teachers, students)

The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. The assistant superintendent tasks the K-12 department chairs (visual and performing arts, wellness, foreign language) and the 6-12 department chair (math, English, science, history/social studies) to perform rigorous evaluations of curriculum on a seven year cycle with the production of a department curriculum guide through discussion and input from all teaching faculty in their department. 80% of the faculty stated that they were involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. Going forward each department will be appointed to participate in a coordinated program review (CPR) over the coming years. External educational consultants will then review the curriculum documents produced by the CPR. The wellness department is the first to complete its comprehensive review and the science department is starting in 2011-2012. Thirty hours of ongoing curriculum development occur annually during professional learning community (PLC) group meeting time during PD release time, and nine hundred hours of Summer Institutes (K-12) with over a dozen courses involved in curriculum development and revision. Teachers teach four out of eight blocks in the rotating schedule, which allows time for collaboration on curriculum development and evaluation of instructional practices. Financial resources have been generously committed to professional development with funding for curriculum initiatives increasing 63% from 2008- 2010. Current funding levels for the Weston summer institutes are more than \$300,000 for K-12. The faculty has used a variety of research based sources to guide their curriculum reflection including Research for Better Teaching (RBT) by Dr. Jon Saphier; presentations by Tony Wager, a leading expert on addressing performance gaps in student populations; and the movie Race to Nowhere addressing the pressure students face to perform academically. Less formally,

department chairs have been asked to lead discussions on book and chapter reviews during summer leadership retreats. Weston High School teachers have numerous opportunities and significant funding sources to engage in curriculum development, evaluation, and revision, which result in developing courses that meet the needs of student's 21st century learning initiatives.

Commendations

1. The evidence of in-depth understanding and application of knowledge in much of the taught curriculum
2. The financial support and time allocated by the district for curriculum development and review during the school year and particularly during summer workshops
3. The purposeful design of the taught curriculum, which engages and provides all students with extensive opportunities to practice and achieve the school's learning expectations
4. The sufficient staffing, instructional materials, technology, and supplies to support student needs
5. The recently revised and well-articulated K-12 health and wellness curriculum
6. The use of professional consultants to assist with the curriculum review and revision process

Recommendations

1. Create a standard curriculum format for all courses that includes units of study (with essential questions, knowledge and skills), instructional strategies, assessment practices (including the use of school-wide and course specific rubrics) and connections to the school's 21st century learning expectations
2. Assign responsibility for 21st century learning expectations to specific curriculum areas
3. Ensure more opportunities for interdisciplinary planning between and among curriculum areas
4. Ensure that common planning time is used effectively for revision and development of the written and taught curriculum
5. Address space issues for physical education classes and ensure there is adequate space for teacher meetings during the school day

3

Instruction

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

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:
 - personalizing instruction
 - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
 - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
 - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
 - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
 - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
 - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
 - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
 - strategically differentiating
 - purposefully organizing group learning activities
 - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
 - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments

- examining student work
 - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
 - examining current research
 - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

Conclusions

Teacher's instructional practices at Weston High School are linked with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Building administrators evaluate teachers routinely and teachers are reflective about their practice and are striving to incorporate the school's core values and beliefs about learning into their classroom instruction. Weston High School's core values of engagement, integrity, resilience, and responsibility as well as the learning expectations were written to reflect the learning expectations and teaching practices that were present in the school before drafting these documents in 2009. According to the Endicott Survey, 68% of faculty report that they have begun to adjust their teaching practice to reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, and 87% of faculty report that they participate in regular professional discourse with their colleagues about instruction. Blending existing, sound teaching practices with faculty-influenced core values, and consistently evaluating 21st century learning expectations has become an ongoing topic of conversation among teachers and administrators. Evidence of strong integration of many of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations was presented during teacher interviews. A more comprehensive evaluation of how consistently these core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are reflected in instructional practice should be integrated into the school's culture. Neither the students nor faculty could fully articulate how Weston High School's teaching practices relates back to its core values; however, integration of these values is evident in classroom teaching. Consequently, there is evidence that instructional practices reflect the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations; however, a more purposeful connection of teaching practices to these goals will strengthen the quality of instruction at Weston High School. (self-study, teachers, Endicott Survey, students)

The instructional practices of teachers at Weston High School support the achievement of 21st century learning expectations in a variety of ways. Teachers personalize instructional practices and allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and proficiency by using kinesthetic, visual, linguistic, logical, and interpersonal learning strategies to engage students. While 79% of teachers reported that they personalize instruction and 87% of parents agreed, only 40% of students feel that their teachers personalize their instruction. Seventy-four percent of students do report, however, that they have a choice of topics for most assignments. In classroom instruction, there is evidence of teachers giving students opportunities to make decisions that drive the learning process. Students are encouraged to visit with teachers during the school day if extra explanation or personalized help is required. Since teachers teach four of eight blocks in the rotating schedule, they have time to meet with students during their planning periods to assist with questions and concerns. In addition, students are allowed to pursue independent study courses in which they have a specific interest. The purpose of these studies is to allow students to engage in work outside of the standard curriculum. Independent studies may include course work at an

accredited high school or college, work experience, creative/academic projects, working as a teaching assistant, or academic research. As a result of allowing students to make choices that personalize the learning process, students have a richer educational experience that is tailored to their individual needs. Students at Weston High School are engaged in some cross-disciplinary learning, exemplified by the correlations between American literature and U.S. history curricula, chemistry and health curricula, and chemistry with art curricula. Limitations on common planning time and the great breadth of material addressed in individual courses make it difficult for teachers to commit fully to interdisciplinary planning. Teachers report that the cross-disciplinary connections are not always overtly stated to the students but the teachers purposefully plan them. Students report that they often collaborate in small groups, which engage them as active and self-directed learners. In classroom observations, the majority of group collaboration among students required the use of higher order thinking skills. Teachers functioned as facilitators within these classrooms, and student groups were given time to direct their own learning. Students in Environmental Science classes are afforded the opportunity to make personal choices regarding which homework activities to complete. In the areas of English, chemistry, and physics, students are given choices based upon interest or ability, such as structuring a final project as a skit, article, or commercial or choosing the detail of complication for a molecular model. In an Honors Geometry class, students worked on a graphing challenge that allowed a variety of approaches and a myriad of correct answers, and in a Spanish class, students worked in groups composing an original skit. In cooking class, students were required to design their own final "Iron Chef" project and create an entire meal, while using a specified ingredient. With regard to authentic tasks, several curricular areas report that although they are in the process of including more of this type of assignment in the curriculum, the degree varies to which every student experiences real-world applications of knowledge. There are examples in several curriculum areas that provide students with authentic tasks. The senior internship program provides opportunities for job shadowing and internships as well as for externships and gives students first-hand experience with the 21st century skills fostered within Weston High School. Within the school, there are other examples of authentic learning tasks such as the video produced by the Advanced Video Production class. With mentorship from Boston's professional filmmaking community, students wrote and produced a film based on the history of The Golden Ball Tavern in Weston during the American Revolution. The GOAL program (Getting Organized in Academics and in Life) is another area that provides its students with a broad range of real world experiences from ordering meals to navigating the Freedom Trail in Boston. In Honors Pre-Calculus, students connect mathematics to the real world by exploring how the variations in a sine wave correlate to FM/AM radio stations and piano tuning. By their very nature, these tasks along with others, such as publishing a school newspaper in journalism class, reach an audience beyond the Weston High School classrooms. Students are frequently asked to reflect on their assessments and daily work in order to making improvements or changes and to critique their own work and that of their peers. Rubrics are used in most disciplines to

encourage students to analyze their understanding of the material. In Latin and Honors Government, students self-reflect, using rubrics on knowledge of concepts and class participation. At the end of a unit, many teachers require students to reflect on their learning and assess the work they did during the assignment. Music students collect music portfolios to help them monitor their own progress through method books and concert repertoire. In the core academic areas, there is not yet a formal collection of evidence to enhance student self-reflection, especially in the area of achieving the school's 21st century skills. As a result, students do not have the opportunity to formally track their achievement over the span of their time at Weston High School for the purposes of self-assessment and reflection with regard to achieving the schools stated 21st century skills. There is strong evidence of technology integration in regards to instruction, notably the use of either computers or SMARTBoard technology in many classrooms. There is an assumption that all students have access to technology for homework assignments and class work. Math teachers make use of document cameras to work simultaneously and model the process of graphing with students. Foreign language classes use a fully integrated language laboratory where students record themselves, listen to podcasts, interact with the teacher, or do project-based work such as using presentation software to create a five-minute presentation on Spanish dictators. Teachers use a variety of websites including MusicTheory.net, Google docs and TeacherWeb.com for classroom instruction. Teachers learn to use these technologies through professional development opportunities or peer assistance. As a result, teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by integrating technology into delivery of instruction and student learning as well as applying their knowledge and skills to authentic tasks in the classroom. (classroom observation, teachers, students, self-study, student work, parents)

Teachers at Weston High School adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student. They use a variety of formative assessments to gauge student learning. Band teachers use SmartMusic software to measure their students' progress with rhythm and pitch accuracy when playing concert repertoire. English teachers give comments on multiple drafts of a paper before it is due. Student response units (clickers) are used to quickly measure understanding, and depending on the response, teachers can move on or review what's been taught. Some English, math, science and health teachers use pretests to measure what students already know and to adjust their teaching accordingly. Math and foreign language teachers use warm-up activities so students can demonstrate how much they understand and to identify which students need further assistance. English teachers stated that their students are held accountable for completing formative assessments and are informed that formative assessments are used for improvement in a content area. Most teachers feel they are giving students feedback in a specific and immediate manner through written and verbal comments during instruction time, one-on-one sessions and on classwork/homework. Because formative assessments are used during instruction time, teachers more effectively

identify students' progress and can adjust their instruction accordingly so that they may meet the learning needs of each student. Weston teachers analyze formative assessments and other information about individual students as a means to devise and employ instructional strategies to specifically help individual students learn concepts and skills. Eighty-seven percent of the faculty feels that they use differentiated instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all students. Method books for band students are supported by SmartMusic software, allowing teachers to identify students who need improvement on playing technique. Students may then replay method book pieces at a slower tempo in order to master the correct pitches and rhythms. The librarian uses Survey Monkey yearly to gather information about students' opinions about the Research and Technology course. In physical education, the students are taught to monitor their heartbeats and exercise at the appropriate level. Foreign language teachers use skits and Total Physical Response, which requires students to activate their brains by moving around the classroom. Teachers are also able to analyze formative assessments while looking at student work in common planning time meetings, department meetings, and Professional Learning Communities. Students at Weston High School are also provided with additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. Most of the parents (79.1%) feel that teachers provide additional support to their children when needed. Handouts listing academic study skills and graphic organizers also provide support. Students in some English classes are given a choice as to how they might present content material, either by filming a commercial, or by writing a newspaper article or short story. As a result of strategically differentiating and adjusting their instructional practices, Weston teachers are able to meet the individual needs of students so that they can reach their academic potential. Weston teachers organize a wide variety of group activities to engage students in in-depth learning and collaboration. Nearly 90% of the student population feel their teachers use group activities in class, and 78% of parents feel teachers engage their child as an active learner. Group activities can range from environmental science classes collecting and analyzing samples from a pond, to band, chorus, and orchestra rehearsing for an upcoming performance. Teachers emphasize and assist with student collaboration, often combining students of different ability levels. Students often prepare notes individually then work in groups to present content material. Foreign language students divide a passage so it can be read, translated, analyzed, and shared with the class. Students become experts in their area, and then teach what they have learned. Evidence of group collaboration abounds in cooking classes, art classes, and theater. Because teachers purposefully organize group-learning activities, students are engaged in a learning environment that teaches them valuable collaborative skills. (Endicott Survey, classroom observations, teachers, self-study, support staff)

Teachers at Weston High School, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices in a variety of ways. Teachers have regular, formal time to review assessment data/results. Professional Learning Communities meet on the first Wednesday of every month to review student work within course level and department,

and across grade levels within a department. Some department meeting time is also dedicated to looking at student work. A strong majority (91.3 %) of the teaching faculty feels that they look at their own student work in order to improve instructional strategies. Some departments and grade levels have begun to give common final exams and formally analyze student work although there is no consistent or uniform protocol. Most teachers use individual assessment data. The analysis of student work using school-wide rubrics is emerging as a standard practice. Because there is formalized time to look at student data/results, teachers are able to improve their instructional practices, both individually and collaboratively which allows them to adjust instructional and assessment strategies for maximum student achievement so that students are provided with the best opportunity to succeed. Teachers often meet individually and collaboratively to examine student achievement data to improve their instructional practices. Many faculty members (72.5%) feel they improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. Most teachers meet with a course partner once in an eight-day cycle and have the opportunity to discuss student work, writing samples, and projects. In addition, high school departments and 6-12 grade levels meet at least once a month. Teachers meet informally across content areas, especially when preparing a cross-curricular project; however, there is no formal structure or agreed on protocol for looking at achievement data across these content areas. As a result of being able to meet regularly, teachers have ample opportunity to examine and discuss student achievement data so that they may improve their instructional practices. A great deal of feedback from students, colleagues, and supervisors is used to improve teachers' instructional practices. While 58.8% of students feel teachers use their ideas and opinions to improve how they teach, only 12.1% of parents feel they have been asked for feedback. Last year, all courses instituted regular course evaluations administered to students. This feedback was collected on Google Docs, analyzed, and presented at department meetings. Also, students are surveyed about their interest in potential new courses. Supervisors give feedback formally through the observation process and informally through ongoing discussions with teachers. Teachers give each other feedback informally through discussion in department offices, more formally during department common planning time, department meetings, and PLCs. Individual teachers solicit feedback from parents informally, usually in conferences about student performance. During those conferences, teachers glean perceptions from parents about the student experience. Teachers often make adjustments in their instruction based on what they learn from parent perceptions. As a result of using feedback from students, colleagues, supervisors, and parents, teachers are able to collaboratively improve their instructional practices so that they can more effectively meet the individual needs of each student. Teachers at Weston High School regularly examine research in order to improve their instructional practices. For example, math teachers have studied queuing theory and necessities for future college calculus success, including how to rephrase math problems for English language learners; they have developed curricular materials in response. Some teachers actively research content for their own creative interests, such as sepia tone by a

photography teacher and enrich their own classrooms with the experiences and knowledge they have garnered. Other teachers conduct research, sometimes publishing the results in professional journals. Department heads have led research endeavors in order to improve instruction. Faculty research has included looking at the usefulness of homework, gender differences in the study of science, and brain research and learning. In addition to research, Weston teachers engage in significant professional discourse focused on instructional practice during common planning time, department meetings, and PLCs. Many teachers also research, facilitate, and attend, or teach summer district workshops. Workshops include topics such as technology training, curriculum development, assessment or looking at student work. Teachers also use and contribute to professional journals in many subject areas. Eighty-seven percent of the faculty feels they improve their instructional practices by engaging in professional discourse. As a result of their pursuit of professional discourse and their examination of current research, the teachers at Weston High School have improved instruction so that students may benefit from cutting-edge content area instructional practices. (self-study, department heads, teachers, school administration, Endicott Survey, student work, Endicott Survey)

Teachers at Weston High School maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices through the myriad of professional development opportunities provided by the school district as well as by individual efforts. A strong majority (91.3%) of the teachers believe that teachers are content area experts, as well as 87.4% of the students, and 84.6% of the parents. Teachers, department chairs, and administrators often send out links to informative articles for the entire staff and faculty to peruse. The high school library regularly shares the table of contents from professional journals with faculty. The school provides time to reflect on professional literature and discourse with colleagues during department common planning time, department meetings, and PLCs. The evaluation process also provides time for ongoing conversations between teachers and supervisors. The school district values professional development for staff and allocates 1.7% of the annual budget to this purpose. The district funds coursework for teachers who apply and has a generous tuition reimbursement program. In addition, the district plans two professional development days within the school year and oversees incentives such as the teacher developed and taught summer workshops. Seventy-eight percent of the teachers have either a Masters or Doctoral degree. As a result of this commitment to maintaining professional expertise, Weston students continue to receive high quality instruction from a highly qualified faculty so that they may benefit from current professional knowledge. (Endicott Survey, teachers, school administration, department heads, self-study)

Commendations

1. The ability to help individual students learn concepts/skills through the analysis of formative assessments and other information

2. The numerous and varied opportunities for Weston High School faculty members to maintain expertise in their content area and in-content specific practices
3. The use of varied technological resources to deliver instruction at Weston High School
4. Teaching practices that reflect Weston High School's core values of Engagement, Integrity, Resilience, and Responsibility as well as the 21st century learning expectations
5. The use of a wide variety of formative assessments to meet the needs of each student
6. The opportunity for students to do course evaluations each year
7. The regular, formal time available to analyze student achievement data
8. The informative, constructive feedback gathered from students, teachers, and supervisors
9. The time available for examination of student achievement data, within departments

Recommendations

1. Examine all instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. Integrate the analysis of common assessment data to improve instructional practices
3. Maximize the use of common planning time as a vehicle for examining student work and student achievement data in order to improve instruction
4. Implement additional ways to ensure that authentic assessment is integrated into every course
5. Increase opportunities throughout the school for students to self-assess and reflect on their work

4

Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
 - student work
 - common course and common grade-level assessments
 - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - standardized assessments
 - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
 - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

Conclusions

Although Weston High School is beginning to develop a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, there is inconsistent implementation of school-wide rubrics while individual rubrics are evident in most classes. In 2010, teachers piloted school-wide rubrics assessing creativity, speech, and written expression. Two more rubrics, critical thinking/problem solving and technology will be introduced and piloted in the 2011-2012 school year. Less than half (45%) of high school faculty understood the formal process used to assess school and individual student progress in achieving learning expectations at the time of the self-study. The school-wide rubrics were designed to be a starting point for teachers to modify teaching practices, provide consistency and allow individual teacher autonomy. There remains a low level of commitment to incorporating school-wide rubrics; however, teachers and students report high use of classroom rubrics within departments and classes. As a result, Weston High School students do not receive consistent expectations or feedback in the form of school-wide rubrics limiting the students' ability to measure and understand their growth in the development of the Weston High School learning expectations. (classroom observations, self-study, Endicott Survey, student shadowing, student work, teachers, students, parents, department heads)

Weston High School has limited communication regarding the progress of achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations for either individual students or the school as a whole. Most students and parents surveyed are unaware of the school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Most parents, however, are satisfied with the level of communication in regard to student progress. Weston High School provides four report cards each year, and four mid-quarter progress reports. The progress reports do not always provide parents or students with grade information, but frequently with comments pertaining to effort and progress. According to the self-study, 85% of parents agreed that Weston High School provided them with a formal report that explained their child's progress in achieving learning expectations. Little to no communication exists specifically in regard to the progress within the 21st century learning expectations. Likewise, the school community regularly receives reports of the schools' and students' progress, but not with any emphasis explicitly indicated toward the 21st century learning expectations. As a result, without communicating regular progress of the development of 21st century learning expectations to students, families, and the school community, it will be challenging for the expectations to become a permanent aspect of Weston High School. (self-study, teachers, parents, Endicott Survey, school committee)

Data is collected, disaggregated, and analyzed by the teachers and administrators at Weston High School in order to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Each department utilizes regular benchmarks and common

assessments and the data generated is examined within some Professional Learning Communities (PLC) during professional release time. In each department, nearly all grade level teams have a common planning time for one academic block during the eight-day schedule rotation. Data collected from both MCAS tests and Educational Records Bureau (ERB) tests are analyzed within the English and math departments to identify achievement gaps. Student work is also examined within the math department on a regular basis. Overall, significant data is analyzed to provide Weston High School teachers with an accurate understanding of inequities in student achievement allowing adjustments to be made in curriculum and instruction in order to address student needs. Weston has a broad set of programs in place to address inequities in student achievement. Students identified through data analysis or referral by a teacher or guidance counselor through the Student Support Team are given many opportunities to access resources that can lead to improved student achievement. The Enrichment Center (TEC) is a tutoring center available to all students. It welcomes walk-ins regularly, but also uses a referral process to provide extra support on an ongoing, scheduled basis. The math department offers an Algebra II Topics course to provide students with a review of prerequisite skills. Special education tutors regularly work with classroom teachers to make accommodations and modifications to various assessments for their population. In order to attend to inequities of opportunity, Summer Academy is offered for incoming 9th grade METCO students in the areas of physics, math, and history, as well as for those who are continuing with honors and AP level courses in science, math, history and English. Weston Public Schools will host the Empowering Multicultural Initiative (EMI) Strategies for Examining and Addressing the Academic Achievement Gap in the summer of 2012, which demonstrates a further commitment to addressing the issue of minority underachievement not only in the high school but also across the district. As a result, students who have not yet reached proficiency are identified and provided support enabling them to access curriculum and instruction that can result in improved achievement. (self-study, department heads, school administration, central office personnel, student work, teachers, evidence folders)

There is a disconnect between the practice of communicating unit-specific learning goals and Weston High Schools' defined 21st century learning expectations. The majority of the individual department curriculum design includes specific learning goals and applicable 21st century learning expectations have been clearly defined by Weston High School. However, teachers at Weston High School do not consistently communicate the specific learning goals of the 21st century learning expectations prior to each unit of study. Individual course and assignment expectations are consistently communicated to students and parents by distributing syllabi at the beginning of the school year and through the presentations at Back-to-School night. Weston High School teachers articulate to students what they are expected to do and know prior to an assignment or unit of study often through the use of assignment specific rubrics or guidelines. A comparable percentage (68% of students and 66% of teachers) feels that

teachers consistently explain to students what will be assessed before each assessment. Students demonstrate an understanding of the expectations of their learning and assessment process for each of their classes; however, teachers do not articulate the school-wide learning expectations. Very few students possessed any knowledge of the school having 21st century learning expectations. When presented with the list of the school's 21st century learning expectations, teachers and students state that the 21st century learning expectations are intuitive and understood for each assessment and for any classroom work, something they "naturally do." As a result, specific expectations for individual courses and assignments provide students with sufficient tools to prepare for their academic achievement; however, without clear expectations communicated regarding the school-wide 21st century learning expectations, students are unable to establish a cognitive context supporting their development of the defined learning skills. (classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, teachers, students, parents, Endicott Survey)

Students at Weston High School are provided with corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments a majority of the time. More than half (67%) of the teachers at Weston High School often use course-specific or department-specific rubrics for their summative assessments, while 92% said they provide rubrics at least some of the time. Many teachers who utilize rubrics for summative assessments incorporate pieces of the school-wide rubrics or add course specific components to the school-wide rubrics. The majority of teachers who use rubrics for assessment provide students with the rubrics prior to assessments. Teachers who do not use rubrics consistently provide clear expectations prior to assessments in the form of directions or checklists. Students demonstrate a clear understanding of expectations of what and how each unit will be assessed. As a result, the majority of Weston students have been consistently provided with clear expectations across all levels and departments, which allow them to achieve greater success because they know how they will be assessed. (classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, student work, teacher interview, teachers, students, parents, department heads, Endicott Survey)

Teachers at Weston High School employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment was consistently demonstrated throughout the majority of classrooms visited (26 out of 32 observed, or 81.25%) in a variety of strategies including verbal check-ins, revision, clicker technology, self-assessed warm-ups and homework checks. Revisions, retakes, and self-assessments are a regular part of many classes within each department. Summative assessments included written quizzes and tests, lab reports, essays, portfolios, online homework quizzes (WebAssign), responding in online forums, performance-based assessments and projects such as videos, PowerPoint presentations, and oral presentations. Both formative and summative assessments demonstrate a variety of higher-order thinking skills including creativity, problem solving, and authentic application of skills observed in 28 out of 32 classrooms, or 87.5%. The math

department employs a retake policy allowing students to retake any test or quiz on which they scored less than 83%. Retakes are encouraged any number of times before the end of the grading period. The English and foreign language departments allow for unlimited revisions to writing assignments until the end of the grading period. As a result, students exhibit their understanding of the curriculum through a wide variety of assessments, ensuring multiple opportunities for student success and mastery of content. (classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, student work, teachers, students, parents, department heads, evidence folders)

Teachers at Weston High School are provided with regular opportunities to collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Within departments, teachers with a common course are provided with a common planning time and use the time to create common assessments, review student work, and make modifications to instruction and future assessments. The math department uses common assessments and tests common courses at the same time. The English and foreign language departments use similar assignments and shared ideas but do not necessarily use a formal common assessment. All departments use time provided in summer workshops, Professional Learning Communities, and professional development days to collaborate on assessment strategies and curricular topics. Many teachers and departments collaborate not only in person, but also through email communication or through shared electronic folders. In the self-study, time was mentioned as a critical need in terms of collaboration both within departments and cross-disciplinary; however, full-time teachers at Weston High School teach four out of the eight blocks in their rotating schedule which seems to provide ample time for individual prep time, common planning time, and individual work with students, as only 50% of their schedule is dedicated to instructional time. As a whole, Weston teachers do not regularly consult school-wide rubrics to analyze their common assessments or their alignment to the core values or 21st century learning expectations. As a result, the teacher collaboration provides a consistent standard for learning among most classes providing students with a consistent learning experience. (self-study, teacher interview, teachers, students, department heads)

Most teachers at Weston High School provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Students report that the specificity and timeliness of feedback varies by teacher. The majority of teachers' corrective feedback is used to improve student work. Seventy-five percent of student work submitted displayed specific corrective feedback and 95% had some indication of corrective feedback. Specifically, in the math department, feedback ensures student improvement on assessments that are initially summative but may become formative with the availability of retakes. Similarly, the English and foreign language departments provide feedback that leads to ensure student improvement with the availability of multiple revisions. The specificity of corrective feedback on most assessments ensures

student understanding of the assessment as well as the grade received. Students report that there are some Weston teachers who provide little to no feedback, and some whose feedback is not given in a specific or timely manner, yet these are in the minority. Most teachers, students, and parents agree that the majority of Weston teachers provide timely and corrective feedback. Parents also indicate that Weston teachers communicate frequently with both parents and students, and all parties are known to “reach out.” This communication comes in a variety of forms, including phone calls, emails, and personal interactions. Also, students frequently email teachers for feedback before or after an assessment is submitted. As a result, the specific, timely, and corrective feedback provided to students allows them the opportunity to improve their work and strengthen their understanding of their performance. (classroom observations, self-study, student work, teacher, students, parents, department heads)

Most departments at Weston High School use formative assessments regularly to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Weston teachers regularly gather information from formative assessments to adapt their instruction during the given class period. As teachers check in with students verbally, visually, or with clicker technology, they frequently make changes or adaptations to the current class period. Teachers also use information from formative assessments to adapt and make changes to future classes or future teaching of the same course. Many teachers use formative assessment to shape the path of the class or to decide what will be formally assessed in a summative form. Math classes engage regularly in “bell ringer” exercises at the beginning of class, which allow the teacher to circulate and check homework while students provide important data that can be used to modify the instructional approach, especially the pacing of the lesson to ensure student understanding and learning. The music department utilizes the software program SmartMusic that provides instrumental students an opportunity to measure individual progress while practicing assigned music. The teachers use these digital recordings as both formative and summative assessments in order to provide specific feedback to individual students who are normally performing in an ensemble setting. Many teachers use formative assessments to allow students to check their own understanding and compare their progress with that of their peers. All full-year courses at Weston High School use a mid-year evaluation to collect feedback from the students regarding their perceptions of the curriculum, instruction, and learning environment for each class. Weston teachers use common planning time on a regular basis to collaborate about student learning and use information from formative assessments to shape common summative assessments and instructional strategies. As a result, the continuous assessment and examination across each department of student understanding informs the instructional practices within the classroom, and improves student learning. (classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, teachers)

Teachers and administrators at Weston High School examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional

practice in individual departments. An earlier district initiative focused on developing protocols for examining student work. Departments have adapted these protocols independently and there no longer remains a unified school-wide protocol or practice of examining student work. Both math and English departments regularly review MCAS results from the middle school along with benchmark assessments in the ninth grade courses to assess student needs prior to tenth grade MCAS testing. The science department PLC evaluates lab reports from students in grades nine through twelve in order to analyze the effectiveness of student writing and the impact that the findings may have on instructional practices within the science classes. As a result, teachers at Weston High School reflect on instructional practices and curriculum design through the process of collecting data from student work, department benchmarks and standardized assessments which leads to improved student achievement. (student work, teacher interview, teachers, department heads, school administration, evidence folders)

Weston High School teachers and administrators do not yet exhibit reflection on the individual or school-wide progress in achieving the schools' 21st century learning expectations. There was little understanding from students, teachers, or parents about how the 21st century learning expectations were being assessed on a regular basis not to mention being reflected upon in order to improve instruction. As a result, individual and collective progression in the development of the schools' specifically defined 21st century learning expectations is not transferring into improved instruction or curriculum revision. (students, teachers, parents, student shadowing, classroom observations, evidence folders)

At this time, grading and reporting practices at Weston High School are not regularly reviewed or revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Students and teachers both have stated that grading policies vary either by the course or teacher. The school committee recognizes the autonomy of the high school and its departments and supports the departmental "team approach" to creating any grading policies or guidelines. Further, the members of the school committee remarked that they were "unaware of any issues" with any grading or reporting practices. On the whole, most students expect to be graded on tests, quizzes, homework, and participation. Other subject-specific grading practices focus on essays, lab reports, or projects. Weston High School possesses a uniform grade scale published in the program of studies. The uniform grade scale was put into effect in the 2010-2011 school year, providing a default number representation for each grade used to eliminate variation between teachers and provide equity. The Curriculum Cabinet, Principal's Advisory Council, and the full faculty addressed the uniformed grade scale. Students and parents agree that each grading policy is clearly defined in a syllabus and discussed at the beginning of the course as well as at Back-to-School Night. The self-study reflects that although the staff believes that each teacher's grading and reporting practices "align quite well" with the school's core values, Weston teachers do not regularly

conduct such review and revision to these practices. Teachers and students have both stated that the ideas of the core values and learning expectations are a “natural” part of the grading and expectations, but there is no formal articulation or alignment with these values and beliefs. The implementation of school-wide rubrics is anticipated to provide more consistency in grading practices. Although the school has made strides toward creating consistent grading practices, there has been limited work in the alignment to core values or 21st century learning expectations. As a result, the grading and reporting practices do not lead to improved student achievement or greater understanding of students’ development of the 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observation, student shadowing, student work, teacher interview, teachers, students, parents, school committee, school administration)

Commendations

1. The accessibility of The Enrichment Center (TEC) to all students at Weston High School to respond to inequities in student achievement
2. The use of course specific rubrics and clear learning expectations in individual courses
3. The demonstration of a wide range of assessment strategies
4. Mid-year evaluations conducted to collect student feedback on courses
5. The consistent use of formative assessment in an effective manner to improve instruction and student learning
6. The regular examination of common assessments and student work within course partners and departments

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a formal process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations based on school-wide rubrics
2. For each learning activity, ensure that teachers clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations that will be assessed
3. Communicate the connection between the 21st century learning expectations and the unit-specific learning goals to all students, teachers, and parents
4. Develop and implement a procedure to communicate individual achievement of the academic expectations for learning to students and their families based on the use of the school-wide rubrics, and communicate the school’s progress in achieving the academic expectations to the community
5. Examine grading practices within the school to ensure consistency and alignment among courses and with the school’s 21st century learning expectations

SUPPORT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

5

School Culture and Leadership

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).
3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
 - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
 - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
 - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
 - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school committee, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
12. The school committee and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

Conclusions

The Weston school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. Parents, teachers and students indicate high expectations for all students are emphasized as the norm. These expectations are reflected in discipline and attendance policies and are found in the student/parent handbook and program of studies. The school administration directly supports a safe and supportive community by creating anti-bullying policies and presentations and recognizing students during monthly all-school assemblies who are "Caught Doing Good." The school focuses efforts on numerous programs and activities that relate to improving school climate such as but not limited to the Black Student Union, Muslim Student Union, Jewish Student Union, Asian Student Union, Latin American Student Union, Gay-Straight Alliance, Best Buddies, Pumpkinfest, Capturing Kids Hearts, Spirit Week, Community Service, Athletic Events, Performing Arts Programs, and the Metco Program. The majority of faculty and students participate in these programs and activities, which demonstrates that students feel a sense of pride and ownership. In 2009-2010 there were at least 1,183 participants in school activities and clubs. Approximately 50% of the student population participates in athletics during the school year. In addition students reveal that much is expected of them in terms of learning, goal setting, behavior, respect for others, and participation in school and community. Although the majority of the WHS community indicates that there is a safe and supportive climate, some students and teachers are concerned about high level of academic stress and pressure. The faculty recognizes this and offers multiple opportunities for students to receive support. Due to the safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture where shared ownership, pride, and high expectations are the norm, the students of WHS are more effectively prepared to successfully meet the core values and learning expectations. (self-study, school administration, department heads, teachers, students, parents, student shadowing, classroom observations, Endicott Survey, facility tour, panel presentation)

Weston High School is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously-grouped core course. All 9th grade students are required to take the same English course, which is heterogeneously grouped and differentiated within the course. After freshman English, students are able to take classes at the honors and AP levels. Additionally, students experience heterogeneous groupings in the two years of required foreign language. During senior year social studies courses, the majority of students experience heterogeneous grouping in Government or Social Science. If a student is not recommended for a level, parents are able to override a course request. The levels offered are college prep, honors, and advanced placement. The option for students to take heterogeneous courses as well as to access honors and Advanced Placement options in most subject areas provides challenging learning experiences

enabling students to achieve the school's learning expectations. (self-study, program of studies, department heads, school administration)

The Weston school community does not have a formal ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. WHS has several initiatives and structures, in addition to regular contact with a guidance counselor, for students to receive counseling and guidance, but none of these efforts is targeted toward every student. Students indicate the ability to relate to a WHS staff member or coach on an informal basis and a health and wellness counselor and a youth counselor are available to students. There is a formal mentoring program for 9th grade students involved in the METCO program during which a mentor follows the student throughout high school. Conversations are underway and a committee has been formed at Weston High School to develop a formal school-wide advisory system in order for students to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. Although students describe various sources of support accessible to them in addition to their guidance counselors, without a formal program in place that is designed to involve every student in the school, it is impossible to determine whether each student has the support he or she needs. (self-study, panel presentation, teacher interviews, school administration, Endicott Survey)

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; dedicate formal time to implement professional development; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Faculty meetings are held once a month and department meetings take place twice a month. School leaders promote discussion of student learning and well being by sharing literature on best practices, providing regular opportunities for professional development and time for teachers to meet. Collaboration occurs most often in departments. Subject area teachers meet in grade-level groups once during every eight-day cycle. Teachers also meet with supervisors and the administration for pre and post observation conferences as required in the teacher evaluation and supervision process found in the contract. Teachers also participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which meet for 30 hours of professional development per year. PLCs are designed to create opportunities for sustained work on topics that create positive outcomes in student growth and success. Teachers can also elect to teach or take a Weston Professional Development Academy Course (WPDAC) on Mondays after school. These courses are based on academic and non-academic topics and are designed to foster a sense of community among the staff. Faculty members can also propose topics for summer workshops around curriculum or other professional development topics. Outside of the school, Weston High School teachers participate in the Teachers as Scholars Program, Primary Source Classes,

EDCO Collaborative Classes, and Empowering Multicultural Initiatives (EMI). The district offers tuition reimbursement for faculty to pursue graduate level course work and provides reimbursement for professional conference registration. Teachers routinely engage in conversations about learning expectations, consistent grading standards, and quality of student work, instructional practices, and curriculum revision. As a result of the wide array of professional development offerings, teachers keep current with best practices and apply the skills and ideas gained ensuring improved curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (teachers, school administration, central office personnel, self-study, department heads, classroom observations)

Currently there is a formal evaluation process in place, which includes pre and post observation meetings, and formal and informal class visits. The principal and assistant principal combined evaluate 18 teachers currently at the pre-professional status level. In the first year, the principal and the specific department head meet with the teacher. In year two, the assistant principal and the department head evaluate and in the third year, the principal and the department head evaluate. Additionally, the principal or the assistant principal evaluates thirteen teachers with professional status. Supervisors are making a conscious effort to make the process more discussion based, utilizing ongoing conversations. Walk-throughs are a common component of evaluations. Many teachers welcome their department members as well as others staff members to visit their classrooms, especially during specialized and unique presentations, projects, and assignments. Participation in ongoing professional developed is supported, as well as in PLC's, to enhance their instruction and learning. Meaningful feedback is incorporated into classroom curriculum. Data collected from Professional Learning Community (PLC) work is used by the administration to determine school priorities to best improve student learning. The evaluation process is in transition in order to comply with the new statewide evaluation process currently being developed. Department heads share their enthusiasm regarding continuous movement towards increased communication methods of evaluation. Research-based evaluation and supervision processes are essential in order for Weston High School teachers to focus on improving student learning. (school administrators, self-survey, department heads)

Weston High School's organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. Weston High School's rotating eight block schedule with 80-minute class periods provides for significant time on learning, professional collaboration, and opportunities for students to meet with teachers for extra help. Teachers have a class load of four out of eight blocks and one duty. Most students take classes seven out of eight blocks. The master schedule allows for flexible use of instructional time and the long blocks allow for in-depth exploration of topics. The assistant principal reviews the master schedule annually with input from the guidance department. During the school day, teachers typically have one common block of planning time with their curriculum team once

each eight-day cycle. Teacher schedules include preparation time, during which they have adequate opportunities to meet with students for extra help. Teachers are available after school, from 2:50-3:30, for common planning time and meeting with students. The school has not explored the alternatives to department-based structures in order to address goals of interdisciplinary curriculum design. The schedule supports implementation of effective instructional practices, common planning time, and supports for teachers affording students the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (evidence folders, self-study, school administrators, teachers, department heads, classroom observations)

Class size and student load at Weston High School enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Class size does not typically exceed 24 students in any core academic class, allowing teachers to personalize learning and provide feedback to all students. Additionally, many classes have fewer than twenty students because certain electives and lab courses have lower capacities. The administration has added sections of courses and hired more staff to maintain a commitment to keeping class size reasonable. For example, the current class of 2014 is much larger than previous classes. Staffing adjustments and additions were made to accommodate the increased size of this class without exceeding class-size limits. Concerned about meeting individual student needs, faculty members raised questions about the number of students with IEPs or 504s in a classroom. The administration has responded to this concern by piloting co-teaching programs; some classrooms with a high percentage of IEP students are staffed by regular and special education staff. In addition, teachers have reasonable class sizes and teaching sections enabling them to address the needs of individual students. Normally, teachers teach four classes of the eight blocks; department heads teach two classes. The teaching load allows for time to spend on research, to meet with other department members, and to work with individual students. Tutors are visible in classrooms to support students with IEP's. Reasonable class loads and class sizes enable teachers time to complete research, meet with department members, and work with individual students, ensuring the learning needs of individual students are met. (department heads, teachers, parents, Endicott Survey, school administrators, teacher interview)

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal works closely with his building leadership team and the Curriculum Cabinet. The Curriculum Cabinet consists of department heads and K-12 directors from the English, guidance, history/social studies, math, science, art, music, foreign language, and wellness departments. The principal works with these leaders to create the program of studies, which is reviewed every year. Annually, the principal invites the department heads and directors to assess each course within their discipline and to make recommendations to the principal. New courses may be added, current courses may not run, or some courses may be combined, pending the approval of the principal.

This process is closely linked to the scheduling process, whereby department heads and directors will submit to the principal sectioning requests for each course in their discipline with rationales for consideration. The result may involve hiring an additional faculty or staff member or changing a current teacher's schedule. Finally, both of these processes are tied to the budget process in which the principal allocates money to the departments. He may also add line items to be considered by the superintendent. The principal spends time walking through classrooms and maintaining a presence throughout the building each day. He shows the students that learning is paramount in monthly assemblies where students are recognized for various achievements. The principal cultivates shared leadership, and engages all members of the school community in efforts resulting in improved instructional strategies and student acquisition of 21st century learning expectations. (Self-study, school administrators, department heads, central office personnel, evidence folder)

Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Community opinions are often solicited about school programs and practices. In March 2010, the school council surveyed 615 students about student workloads. The results of the survey were shared with the community and preliminary recommendations were made for ways to address the identified issues. Every five years, with smaller surveys taken annually, Weston administers a Youth Health Risk Behavior Survey to gather data on the behaviors of the student body. As a result of this data, the school has taken several steps to collaborate with the community to help promote healthy behaviors among students. Weston used survey data to obtain a federal health and wellness grant. One result of this grant was the development of a Social Norms Campaign created through school and community collaboration. The Social Norms Campaign emphasizes healthy choices students are making based on survey data. Teachers, parents, and students are involved in making meaningful school decisions through serving on search committees for hiring new administrative staff and faculty members. Five parents, three students, and four teachers serve on the school council, and students serve with faculty as members on the Principal's Advisory Council. Four students, one from each class, comprise the Student Advisory Council. The Curriculum Cabinet, co-chaired by the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and the principal, is made up of all department chairs and directors. The High School Leadership Team consists of the department chairs and directors, as well as the athletic director and the activities director. Each class also has two faculty advisors and parent advisors. Furthermore, the principal focuses all aspects of the school on its core values and on key beliefs about learning, including teachers who work collaboratively, students who are highly invested in learning, and parents who feel engaged as partners. Students are able to submit ideas to the principal for consideration. The Endicott Survey reveals that 62.3% of staff members feel they are meaningfully involved in decision making to promote an atmosphere of responsibility and ownership; 47.4% of students reveal they have input in important decisions made at the school; and 76.9% of parents have opportunities to be involved in important

decisions made at the school. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making resulting in the promotion of responsibility and ownership. Shared leadership is cultivated, engaging all members of the school community in efforts ensuring the improvement of teaching and learning. (self-study, teacher interviews, Endicott Survey, department heads, parents)

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. In 2008-2009, a Faculty Based Initiatives (FBI) group was created to address identified needs seen in the school. The committee created a 9th Grade Parent Handbook to help with student/parent transitions from middle school. During the February Black History Month assembly in 2010, METCO students spoke to the student body about their feelings of inclusion and exclusion in the Weston community. In response, conversations about diversity were continued in the classroom, and a faculty diversity work group was created. Faculty members have organized to lead the school in creating "green" practices through reducing energy and resource usage. Teachers serve as the faculty advisors for the 53 student clubs at Weston High School. In addition, teachers serve on a variety of committees; for example, the new science facility committee, the technology committee, the communication committee, the global education committee, and the professional development committee. Teachers can also write grant (over \$1000) and mini-grant (under \$1000) proposals to the Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee (WEEFC) for enrichment projects, which increase students' engagement in learning. In previous years, faculty proposals represented the majority of summer workshops; however, this number declined significantly and was replaced by district-led workshops in summer 2010. As a result of the leadership demonstrated by teachers there are connections and relationships with students that clearly contribute to a positive school climate fostering the ability for Weston High School to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teachers, school administrators, students, parents)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school board and superintendent allow the principal to make school-based decisions pertaining to many areas, including hiring, evaluating, and disciplinary decisions for students. The principal oversees the curriculum and approves proposed changes to the program of studies. The principal proposes the school budget, which is reviewed and revised in collaboration with the superintendent and then presented to the school committee. All of these responsibilities allow the principal to express a vision for the school and support proposed changes to achieve this vision. Moreover, the school board and superintendent fully support the principal and his decisions through their collaborative and constructive approach. According to the Endicott Survey, 69.5% of the staff agrees that the school committee, superintendent, and principal collaborate in the process of achieving learning expectations. The principal and assistant

superintendent meet regularly to discuss issues and concerns that, when necessary, are brought to the attention of the superintendent. It was reported that there is often stronger support for requested needs if the superintendent has appropriate information ahead of time. The positive, working relationship fosters a collaborative, reflective, and constructive approach in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott Survey, teachers, school administrators)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal is given autonomy to make decisions regarding teaching and learning. He has several groups that he seeks council from including the Parent Advisory Council, the Student Advisory Council, and the Curriculum Cabinet. The principal is asked to contribute suggestions when the school committee reviews its policies. Through the budget process, the principal is able to make decisions to lead the school in achieving identified goals. The superintendent always seeks the principal's opinion as issues arise concerning the high school. The principal also attends school committee meetings when relevant issues are discussed. The principal utilizes feedback from various stakeholders to make important decisions for the school and in the best interests of the students creating opportunities for Weston High School to reach its core values and 21st century learning expectations. (central office personnel, school administrators, teachers, department heads)

Commendations

1. The equitable, inclusive and supportive school culture as evidenced by school-wide assemblies and the myriad of activities and athletic offerings for students
2. The number of heterogeneously-grouped classes which foster equity and inclusivity
3. The school schedule that allows teachers time during the school day to collaborate with their colleagues and meet individually with students
4. The collaboration between the subject area teachers to develop curriculum and achieve school goals
5. The manageable class size and student load for each teacher which allows them to meet the learning needs of individual students
6. The productive collaboration between faculty and administrators to achieve school goals
7. The parental, student, and teacher involvement in decision-making processes
8. Collaboration between the school committee, superintendent, and principal to achieve 21st century learning expectations

Recommendations

1. Create a formal on-going program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school guidance counselor, who knows the student

well and assists the student in achieving the schools 21st century learning expectations

2. Provide support for teacher training and professional development in creating interdisciplinary curricula and pedagogical methods to support core values and 21st century learning expectations

6

School Resources for Learning

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - deliver a written, developmental program
 - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
 - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
 - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

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

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

personnel and support staff who:

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

Conclusions

Weston High School's directive interventions strategies support the majority of students' ability to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. A variety of programs are provided to the students to address both academic and life skills. The Enrichment Center (TEC) is designed as a drop in center for any student who needs assistance or students can be referred by staff members. Students within the general education population as well as within the special education population can access this program during the day for academic support, for access to resources not available in other areas of the building, for a quiet place to study, or for assignment completion and a large number of students access this program on a daily basis. The SKILLS program is for those students who are identified with specific learning disabilities and require remedial instruction or accommodations to their general education program. These students receive required services outlined within their IEP in the general education classroom or in a special education setting such as a resource room. Students with more profound to severe cognitive or physical disabilities are enrolled in the GOAL (Getting Organized for Academics) program to receive direct transitional life skills training as part of their transition plan from school to real world application for post high school objectives. Skills taught in GOAL range from basic life and adaptive skills to more specific skills geared toward employment and future life functions. The English Language Learners program consists of two teachers and four tutors who provide services to students throughout the district. The students requiring services through the ELL program are identified through the school registration process as well as by a completion of a state assessment to determine eligibility for ELL services. ELL staff provides a wide range of services to those students whose primary language is not English and require additional supports with the English language to level the field in the general curriculum. ELL staff and guidance determine the level of services each student needs.

One area of need in the school's resources for learning is the support for students identified with social and/or emotional needs. Currently, these supports are not meeting the student demand because of the limited amount of staff available to meet student needs. Currently, a part-time youth counselor or the school nurse attends to students with emotional needs. The youth counselor position is a part time position outsourced by the Human Relations Services (HRS). This position is not a contractual position filled by a faculty or staff member. This counselor works for 20 hours a week meeting with students in need of additional counseling beyond the scope of the guidance counselors' roles and responsibilities. The school psychologist is also a part-time position and is often occupied with educational testing and special education meetings. The health wellness counselor position, previously funded by grant money, has been eliminated due to the grant expiring. This position provided intense counseling to students engaged in high-risk behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse.

This position also served as a primary resource for students identified with social, emotional, or behavioral disabilities. Although most students requiring services to meet individual needs are met through directive intervention strategies, the population of students with social and emotional needs is increasing and needs additional assistance, in order for all students to achieve the school's 21st century expectations. (self-study, panel presentation, teacher interview, teachers, students, parents, department heads, central office personnel, school administrators, school support staff, Endicott Survey)

The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. The families of Weston High School students are well informed about the support services offered at the school. Ways in which parents are notified of such services include, but are not limited to, the Weston High School website and guidance page, a monthly guidance newsletter, a parent list-serve and email. Letters and a copy of a signed student contract are sent home to parents of students receiving a score of "Needs Improvement" on their MCAS test, informing them that their child will be placed on an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). School community survey data shows that families and students feel they have access to information on student support services. A majority of respondents, 78.7%, "know who to ask for help at school if I have a personal problem", and 89.6% were in agreement that the school provides information about available student support services to all families. In addition, the school has grade-specific email list-serves that guidance uses to send reminders of upcoming parent seminars, deadlines, and community events. Special education teachers and tutors communicate with parents through yearly team meetings, quarterly progress reports, a yearly parent forum on students' rights and responsibilities, a yearly mailing of a procedural safeguards brochure, and communication, as necessary, between their regular education teachers and home. A special education communiqué to parents is written twice a year and posted on the school website. The ELL professional communicates directly with parents on individual issues and through quarterly progress reports, mailings, and a yearly parent forum. Information on health issues (including athletic eligibility requirements) is communicated to families through mailings, individual consultation, website postings, and list-serve announcements. The variety of formats with which the student support services communicate their resources to families creates strong relationships between students' families and the school, supporting each student's ability to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, parents, school support staff, school, administrators, Endicott Survey, evidence folders)

Support services staff uses technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. The school maintains and updates a website that the community, parents, teachers, and students can access to receive information about upcoming services/programs, general information, homework assignments, and other resources recommended by the guidance department as well as by the health office. Administrators and guidance counselors access the Rediker software system for the

implementation of schedules, grades, discipline history, attendance, student contact information, transcripts and schedules. The guidance department utilizes the Naviance Succeed software to research learning styles, career exploration and college search and application process. The TEC program has 13 computers that are used regularly by students to complete their work. The library provides a variety of technology for faculty, staff, and students to use either in school or remotely from home. Technology offered through the library ranges from flip video cameras, Kindles, iPads, and document cameras, to audio books and a computer lab. The library also accesses other resources through the Inter-Library Loan to meet the needs of the ELL population. The School Nurse Application Program (SNAP) documents health records and other pertinent information necessary or appropriate for each student's file. ELL staff utilizes email to communicate student needs and concerns to teaching staff, guidance and parents. ELL standard documents are stored on Google Docs. ELL staff can access the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education website for policies and assessments. ELL state assessments results are accessed and downloaded by the DESE and shared with the guidance counselors, principals, and teachers. Special educators use available technology to provide differentiated instruction and services. In addition to the school-wide available technology, the special education department provides identified students with assistance using specific software and equipment such as word processing, Geometer's Sketchpads, and graphic organizers, and other assistive technology necessary for students with an educational disability to access their education in the classroom setting. Websites including TeacherWeb, My.weston.org and westonmath.org are used to help special education students keep track of daily assignments. Ongoing collaboration with the technology department ensures that teachers keep technology up to date and functioning. Due to the wide variety of integrated technologies, the faculty, staff and administration deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student and promote students' achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, self study, student shadowing, facility tour, teacher interview, students, teachers, parents, department heads, central office personnel, school administration, school support staff)

Weston High School's counseling department provides an array of services to meet students' needs. There are five guidance counselors in the guidance department inclusive of the department head position who covers grades 6-12. Four of the counselors have a caseload of approximately 170-175. The department head carries one-half of a caseload to accommodate his other responsibilities. Four counselors are full-time employees who serve the 747 students at Weston High School. Each counselor has a student load spread across four grade levels. The department head oversees the services being provided and reports on those services at administrative levels. One administrative assistant serves the guidance counselors. One school psychologist is available part-time to administer psychological testing for students applying for special education and to provide consultation for other school support personnel regarding individual student concerns. The psychologist's time is shared with an elementary

school in the district. Due to her time restrictions, the majority of her schedule is filled with psychological testing for special education. This requirement precludes her from seeing students for counseling, though her expertise would be ideal in many situations. A youth counselor is available to meet students' counseling needs. The youth counselor spends approximately three days at the high school and an additional half-day at her office at Human Relations Service as she is an employee of HRS and not Weston Public Schools. Currently, she serves as the chief resource for students at-risk and for students identified with an emotional and or a behavioral disability. Due to the lack of personnel available, it is difficult to coordinate a continuum of adequate services beyond the guidance department. Also, due to her part-time partnership with the school, she is not able to meet those needs on a regular basis. The health and wellness counselor is no longer with the school as the grant funds have expired. The health and wellness counselor served as the school's resource for students who engage in high-risk behaviors, struggle with drug/ alcohol abuse, and for counseling services for those identified with emotional or behavioral disabilities. He and his intern carried a caseload of approximately 35 students per year, allowing the youth counselor more time to see students who need ongoing support regularly. The guidance department also has access to local partnerships with mental health and social service agencies outside the school. These include the Human Relations Service (HRS) of Wellesley and the Weston Health and Wellness Project. In addition, for students in crisis or at-risk, counselors make referrals to several agencies, organizations, and programs including the following: McLean Hospital (Emergency Room or day care), HRS and local therapists, and the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Mass Rehab, and Job Corps/ AmeriCorps. Counselors also partner with social service agencies, such as DCFS, court-appointed guardians or personnel, and outside therapists or medical providers, pursuant to a written release from parents. These partnerships with outside local and state services provide students and families with extended services beyond the school. These programs help a student or family in need with services in their communities.

The guidance department also employs a developmental guidance curriculum, which is outlined in the benchmarks for the department and is provided to the parents and students at a parent forum held at the beginning of the year. The junior and senior guidance seminars are scheduled classes and the syllabi are posted on the guidance website. Freshman and sophomore meetings are coordinated with scheduled study halls and career seminar classes. The developmental program is delivered in group meetings with each grade level. Freshmen focus on transition; sophomores on academic/ career planning; juniors on post-graduation planning; seniors on the college application process. Individual meetings are scheduled into each student's time at Weston High School. In these meetings, counselors provide personal, emotional, crisis, academic, career, and college counseling as needed. The guidance counselors also meet with many parents and communicate through email or telephone during the school year to communicate students' needs and concerns. According to the DESE website, the

graduation rate is 96.6%. Weston High School also employs a myriad of surveys to collect important feedback. Seniors these are given the Senior Exit Survey, which collects data on student satisfaction with counseling services, career guidance, and post-secondary planning, and the Student Workload Survey, which gathers information on student stress levels and overall workload. In response to these two surveys, Weston High School has modified guidance curriculum to effectively meet student needs and has worked on helping students and teachers to effectively manage student workload. One additional example is the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which is used to measure the prevalence of risky practices, such as drug and alcohol use, among students.

Weston High School has used the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to modify health curriculum and address current trends among their students. Additionally, Weston High School provides parent surveys that ask for feedback that is used to improve programs. One example is the Social Norms parent survey, which measures parental attitudes and beliefs surrounding alcohol consumption among their children.

Additionally, the school provides parent information sessions for parents of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, and offers workshops on social norms and social host responsibilities. According to the Endicott Survey, 31.3% of the polled student population felt they met with their counselors regularly. When compared across grade level, the percentages increase at the progress through their educational career. Fewer than half, 45.6%, of the parents felt that their child meets with their counselor on a regular basis to discuss personal, academic, career, and college planning. Although the counseling department is able to offer adequate support services to the majority of the population, the population who requires more intense services such as high-risk students and students with social emotional/ behavioral disabilities are unable to access the level of services needed due to the inadequate personnel available to provide these services. The counseling department, however, is able to reach the vast majority of the student population who do not fall within the at-risk cohort. (self-study, teacher interview, department head, school support staff, panel presentation, school administrators, parents, teachers)

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. Weston High School employs one full-time RN who is licensed by the State of Massachusetts Board of Registration of Nursing, holds a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Professional License as a School Nurse, and national certification in her field. The school nurse is available for confidential consultation, emergency treatment, and case management during all hours that school is in session. The high school nurse also serves on the 504, Student Support Team, and Principal's Advisory Committee, Child Protection, Crisis and Restraint Teams, and Weston Health Advisory Council. The nurse also chairs the advisories subgroup of the school's Diversity Committee. The school nurse is available to care for and consult with all faculty and staff. Although there was some concern expressed in the self-study that additional staffing is necessary, the school is within the appropriate nurse-to-student ratio as identified by the US Department of Health and Human

Services/Healthy 2010 Initiative. Interventions include, but are not limited to, first aid, medication administration, chronic health condition management, health education, psycho-social counseling and, in the case of a medical emergency, triage, care, and support until EMS personnel arrive for transport. All assessment and interventions are guided by the MA State Nurse Practice Act, Board of Registration of Nursing (BORN), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and MA Department of Public Health (DPH). In addition, the health suite is an appropriate and effective space for providing preventative and directive intervention services. There is a conference table for small group meetings and a separate area for students needing privacy. The location of the suite is ideal as it is triangulated with the guidance office and the office of the social worker, allowing all three services to work closely together. Weston High School Health Services use appropriate referral processes both internally and externally. Guidance and youth counselors, administrators, teachers, department heads, and special education processes are all used. Referrals may be made to the athletic trainer for a sports-related issue or injury. External referrals are made to the student's primary health care provider, dentist, or mental health specialist. Before an outside referral is made, the school confirms health insurance and, if applicable, stays within the provider network. Additional resources for referral are the Human Relations Service (HRS), local hospitals and clinics, and the Department of Families and Children (DCF). Furthermore, the health services staff assesses itself by using ongoing feedback from families, students, and staff received through attendance at SST, 504, and IEP meetings. The Department of Public Health and the Endicott Survey have conducted formal assessments of the program through a 2006 survey. The health services Professional Learning Community also conducts a Study of Utilization, which identifies students with the highest number of visits to the nurse's office, allowing the nurse to make an intervention plan for those students to increase the amount of time they remain in the classroom. By using relevant data, a strong referral process and both school-based and community services available, Weston High School is able to ensure that each student physical needs are met. (self-study, parents, school support staff, facility tour, students, Endicott Survey)

Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum. The school has one certified librarian and two paraprofessionals who work with faculty to integrate library materials with their curriculum. Faculty members consult with the library staff to coordinate materials ensuring that resources are readily available for student work. The library provides a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum. Furthermore, ongoing communication between the library staff, students, and faculty determine current student interests and needs, both for personal enrichment and for school assignments, and new material is acquired to reach these goals. Students and faculty are surveyed periodically about materials and services in order to make improvements or to maintain current levels of

success. Library staff members maintain regular communication with faculty, making them aware of resources, old and new, that are available for curriculum enrichment, teaching, and research. The library staff coordinates books, e-books, audio books, podcasts, DVD's and inter-library loans for various topics and projects and maintains computers and laptop carts for class and individual use. Strong collaboration with faculty and a wide range of library resources allows the Weston High School librarian to be actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum. The library is a welcoming environment for students and faculty to pursue 21st century learning. It is open for thirty minutes before school begins, throughout the school day, and remains open for forty minutes at the end of the school day. The floor plan is open and well lighted, with a great deal of space provided for group work and a small area for individual work. Due to the large number of students who use their personal laptops in the library, they would benefit from the installation of more electrical outlets in the main table area. The layout of the library, the multitude of resources offered there, and the implemented technologies are highly conducive to meeting the independent learning needs of students. The library has eighteen research computers, twenty-five lab computers, two laptop carts with twenty-five laptops and a printer on each cart, one netbook cart with thirty netbooks and a printer, and an iPad cart with thirty first generation iPads. The library also has six Kindles for student use and three iPads available to teachers. The library staff provides ongoing programs to educate students in the use of technology, including a quarter-long Research & Technology class scheduled for all freshmen, introducing each student to the resources available for research. Faculty members are surveyed each year to assess needs both in terms of materials and the services to students that the library provides, while freshmen in the Research and Technology class are surveyed to evaluate the one-term course. The library's research and technology program ensures that students become informed consumers of media who possess skills in separating truth from myth, are able to access tools for obtaining or sharing information and have varieties of technology to advance their learning. A wide variety of current and implemented technologies accompanied by the instruction to use those technologies supports each student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, student shadowing, facility tour, teachers, school support staff, Endicott Survey)

Weston High School offers a wide variety of services to students identified with educational needs such as ELL services, 504 plans, Student Support Team (SST), and other varied services outlined in a student's IEP. There is, however, a general concern within the special education department regarding the lack of a department head, which makes it difficult for the department to develop, organize, and monitor progress for these students, as there is no representation at Curriculum Cabinet meetings. This concern is expressed on many levels in the school community, as each department head is vital in the representation of his or her department to bring forward concerns as well as to deliver pertinent information discussed at the Curriculum Cabinet meetings. With the lack of a special education department head, the department is not involved in the

curriculum process, and is not available to coordinate services within the department. For those students with educational needs who may not fall under the special education realm, other services are in place to ensure that their needs are being addressed to assist them with meeting the 21st century learning expectations. Students who require accommodations through a 504 plan in order to access the curriculum are identified through an evaluation process. Two general educators, the school psychologist, a guidance counselor, youth counselor, and assistant principal form a team with the parent and student to review information for eligibility. If a student becomes eligible for accommodations under section 504, the team will develop a plan specific to that student and his or her needs. Guidance counselors then oversee the implementation of that plan. The ELL staff consists of two teachers and four tutors who provide services to students throughout the district. The students requiring services through the ELL program are identified through the school registration process in conjunction with the completion of a state assessment to determine eligibility for ELL services. ELL staff provides a wide range of services to those students whose primary language is not English and require additional supports with the English language to level the field in the general curriculum. ELL staff and parent/guidance recommendation and ELL assessments determine the level of services. ELL staff utilizes email to communicate student needs and successes to the teaching staff, guidance, and parents. ELL standard documents are stored on Google Docs. ELL staff can access the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education website for policies and assessments. ELL state assessments results are accessed and downloaded by the DESE and shared with the guidance counselors, principals, and teachers. This information can then be used as a baseline for developing effective programming. The TEC program is designed as a drop-in or referral and is staffed with a certified teacher. Students within the general education population as well as within the special education population can access this program during the day for academic support, for a quiet place to study and to complete assignments, or for resources not available in other areas of the building. The school offers parents and teachers an avenue to bring forward concerns regarding their child/student, but who may not need specific intervention at the moment.

The process used to report student concerns and to review those issues are done so through the Student Support Team (SST). A parent in conjunction with the student's guidance counselor and/or an administrator can complete a request for student support as can the teachers/staff in the school. This request is then submitted to the SST team and reviewed by the team members. Upon determining if a student requires additional support, the team will develop an intervention plan for that student and continue to monitor it weekly for the intervention's effectiveness. If that student continues to struggle, then he or she is referred to other services within the building such as the special education referral process or other services as deemed appropriate for that particular student. The SKILLS program is designed for those students who are identified with specific learning disabilities and require remedial instruction or accommodations to their general education program. These students receive required

services outlined within their IEP in the general education classroom or in a special education setting such as a resource room. Special educators use a combination of formal and informal assessments to determine the effectiveness of the services being delivered. They utilize the data collected to make adjustments to a student's program and determine if that student is making adequate progress towards the goals outlined in the IEP. Students with more profound to severe cognitive or physical disabilities are generally enrolled in the GOAL program to receive direct transitional life skills training as part of their transition plan from school to real world application for post high school objectives. Skills taught are generally basic life and adaptive skills to more specific skills geared toward employment using those particular skill sets. Ongoing assessments of programs to ensure effectiveness of students' programs are indicated by the special education staff who meet with the SST team weekly, with the guidance department weekly, and with the principal and director of student services once every two weeks. As a result of the wide variety of services and programs offered to students identified with specific educational needs, most students have many opportunities to make adequate progress within their education program. Weston High School provides all students with inclusive learning opportunities. Students identified with educational needs receive their instruction in a variety of settings as deemed appropriate and necessary for students to meet their educational goals and the 21st century learning expectations. For this to work effectively, special educators collaborate with general education staff on a daily basis as well as co-teach one class with a general education teacher. Special education teachers meet with administration and the director of student services twice a month to discuss ongoing assessment, deliveries of student programs, and provide the department with necessary information from the administrative level. Special education teachers and the guidance department have a weekly meeting to review concerns regarding students' progress and other services being provided. Through these collaborative sessions special educators work on staff scheduling to ensure their tutors are assisting those students who require additional supports in the general education classroom. Five special education teachers and twelve tutors support that department. Special education teachers feel they have enough staff to support students' needs within the classroom and in their department. Special education teachers, general education teachers and service providers such as the school psychologist, speech language therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist as well as other service providers and administration perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. Students are given the Woodcock Johnson III, WIAT, WISC IV to assess academic and cognitive abilities as part of the special education process. Other specific assessments are conducted depending on the specific concern or need of the student. Both formal and informal assessments are used in the classrooms on a daily basis to determine the effectiveness of delivery and program. Departments meet weekly and review data to determine if any adjustments need to be made to a student's program or to the curriculum in general to meet the needs of all students. The Foundations course

options were developed to ensure students with significant educational needs are able to access their education in the general education setting with assistance from the special education department. With the many avenues to collaborate with other staff and administrators, the special education department is able to make ongoing assessments of program effectiveness and adjust accordingly and quickly to ensure that all students can be successful in meeting the school-wide expectations for learning (self-study, teacher interview, teachers, school administrators, school support staff)

Commendations

1. The wide variety and quantity of current technology in the library and the resources that extend the access to information from the library/media center to home
2. The large, comfortable, well-staffed library space
3. The strong health services program where the school nurse is involved in all student service coordinated efforts
4. The strong relationships between health services and community resources for student referrals
5. The communication between departments and the technology staff to ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of technology and to ensure technology is functioning and current
6. The SKILLS and GOAL programs, which address the needs of special education students
7. The TEC program which services any student in need of additional assistance during the school day
8. The developmental guidance curriculum which gives all students a basis of essential information to achieve success in school

Recommendations

1. Create and implement a program with appropriate staffing to address the needs of students identified as high-risk or with social and/or emotional disabilities.
2. Review current communication avenues to ensure that information regarding all services, especially those most in need, is communicated to families

3. Ensure appropriate leadership for and representation of the special education department in all school-wide conversations
4. Provide additional professional development in the area of technology integration for teachers



Community Resources for Learning

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

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
 - a wide range of school programs and services
 - sufficient professional and support staff
 - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
 - a full range of technology support
 - sufficient equipment
 - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
 - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
 - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
 - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
 - programs and services
 - enrollment changes and staffing needs
 - facility needs
 - technology
 - capital improvements.

4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

Conclusions

The community served by Weston High School and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services which meet the needs of students, provide sufficient professional and support staff as well as on-going professional development and curriculum revision and a range of technology support, sufficient equipment, instructional materials and supplies. While the Endicott Survey responses indicate that only 42% of staff and 38% of parents feel that the school's budget is adequate, staff and administration report that few programs have been eliminated due to budget allocation issues during the last three years. The school district is assisted in maintaining these programs through the assistance of WEEFC (Weston Educational Enrichment Foundation) and the Weston Boosters to fund some of the needs. One outstanding characteristic of the funding level is that there are no fees levied for participation in athletics, activities, and transportation. Six new staff members and tutors have been added to the professional staff during the 2010-2011 school year in order to meet the needs of rising enrollment. However, the TEC program, nursing services, and counseling support for students with emotional have been negatively impacted due to budget allocation decisions. The TEC program staff has been reduced to one staff member, the nursing staff has been reduced to one school nurse, and the health and wellness counselor has been discontinued due to the grant funding support ending. The community and district's commitment to providing dependable funding allows Weston High School to provide the services and programs necessary to support its students' ability to meet its 21st century learning expectations. However, in order to support this goal for all of Weston High School's most needy students, it is critical to the appropriate level of counseling support for students with emotional needs and those with substance abuse challenges. In addition, the continued success of the TEC program will be strongly tied to the availability of sufficient staffing. The faculty and central office staff enthusiastically describe the funding allocated for on-going professional development and curriculum revision. The funding for professional development has remained stable and there has been a 63% increase the budget for curriculum revision over the last three fiscal years. Of particular note is the significant funds set aside for summer professional development work and the professional learning community time deliberately accommodated within the schedule of the high school. All Weston teachers receive a laptop upon their arrival in the district. Expenditures to ensure a robust wireless network and reliable technology infrastructure have provided the staff with the support necessary to ensure that technology can be used to contribute to the educational toolkit of the faculty and staff. A new technical support staff member has been added to the high school, an instructional technology integration specialist is available to assist staff members, and an online trouble reporting system contribute to the success of technology usage within the building. However, there is widespread agreement among the faculty that additional funding is needed for professional development with respect to the use of the new and emerging technologies in the classroom. Implementing new technologies without the necessary

professional development lessens the likelihood of the technology having an impact on teaching and learning. As a result of the dependable funding for school programs and personnel, teachers feel supported and students have the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, administrators, Endicott Survey, central office personnel, support staff, and parents)

Weston High School maintains a high level of cleanliness and upkeep. This is partially attributable to the adequate funding of programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. The pride in the caring for the high school is immediately apparent in discussions with the building custodial staff and the director of facilities. Parents, students, and staff acknowledge the routine cleanliness and focused upkeep of the building. Seventy-two percent of parents and 71% of students report appropriate conditions for learning in the school building. Only 28% of teachers believe the physical plant is not conducive to education. There is clear division of responsibilities for day-to-day cleaning and long-term maintenance of the building. The director of facilities is responsible for purchasing supplies and equipment and creating the budget for the five schools within the district and other town-owned buildings. The head custodian meets informally with the principal regarding the routine maintenance of the building and its facilities. The director of facilities and the principal are responsible for hiring and management of the high school staff. Two full-time custodians work days and six full-time custodians work nights. The director of facilities reports that he does not believe there will be a negative impact on the custodial staff when the new science wing is opened, as it is his assessment that the custodial staff is currently more than adequate for the current size of the building. Therefore, there will be sufficient staffing for the increase in new science wing, which will be finished in the fall of 2012. Two members of the district's maintenance staff oversee the maintenance of the electrical, plumbing, and heating systems. If additional maintenance staff is required for a major project, the director of facilities ensures their availability. Under the director of facilities, two groundskeepers maintain the athletic facilities. They are responsible for the maintenance of the grass and turf fields, track, and tennis courts on the campus. Respect for the efforts made in keeping the building clean and well maintained by the faculty and students help to make the job of the custodians a little easier. An electronic list of work orders is maintained by the school district. Work orders may be written by any member of the faculty or staff at the high school and are assigned priority by the director of facilities in conjunction with the principal and maintenance staff. The orders are given priority by the head custodian and assigned to a specific individual or member of the maintenance staff. The date of the work order and completion date are kept in a log. Department chairs are responsible for informing the director of facilities about any classroom or departmental concerns. Classroom and cafeteria furniture are replaced on an annual basis as part of the principal's budget. The town's director of technology and libraries maintains a separate inventory of all computer equipment. The director's budget has been more than adequate and has been

able to maintain a five-year cyclical schedule for the replacement of desktop computers and laptops. During this year's budget cycle (2010-11) all the core switches were upgraded and/or replaced improving the technology infrastructure district-wide. Continual allocating of funds for the replacement of furniture for classrooms and cafeteria will assist Weston High School in providing a consistent pleasant educational environment for its students. Planning for the updating of technology on a regular basis will ensure that students have access during their time at Weston High School to the generation of technology that they will likely find in college and in the workplace. The maintenance staff reports that items in need of repair are generally attended to in a timely manner; however, this contradicts the Endicott Survey results, which indicate that nearly 40% of staff does not believe repairs are done expediently. In addition, repeated reports indicate that the ambient temperature of classrooms and general areas vary greatly, with some rooms being extremely chilly and others being uncomfortably warm. Ceiling fans have been recently added to some common areas in an effort to increase air circulation. While the self-study report in this area comments about significant issues with air quality, in interviews with staff no additional information about this claim was made available. In addition, the director of facilities regularly calls for tests of air quality in the building and reports that all tests are well within acceptable limits. The clean and comfortable learning environment afforded to the students of Weston High School assists the district in providing its students with the best chance possible for achieving its 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott Survey, custodians, central office, parents, teachers, self-study)

The school implements a comprehensive long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes, staffing needs, facility needs, as well as technology and capital improvements. The district is currently in the third year of the 2009- 2014 long-range plan. The current plan as described by the superintendent's goal report to the school committee for the 2010- 2011 school year calls for a variety of efforts to improve teaching and learning, improve targeted supports for students, improve communications, increase attention to diversity, and continue technology improvements. The superintendent's goal report and the instructions provided by her office report for the upcoming budget cycle indicate that these long-range plans are reviewed annually and modified where necessary. In addition, at the high school level, the principal and department heads report that they review staffing needs and enrollment annually to determine courses to be offered and included in the program of studies. Long range planning provides the district with a road map for the future of its students and increases the likelihood that it will have the resources necessary to provide a 21st century education for its students. It also allows the district to communicate to the community that its expenditures are planned in a thoughtful manner, thus increasing the likelihood of the continued generous funding for education in the community. The district provides funding for numerous and varied programs in an attempt to address a wide range of student needs such as students with IEP's, 504 plans, and the district's METCO students. The superintendent's report indicates that the

district, in comparison to sixteen comparable districts in Massachusetts, ranks second in its per pupil expenditures. During this same time period the expenditures for special education was 13% of its overall school budget, ranking it 15th out of the 16 schools in its self-identified district cohort, despite an increase in Chapter 70 funding from 2006 to 2008. In interviews of school support staff, guidance, and school administration it was highlighted several times that financial support for a high school special education department head as well as for the continuation of an additional staff member for the TEC program had not been allocated. The district also has long-range plans to address the facility and technology needs and improvements and is currently implementing the upgrade of the telephone system in the school district. In addition to the health and wellness services provided by the school budget, the school nurse and the director of physical education and wellness have received federal grants from the Department of Education that are being used to fund the Weston Health and Wellness Project, additional personnel and initiatives for the physical and emotional well-being of the school population. The director of food Services is working with area farms to increase the amount of fresh, local produce available. Appropriate long-range planning, combined with annual reviews of long-range plans, allows a school district to be responsive to the needs of its students. The continued funding of the programs that are part of the long-range plan is critical to the successful implementation of long-range plans. In clearly articulating the long range plans for its students and establishing a formal review process of these plans, the Weston Public Schools supports its efforts for the long-term success of its students (central office personnel, department chairs, self-study, teacher interview, principal)

The principal of Weston High School, the department chairs, and the faculty through their department chairs, are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget each October. The department chairs and the principal report that the budget is built from the ground up each fall, with each department chair bringing forward information from his/her department. Each department chair meets with the principal to advocate for the needs of his/her department. Each faculty member is included in a department that is represented in the budget process with the exception of special education. The principal has the responsibility for proportioning the vast majority of monies designated for teaching and learning at the school. The budget is compiled and submitted to the director of finance and operations for review. After review of the principal's proposal, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and the director of finance and operations submit the proposed budget to the school committee for review. If the budget is reduced, the principal in conjunction with other administrators and department chairs determine how the reductions will be applied. An inclusive budget process ensures that the budget will be based on a consensus of all students' needs in the school. It also assists with achieving support for the decisions that are made in difficult financial times. (facility tour, student shadowing, classroom observations,

teachers, panel presentation, school support staff, school administrators, parents, Endicott Survey)

The school site and plant supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services in most areas. The facility was most recently renovated in 1996-'98, however the school population has increased significantly over the last five years (2005-2010). Currently, some departments experience difficulty in delivering 21st century learning expectations due to the constraints of classroom space. The completion of the 20,000 sq. ft. science wing, providing adequate lab and project space for the science curriculum and the renovation of the current science labs into classroom space will alleviate the over-crowding and will allow for more effective class scheduling. School and system administrators have worked collaboratively with the members of the science and technology departments in planning for the addition of the science wing. In the meantime, the school creatively deals with insufficient classroom space by having teachers share their classrooms four of the eight blocks in an eight-day cycle. Teachers utilize time to collaborate while sharing the department office space during free blocks, as well as to be accessible to students. Although some faculty indicate that classroom space is tight, the self-study survey reported that over 84% of students, 88% of staff and 90% of parents feel that the facility adequately supports its programs and services. Once the new science wing is complete, teachers will be much more able to deliver a guaranteed curriculum that will allow students to achieve 21st century learning expectations. The school food services staff provides nutritious meals for students, faculty and staff. The lunchroom remains open until 3:30 PM to accommodate an after-school snack program initiated in response to parent concerns for students participating in co-curricular activities. The kitchen is clean and inspected regularly. Although the food service space was reconfigured in the 1996-'98 renovation, the food service personnel feel the space is adequate but over-crowding and long lines at each of the three lunches attest to some remaining issues in traffic flow. If there is uneven distribution of the student population at any one of the three lunch blocks, students cannot obtain and finish eating their lunch in the allotted time period. The administration wing houses all of the administrative offices including offices for the athletic director, athletic trainer, health suite, and guidance reception area and offices, and two conference rooms. Although a few teachers and administrators expressed concern that there is not adequate conference room space, due to the office suite spaces being connected, shared use and careful planning can accommodate most meetings and allow for privacy. Careful scheduling of group meetings is paramount in ensuring privacy. The school has well-maintained athletic facilities for all athletic teams and physical education classes. The recent additions of the turf field, new bleachers, and dugouts have increased the usage of these areas. The weight room and cardio room are cramped and could use additional space and updating of equipment. The auditorium stage floor has not been well maintained and is currently in need of replacement, as it was not replaced during the 1996-'98 renovation. More than 75% of the student population participates in co-curricular activities at Weston High School; therefore,

maintaining safe and suitable space for activities such as music, theater, and athletics must be a high priority to enable students to fully experience a 21st century learning expectations at Weston High School. (facility tour, teachers, panel presentation, school support staff, parents, Endicott Survey, administrators, student shadowing)

The school maintains up-to-date documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations. Weston's director of facilities is responsible for maintaining all documentation and for scheduling all required inspections from local, state, and federal agencies. The high school receives and posts documentation on annual inspections conducted in compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations. The Weston High School kitchen is inspected twice each school year by the Weston Board of Health. The kitchen has a current food establishment permit. Training is performed regularly to ensure staff is Serve Safe certified. Professional development for faculty and staff for the current year includes anti-bullying, anti-bias, allergy awareness, and meal component training. The food services department, as a member of the wellness committee, formulated the current wellness policy. The Food Services Department is regularly invited to collaborate in activities and discussions that promote student health and wellness. No peanuts posters are evident in classrooms throughout the school to protect students with peanut allergies. The school has upgraded some electrical infrastructure to support additional technology in the science wing, foreign language lab, and video production studio. The school district's ongoing commitment to maintaining its facilities in effective working order and in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations, has resulted in a limited number of issues which have all be resolved and corrected immediately, thus ensuring that the plant and site adequately support all programs and services. The director of facilities maintains a service log of maintenance issues, assigns priority-based on health and safety impact, and records date received as well as date completed. The facility is well maintained by the custodial staff and work orders are completed in a timely manner. A few teachers stated that their classroom can be excessively hot or cold or that adequate air circulation was not always possible, but the director of facilities maintains that air quality is addressed and that there is regularly scheduled duct cleaning and filter replacement in the HVAC system, and equipment checks for moisture and mold indicate none present. There are a few windowless classrooms, however, there are plans to install windows in some of them during the renovation of the science wing. In addition, ceiling fans have been added in the library and cafeteria to improve air circulation. One safety concern is related to the accountability of students during their "free blocks" in the event of a crisis or emergency. Only students in SKILLS or directed study are counted in period attendance during their free blocks. Furthermore, Weston High School has not practiced a lock down drill in more than two years. The school does have a Crisis Management Team, however, and the principal reports that there are plans to re-establish these emergency drills. In addition, custodians report that the doors are unlocked at 5:30 AM and remain so until 10:30 PM daily and there are no security

cameras at any of the entrances to the school. Although the school's physical plant is in compliance with fire, health and safety regulations, without a mechanism to track all students, regular practice of lock down drills and detailed crisis management procedures, student safety could be at risk. (facility tour, student shadowing, classroom observations, teachers, school support staff, school administrators, self-study)

All professional staff members engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected to the school. Weston High School strives to engage all families in each student's education. Many parents attending monthly meetings of the high school PTO and meetings of the Boston Weston METCO Parent Organization were instrumental in the creation of The Enrichment Center, a program to provide academic support for the student population. Parents serve on the School Council and attend numerous evening events (Back-to School Night, Curriculum Night, Principal Drop-In Nights, Guidance Seminars, and Health/Wellness Seminars). A Family Friends program provides support for METCO students on a local basis. The athletic department holds mandatory meetings at the beginning of each sports season for all parents to review policies and meet with team coaches. New parents and students attend a small group information session and tour the school. A 9th Grade Transitional booklet was developed two years ago and is given to every freshman and new student. Within the special education department, SKILLS tutors and special education teachers work closely with students and families to ensure that students' needs are being met in a manner that fosters independence and success in the classroom. Students in the METCO program work with teachers over the summer in preparation for rigorous courses in the fall. In addition, the administration and faculty members frequently meet with METCO parents both in Boston and Weston. The variety of opportunities and offerings enable parents to be informed and engaged in the process of assisting their student in experiencing the school's core values and learning expectations. Outside of the classroom setting, parents are kept up to date on student progress. Email, list serves, school and departmental websites, TeacherWeb, and Homeworkknow.com are all used as a means to keep students, parents, and guardians informed of day-to-day activities. Formal progress reports are submitted to parents and students a minimum of eight times per year, at mid-quarter, and at the end of the term. Weston High School professional staff actively endeavors to engage parents and families as partners in each student's education. Although the professional staff feel that in the past outreach to those families who have been less connected to the school was not sufficient (34.8%) and parents did not feel a strong level of engagement in their student's education (56.6%), the school continues to work toward improvements in these areas. When speaking with parents, most felt teachers did reach out to them with either a phone call or an email to communicate any concerns regarding their child's progress in their class. There is a significant effort on the part of the guidance department to work with all students to develop college plans, particularly those who need additional support or assistance. Several parents of METCO students commented that the guidance counselors had

helped them work with their children to make informed decisions regarding college applications, college choices and which courses to take at Weston High School to improve their chances of college acceptance. The efforts on the part of the school to reach out to the METCO students have helped these students and their families feel like essential parts of the Weston High School community. Weston High School should consistently make efforts to actively reach out to engage all of its families to be vital partners in the educational process of their children so that every child achieves the 21st century learning expectations. (student shadowing, teachers, panel presentation, school support staff, school administrators, parents, Endicott Survey)

Weston High School develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Each discipline, as well as school-wide events and educator programs foster substantial partnerships throughout the learning community. Partnerships have been fostered over the years with community groups including WEEFC (Weston Educational Enrichment Foundation), whose generous grants throughout the district support student learning, the Weston Parent Teacher Organization, which supports all of the schools in the district on many levels, and the Weston Boosters organization, which supports athletics in the schools. One of the best examples of community and business partnerships is the senior internship program, which matches members of the senior class with professionals in various fields for a three-week internship during the last part of their high school careers. Students have done internships in a wide variety of places including the Massachusetts State House, the Boston Bruins and many well-known organizations. The goal of the project is to increase student exposure to varied interests and possible career paths. Career Day serves as a platform to connect the school and community by bringing in various guest speakers (both community and business) for students to have increased exposure to the varied career paths available. In addition, parents are called upon to offer expertise in the classroom setting as mentors, chaperones and guest speakers. Parents and guardians have been called upon to offer their expertise within the classroom setting and as presenters at the bi-annual Career Day Program. According to the Endicott Survey, more than three quarters of the students (78.0%), parents (85.2%) and staff (91.3%) surveyed agreed that the school maintained effective partnerships. The Weston High School Community has capitalized on their school and community partnerships to provide authentic learning opportunities for their students. (student shadowing, classroom observations, teachers, panel presentation, school support staff, school administrators, parents, school administrators, parents, Endicott Survey)

Commendations

1. The overwhelming community support which provides dependable funding for a wide-range of programs for students
2. The absence of fees for transportation, activities, and athletics

3. The continued support of funding for professional development and expansion of support for curriculum revision
4. The support of WEEFC (Weston Educational Enrichment Foundation), Weston PTO and Weston Boosters organizations
5. The senior internship program that allows students to create partnerships with the community
6. The district's commitment to on-going maintenance of the school building
7. The funding of a 20,000 square foot science wing to alleviate physical plant impact on program delivery
8. Summer program to support academic challenges of METCO students
9. Family Friends program which provides support for METCO students in the town of Weston

Recommendation

1. Provide funding for counseling supports for students with emotional needs and substance abuse challenges
2. Provide funding for and prioritize professional development for technology integration into instructional practices
3. Monitor and control the widespread variation in temperatures in the classrooms and common areas
4. Develop a method of ensuring that all students in the building are accounted for in case of a crisis or emergency
5. Develop a plan to conduct regular lock down and emergency drills

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 89. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The members of the visiting committee wish to express their appreciation for the hospitality extended to them during the accreditation visit by all stakeholders in the Weston High School community.

**Weston High School
NEASC Accreditation Visit
October 16 - 19, 2011**

Visiting Committee

Alyson Geary, Chair
Hopkinton High School
Hopkinton, MA

Paula Dillon, Assistant Chair
East Greenwich Public Schools
East Greenwich, RI

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Hamilton-Wrenham Regional High School
South Hamilton, MA

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Ashburnham, MA

Shauna Nute
Martha's Vineyard Regional High School
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Jessica Regis
Amesbury High School
Amesbury, MA

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Swampscott High School
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Susan Sullivan
Duxbury High School
Duxbury, MA

David Fraser
Milford High School
Milford, NH

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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