

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS



REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

North Reading High School

North Reading, MA

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

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

The self-study of North Reading High School extended over a period of 15 school months from September 2012 through January 2014. The visiting committee was pleased to note that parents and students joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 15 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the North Reading High School. The Committee members spent four days in North Reading, 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 Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented a variety of public schools diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of North Reading High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 18 hours shadowing 15 students for a half day
- a total of 15 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

School and Community Summary

The town of North Reading, Massachusetts is located approximately eighteen miles north of Boston and fifteen miles southeast of Lowell. It is located between Interstate routes 93 and 95 and is entirely within the watershed of the Ipswich River. It is a suburban community with a population of 14,892 people according to the most recent available census data collected in 2009. This is a 4.5% population increase from the previous data collected in 2000. The total area of the town is 13.5 square miles. Commercial enterprises in the town are predominantly professional, scientific and technical services, finance and insurance, construction services, and public administration.

According to data gathered in 2009, the most recent data available, there are 4,870 total households in North Reading. The average family size is 3.28 and the median age is 37.8. The town is not particularly racially, culturally, or ethnically diverse as it is 97% white. The remaining 3% of the population is comprised predominantly of Asian, Hispanic, and African-American races. The residents of North Reading speak mainly English at home; 6.7% of families speak a language other than English at home.

The population consists of 92.2% of residents which possess a high school diploma and 41% of adults have attained a bachelor's degree or higher. According to data from the 2000 census bureau, the most reliable data at the time of the writing of this report, the median household income in the town is \$76,784 and the per capita income is \$30,902. The median home value is \$270,300. According to 2010 data, 5.1% of residents are below the poverty level in North Reading, compared to 10.8% of residents in Massachusetts. In the 2011-12 school year, 9.1% of the students at the high school were considered low income and the number of students district-wide for this same indicator was 7.9%. Students at the high school are eligible to receive free and reduced lunch if they meet the financial qualifications. In the 2011-12 school year, 6.8% of students qualified for free lunch and 2.3% met the qualification for reduced lunch benefits.

North Reading High School serves grades nine through twelve for the town of North Reading. It is one of five schools in the district; there are three elementary schools and one middle school. There are currently no private or independent schools servicing students in North Reading other than several pre-kindergarten programs. While the North Reading School Committee has consistently voted not to participate in school choice, the town of North Reading is a member of the Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School District in Wakefield, Massachusetts. As a district member, North Reading students are eligible to attend and may also enroll in Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School if a preferred vocational program is not offered at Northeast Vocational.

At the time of the writing of this report, there were a total of 2,601 students in the North Reading Public School District. There are currently 728 students enrolled at the high school; 14.2% have individualized education plans and 0.1% are determined to have limited English proficiency. Much like the town, the student population at North Reading High School does not reflect broad racial diversity; 95% of the student body is white, 2.5% is Asian-American, just over 1% is Hispanic and 0.4% is African-American. According to 2010-11 school year data, the high school staff consisted of 62.5 teachers and there was a student-to-teacher ratio of 11.3 to 1.

In the 2011-12 school year, the student attendance rate at North Reading High School was 95.1%. Student attendance at the high school has stayed above 95% for the past eight years; teacher attendance in 2011-12 was 96% and has been historically high as well. Over the past three years, graduates of North Reading High School pursued higher education at an increased rate. Based on data from 2009-10, 89.7% of graduates attended public and private colleges and universities; 81.3% of these students attended four-year schools and 18.7% attended two-year schools. This is an overall increase of 2% from the 2008-09 school year and a 6% increase from 2007-08. Approximately 3% of graduates enter the military after graduation, roughly 1% higher than the state average. The remaining 6-7% enter the work

force or pursue other forms of post-secondary education. Exit survey data for students in the class of 2011-12 indicate that 80% of students plan on attending four-year schools, 13% plan to enroll in two-year schools, 6% intend to pursue career education or enter the work place directly, and 1% plan to enlist in the military.

Student population trends for North Reading High School reflect roughly a consecutive 2.5% increase incrementally through the next three years. After the 2015-16 school year, enrollment projections show a gradual decline in student population that is also evident district-wide. This same data projection for a ten-year period beginning in 2011-12 forecasts a 12% decline district-wide and a 9% decrease at the high school level. It is important to note that actual student numbers may be counter to these projections.

According to data from 2011, the North Reading Public School District total per pupil expenditure was \$11,842. This number is approximately \$1,500 less than the state average, but it does reflect a 4.9% increase across the district from 2010. Of the total district expenditures, approximately 38% is dedicated to faculty and specialist salaries, and 16% is spent on teacher retirement and insurance programs. Based on information provided by the director of finance and operations, 67% of local resources are devoted to public education and 47% of local taxation is spent on schools.

At the time of the writing of this report the most recent data accessible through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website is for the 2010-2011 school year; based on that data, the graduation rate at North Reading High School was 93.3% with a retention rate of 4.5%. Students pursuing a GED equaled 1.7% and one student dropped out. The two-year dropout rate is 1.85%. A three-year average of this same data yields a graduation rate of 94.2%, a retention rate of 2.8%, a GED equivalent of 1.3%, and a dropout rate of 1.8%. Statewide in Massachusetts in 2011, the graduation rate was 83.4%, the retention rate was 6.6%, students pursuing a GED totaled 1.7%, and 7.2% of students dropped out of school.

North Reading High School has established ties to local colleges to provide educational opportunities to members of the school and community including local, district, and regional educators. It is a member of the Salem State Collaborative Project. This program is designed to offer professional development to educators within the collaborative. The high school is also established as one of Endicott College's Regional Teacher Centers. Through this association educators are able to enroll in graduate course offerings. North Reading High School also maintains articulation agreements with North Shore Community College. By participating in the Tech Prep program, students can earn up to nine college credits for taking and passing identified high school classes with a B or better average. Further programs with North Shore Community College include a joint admission option, which gives students savings options when transferring to other Massachusetts schools after receiving an Associate's Degree from North Shore Community College.

Students can enroll in internship programs as well as cooperative education programs. Currently in the 2012-13 school year, senior students have participated in internship programs at businesses such as Harmeling Physical Therapy, EBI Consulting, and the Stone Zoo. Teachers at North Reading High School work hard to maintain relationships with members of the business community to support their course curriculum. Recent guest speakers have included local business owners, legal professionals, and other members of the business world. Employment postings are also maintained in multiple locations within the building.

There are many achievement recognition opportunities for students attending North Reading High School; both internal and external awards are available. The extensive list includes Student of the Month, Student Recognition Night, seasonal athletic award ceremonies, Hornet of the Week, North Shore Chamber of Commerce Honor Scholars Dinner, Honor Roll, National Honor Society. Students at

the high school are eligible to receive leadership opportunities through the Rotary organization and their respective RYLA scholarships.

North Reading High School offers a broad variety of interscholastic athletic opportunities during the fall, winter, and spring sports seasons. There are a total of twenty competitive sports teams for both boys and girls, there are five co-educational teams that students may participate in, and there are three cooperative programs with three local communities. Student participation in athletics has remained strong with a two-year average participation rate of 63%. North Reading High School also supports a total of 34 clubs and organizations open to all students.

On line resources include:

<http://www.city-data.com/city/North-Reading-Massachusetts.html#ixzz2DI3GvWV6>

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/general.aspx?topNavId=1&orgcode=02170505&orgtypecode=6&>

North Reading High School's Core Values, Beliefs, and 21st Century Learning Expectations

Core Values and Beliefs

At the core of North Reading High School is the common belief that effective citizenship in the twenty-first century begins with a commitment to leadership through service and life-long learning that is fostered in an environment that includes all students. We are a dynamic community of students, teachers, parents, and administrators with shared beliefs and values committed to developing capable, knowledgeable twenty-first century citizens. It is our mutual responsibility to be actively involved in a learning process that fosters higher-order thinking, problem solving, healthy risk-taking, and innovation combined with academic rigor. We believe that an environment of collaboration, mutual respect, caring, and trust is the foundation for establishing a commitment to life-long learning. We believe that students learn best when they are connected to their community and can share in the obligations and duties of citizenship. North Reading High School embraces its opportunity to reach beyond its walls and is dedicated to preparing its students to be successful contributors to their local and global communities in the twenty-first century.

21st Century Learning Expectations

Academic Expectations:

1: THE STUDENT READS ACTIVELY AND CRITICALLY.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student is able to read varied materials with both literal and analytical comprehension for a variety of purposes.*

2: THE STUDENT COMMUNICATES CLEARLY IN SPEECH.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student is able to verbally communicate ideas and information effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.*

3: THE STUDENT WRITES EFFECTIVELY.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student is able to communicate ideas and information coherently in writing using standard English for a variety of purposes and audiences.*

4: THE STUDENT IDENTIFIES, ACCESSES, AND UTILIZES A VARIETY OF RESOURCES FOR OBTAINING INFORMATION.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student is able to locate, analyze, and synthesize appropriate materials for a variety of purposes.*

5: THE STUDENT EMPLOYS MULTIPLE STRATEGIES IN REASONING AND PROBLEM SOLVING BOTH INDEPENDENTLY AND COLLABORATIVELY.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student is able to effectively identify, evaluate, and creatively solve problems in addition to evaluating the process utilized.*

6: THE STUDENT LISTENS EFFECTIVELY AND CRITICALLY.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student is able to listen with literal and analytical comprehension in a variety of situations.*

7: THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATES KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN A VARIETY OF FORMS.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student is actively engaged in his/her education. The student shows initiative, self-direction and productivity.*

Civic and Social Expectations:

8: THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATES RESPECT AND TOLERANCE.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student is able to interact effectively with others and work effectively in diverse teams, in both the local and global community.*

9: THE STUDENT ACTS RESPONSIBLY AND DISPLAYS GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

LEARNER OUTCOME: *The student participates in the school community both positively and ethically while finding constructive opportunities to influence its direction.*

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

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

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

**ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT
LEARNING**

1

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

Conclusions

The North Reading High School community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning led by the principal. In October 2010 a nine-person committee of teachers was formed to review and evaluate the school's mission statement using current research to inform their decision-making. After reviewing research, surveying students, faculty, and parents in the community, the Committee for Mission Transition (C4MT) presented its findings to the school community. The faculty approved the core values and beliefs on 21st century learning expectations on June 6, 2011. Because North Reading High School's core values and beliefs about learning were created in a dynamic, collaborative, inclusive process based on current research-based best practices, they are foundational, collective commitments to students and are the basis of the decision-making process. (self-study, teacher interviews, community members)

North Reading High School has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, civic, and social competencies, and are all defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement. The Committee for Rubric Transition (C4RT) was established in the fall of 2011 for the purpose of designing rubrics on each of the nine 21st century learning expectations. By January 2012, the committee had drafted rubrics, which were reviewed and revised by the committee members before being presented to the staff for approval in May 2012. At the beginning of the 2012 - 2013 school year, all North Reading High School students received copies of the rubrics and started utilizing them in their classes. Teachers were asked to start implementing rubrics into their instruction and assessments with the goal that they would become pervasive in the school environment by the following school year. Teachers across content areas are working toward utilizing rubrics consistently throughout instruction and assessment, and when rubrics are fully incorporated in both formative and summative assessments in all classes throughout the year, all students will be challenged in a more equitable manner. (school leadership, self-study, teacher interviews)

North Reading High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school. Ninety-seven percent of staff agrees that the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the school culture. This information was confirmed from speaking with teachers and school leadership. Teachers were able to cite multiple examples of events, activities, and student offerings that promote the values including the inclusion of writing, reading and technology expectations within assignments in all content areas. In addition parents reported they felt the experiences of their children at North Reading High School strongly reflected the school's dedication to promoting their core values and beliefs in a way that positively impacted school culture. Students were knowledgeable about the core values and were able to give examples of how they were being fulfilled in various facets of the school. Students referenced North Reading High School's community service requirement and accompanying project as a reflection of their values and beliefs in the school culture. Students also mentioned the school-wide support of the theater and arts programs as further evidence of the culture of the school. The core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations were reflected in the majority of classrooms, both through teacher instruction and student involvement. The school assisted students and parents with the publication of the "Core Values, Beliefs, and 21st Century Learning Expectations and Evaluation Rubrics" booklet. The booklet explains the core values, rubrics, and usage to all students and families. North Reading High School's culture continues to reflect the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, which promotes student learning and results in a safe and effective school environment for all. (teacher interviews, students, parents)

North Reading High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations drive assessment in the majority of classrooms, frequently drive instruction, and sporadically drive curriculum. Teachers frequently use appropriate sections of the learning expectations rubrics for summative assessments of student work and for understanding of taught content. Students indicated that they have a clear understanding of the various uses of the rubrics and receive feedback from them. Many samples of student work encouraged students to make connections between topics in an interdisciplinary fashion. These samples and assessments demonstrate teachers' aim to build students into more independent critical thinkers. In some cases instruction is closely tied to assessment and mirrors North Reading High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Within block scheduling teachers plan to utilize the time effectively and convey content through multiple

methods of instruction. Despite this objective, North Reading High School's block periods, for the majority of observed classes, do not utilize time to their full potential. Both faculty and students report effective instruction in the content area and overwhelmingly support the current school schedule. Teachers report that the inclusion of the core values, beliefs and 21st Century rubrics has diversified their instructional strategies and are helping to prepare students for their academic future as lifelong learners. Although teacher instruction allows individualization of the content to reflect the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, this is not extended into most curricula. North Reading High School's course offerings have expanded from year to year and offer a wide selection of electives. The curriculum of the individual courses does not appear to have been updated since the implementation of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations were finalized in June 2011. The course descriptions in the program of studies reflect limited or no curriculum revision since the June 2011 implementation. The programs of studies across the years indicate many new elective courses were added that incorporate aspects of the new learning expectations. However, adding new electives does not compensate for not revising core classes to ensure alignment with the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, as students are not able to participate in every elective offering throughout their high school career. North Reading High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations drive assessment in the majority of classrooms, frequently drive instruction, and sporadically drive curriculum. When the core values and beliefs drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment for all students in all courses the educational opportunities for all students will be assured. (self-study, student work, student shadowing)

North Reading High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations actively guide the school's policies and procedures, inform and influence decisions and resource allocations in some areas. The school's policies and procedures reflect a strong and positive school culture with an emphasis on citizenship and leadership. Students take responsibility for maintaining a clean learning environment. Despite the crowded hallways and classrooms in the current facilities, students are respectful of other students. The student handbook contains a section on citizenship, culture, and conduct. Both teachers and administrators in discussions have conveyed pride in the number of students that adhere to these policies in a manner that displays commitment to a positive and supportive school culture. North Reading High School's community service requirement for juniors and seniors has been revisited and revamped in the past two to three years to ensure quality and focus on the core values of citizenship and leadership through service. Teachers feel that this new version of the community service requirements helps students to participate in more authentic leadership and service experiences. An additional boost to school culture and pride has been the new building initiative. The community of North Reading, its elected officials and the school committee has supported funding for a brand new learning facility for both the middle school and high school. This building will be completed for use at the beginning of the 2014 - 2015 school year; at this time the high school students will move to the new building. This large project required both decision-making and resource allocation that was based in part on North Reading High School's commitment to promoting lifelong learning. The new school facility will undoubtedly serve students and faculty well as they strive to implement the core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations; there is a clear need to maintain class sizes that promote effective learning and the annual operating budget must address this need.

Based on the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations there has been a focus on adding additional electives to further students' abilities to develop as lifelong learners. This further impacts class sizes, which teachers say affects their instruction and assessment abilities. Both teachers and school leadership have acknowledged that this is an area for growth. North Reading High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations have driven policies, procedures, decision-making, and resource allocation and have had a positive impact on promoting school culture; however, decisions and resource allocations must benefit and support achievement and learning for all students. (student shadowing, school leadership, teacher interviews)

North Reading High School now regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities. Beginning in 2010 - 2011 school year, North Reading High School began to develop and implement a plan for core value revision. The process took one school year, after which the leadership developed a plan to revisit and revise these core values every two years. This process includes forming a committee of teachers, surveying students and alumni, and researching best practices in addition to current expectations and values from other communities. Both staff and community feel strongly and positively about their current core values and feel that it accurately represents their school. With that in mind, school leadership, students, teachers, and the school

committee believe that changes to their core values will likely be minimal in the near future. North Reading High School plans to consistently revisit and maintain core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, which will allow North Reading High School teachers and staff to build on existing ideals and rubrics while allowing opportunities for growth. (self-study, school leadership, teacher interviews)

Commendations

1. The dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning led by the principal
2. The North Reading High School community that is actively involved, informed, and extremely supportive of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
3. The clear and specific rubrics for each learning expectation that have been disseminated to all students, parents, and faculty
4. The pervasive understanding, dissemination, and use of the 21st century learning expectations rubrics for summative assessments
5. The school culture that exemplifies North Reading High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
6. The school's policies and procedures that promote citizenship and leadership
7. The school's updated community service requirement for juniors and seniors that adheres to its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations and promotes authentic citizenship and leadership experiences
8. The high school's process for revisiting and reviewing its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Recommendations

1. Review class size policies in order to support all students in achieving 21st century learning expectations
2. Ensure that the Core Values, Beliefs and 21st Century Learning Expectations are used to actively guide the school's policies and procedures, inform and influence decisions and resource allocations
3. Maintain the newly adopted practice of a regular review and revision process for core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations going forward

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 in some areas is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Each core content curriculum area has been assigned two of the nine 21st century learning expectations and non-core content areas are allowed to choose any two learning expectations and are outlined in a letter sent home by the principal to supplement the report card each and every marking period. The school analyzes data regularly in order to add courses to the curriculum; however, data is not used to remove courses or to revise units within courses. A five-year curriculum cycle review process does exist, is district wide, and was finalized in 2013 but has yet to be fully implemented. The function of the review committee is to incorporate new Common Core State Standards into the existing curriculums. There is no indication of any plans to begin the process of curriculum review and revision with the goal of incorporating more core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. A review of the North Reading High School Curriculum Guide revealed that it is not clear how students specifically practice each 21st century learning expectation within their courses. Because non-core content areas are allowed to choose the two learning expectations their students will focus on, there is not a guarantee that students will be exposed to each learning expectation in more than one content area. Although students are regularly provided rubrics before completing summative assessments, the feedback is not often detailed and tends to be more holistic. Through conversations with teachers, the expectations are clear as to which learning expectations they are to assess and collect data on; however, there has been no determination of how a student needs to perform across his/her entire high school experience in order to meet the 21st learning expectations prior to graduating. By fully incorporating the 21st century learning expectations into the curriculum, teachers will be able to assess them with validity and to analyze student growth that will assist students as they strive to achieve these expectations. (self-study, teachers, panel presentation)

The curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; however, the curriculum rarely states the school's 21st century learning expectations, lacks instructional strategies, and vaguely describes assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. Conversations with NRHS curriculum specialists and K through 12 curriculum specialists revealed that there was a focus on Understanding by Design and the use of essential questions when the curriculum was formally written two years ago; therefore, the written curriculum includes essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. However, instructional techniques and detailed assessment practices are not referenced, as there was no formal professional development offered to curriculum writers on best practices or varied assessment techniques to be incorporated into the written curriculum. Additionally, the 21st century learning expectations, school-wide analytic rubrics, and course-specific rubrics are not referenced in the written curriculum. The written curriculum focuses on essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and lacks connection to the 21st century learning expectations, which has led to misunderstanding among teachers about expectations for instruction and assessment practices. Including appropriate instructional strategies within the written curriculum documents that are aligned with the school's 21st century learning expectations will result in a clear and consistent focused curriculum that will enhance student achievement (teachers, self-study, department leaders)

The North Reading High School curriculum documents are aligned in a common format that emphasizes depth of understanding, the application of knowledge, and the focus on inquiry and problem solving along with higher order thinking is disparate among different content-area courses. Authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school and cross-disciplinary learning are provided and there is evidence of the informed and ethical use of technology. Over the past three years, the professional development on Understanding by Design has allowed for the curriculum to emphasize depth of understanding at varying levels depending on the instructional

practices in place in each content area. The curriculum was written to formalize the teaching already occurring. Authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school and cross-disciplinary learning happen in internships, core and elective classes. Most students are exposed to these experiences. In the 2013-14 school year, there are 11 senior students enrolled in the internship program. Teachers do not collaborate on interdisciplinary units and have not been required to make connections from one content area to another on a regular basis. However, there are isolated incidents of teachers who are placing importance on this, such as connecting ceramics projects to social studies. The library/media specialist provides some instruction on the informed and ethical use of technology mainly to language arts, science, and physical education courses. The mathematics department is focused on the 21st century learning expectation of problem solving and some student work in other content areas showed evidence of the use of problem-solving skills. Current instruction and assessment practices drove curriculum writing; therefore, systemic shifts to inquiry-based learning and higher order thinking have not occurred in a manner that would allow all students to be exposed to authentic and cross-disciplinary learning. When the taught curriculum is written to reflect the practices of higher order thinking, depth of understanding, authentic learning, and cross-disciplinary learning and the use of technology all students will be able to meet the school's 21st Century learning expectations. (self-study, curriculum specialists, student work)

There is inconsistent alignment between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum. All course curricula have been written in a common format by the faculty during the last several years. The Endicott survey data indicates that 80 percent of teachers agree, "The written and taught curriculum is aligned." However, not all teachers are delivering the written curriculum. In interviews with faculty it is clear that common assessments are not used school-wide within departments although departments are working on developing and implementing common assessments. The science department is using common assessments regularly, but other departments are not. The biggest inconsistency is in the English department where there is no evidence of common assessments. In the fall of 2012, teachers began using school-wide rubrics; however, these rubrics have not supported an improved alignment between the written and taught curriculum. Teachers report that they are using rubrics, but that there is a wide range of how frequently the rubrics are used and the ways in which they are used. Students say that rubrics are used in all of their classes. Curriculum specialists and teachers do not regularly observe classes and examine student work in order to ensure that the written curriculum is being taught. No evidence was found to show that lesson plans are collected or reviewed by curriculum specialists to ensure alignment between the written and the taught curriculum. A standardized process for creating a clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum ensures that all teachers deliver a common curriculum.(teachers, self-study, Endicott survey)

There is little curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with the sending school in the district. In interviews with faculty and according to information presented during panel discussions, teachers say that although they have monthly department meetings and full- and half-day professional development, the focus has been on preparation for the NEASC visit including writing curriculum guides for all courses and, in 2013-14, creating and implementing common assessments. There is virtually no vertical articulation between the high school and the middle school; the middle school is the only sending school to the high school for nearly all of the high school population. According to the North Reading High School self-study report, in 2009-10, district-wide curriculum councils were organized to facilitate vertical articulation. This model was not continued and has not been in place for at least one year. In 2013-14, the middle and high schools had a half-day of professional development to work on vertical articulation, and the director of academic services stated that the district is aware of the need for vertical articulation. The Common Core State Standards have dictated the need for vertical articulation in all core-content areas; the math department has begun the process with the Algebra 1 curriculum.

Teachers also report that for the most part, they do not work collaboratively in a cross-curricular manner, except for the special education department in which some staff work in a co-teaching model across disciplines. Although the cross-curricular experiences among disciplines are few, some teachers incorporate interdisciplinary lessons in their teaching. For example, one English instructor who teaches A Separate Peace has students research the history of World War II because of its connection to the novel. There are also some cross-curricular connections with health, physical education, performing arts, and world languages. Several years ago there was a Modern American Culture course taught by a social studies teacher and an English teacher. However, the course only ran for one year due to a decline in the student enrollment.. Teachers also report that the lack of common planning time hinders their ability to implement cross curriculum coordination. According to the North Reading

Public Schools Professional Development Plan for the 2013-14 academic year, there were four half days of professional development scheduled for curriculum work, but there was no focus on cross-curricular work. The director of academic services leads the district's five-year cycle of curriculum review. This process has not yet been put into action, and curriculum specialists are unclear about how the process will unfold as it was formalized in 2013 and has yet to be implemented. Since teachers do not generally plan collaboratively at the high school and rarely meet with their colleagues in the middle school, there is limited effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation among all academic areas within the school as well as with the middle school. Increased and more effective coordination within and among all academic areas and with the sending school will result in a stronger progression so that all students will be more effectively prepared to meet the learning expectations. (teachers, panel presentation, district leadership)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are not always sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. According to the Endicott survey, 49 percent of the teachers disagree with the statement that "Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students." Although there are some classes that are 17 to 22 students in size, more than 45 percent of core-content, non-elective classes in the 2013-14 school year have enrollments at or above 25 students. The school population has increased significantly in the last ten years with a total population of 728 students. That number is expected to increase by another 50 students next year, and there are no plans to increase personnel because of budget constraints. Teachers say that the large class sizes make it difficult to provide optimum instruction and delivery of the curriculum. In some cases, teachers are giving fewer written assignments such as essays and research papers because of the time factor involved in assessing written work. Some departments report that they cannot offer electives because they must use all personnel to teach core classes. Parents are unaware of the larger class sizes. They say that large class sizes were a problem eight to ten years ago; they are under the impression that most classes now have 17 to 22 students. Parents acknowledge that class sizes over 22 students make it more challenging for teachers to deliver the curriculum. Teachers report that the addition of an adjustment counselor this year has helped to reduce the pressure on the current guidance staff, but say another guidance counselor is needed. The library/media specialist is the only certified library/media specialist in the district although there is an instructional technology specialist who is shared with the high school and middle school. The instructional technology specialist has some, but not all of the same responsibilities as the library/media specialist. Faculty report the library/media specialist is extremely helpful in supporting the curriculum by providing an abundance of research resources and access to valid electronic information. In September of 2015, when the middle school joins the high school in the new facility, the high school library/media specialist, the middle school library paraprofessional and the instructional technology specialist will work in the same library/media center in the new building as the high school and middle school will share this facility. With the projected high school population of 800 plus students and the middle school enrollment of 680 students, this means that there will be only one certified library/media specialist for a very large student population.

According to the Endicott survey, 46 percent of teachers agree with the statement, "The school has sufficient instructional materials to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities." To the statement, "My son/daughter has been provided with the materials needed for each class (textbooks, computers, equipment, and supplies)," 83 percent of parents agreed and 79 percent of students indicate agreement with a similar statement. The 2011 reported per pupil expenditure at North Reading High School was \$11,842, about \$1,500 below the state average. Some departments report that they have not always been able to purchase textbooks that support the curriculum. Because of budget challenges, funds to purchase supplies and other resources are sometimes encumbered before the end of the school year. Co-curricular activities are dependent on user fees and booster association contributions. There is a robust co-curricular and athletic program, which includes three cooperative sports programs with nearby communities. Nearly 70 percent of the student population is enrolled in some form of co-curricular activity or sports.

Technology that supports the curriculum includes SMARTBoards and Tablets, electronic readers, Chromebooks, Dragon Naturally Speaking, iPad's, six computer laboratories, and upgrades in desktop and laptop computers for students and staff. However, not all classrooms have access to reliable technology and technology is often slow and sometimes does not work, causing a disruption in delivery of the curriculum. The new middle/high school will include more and upgraded technology including advanced wireless and communication capabilities, a high

tech sound system, and a distance learning seminar hall. According to the library/media specialist, the new facility will have 30 Chromebooks, 30 iPad's, and 30 laptops on computer carts for each floor of the high school.

The current facility negatively impacts the delivery of the curriculum. There is inadequate access to science labs, the building is too cold in the winter, equipment is inefficient, and there is lack of storage. The provision of sufficient staffing, instructional materials, technology, and facilities will allow students to benefit from full access to the curriculum. (teachers, Endicott survey, self-study, district leadership)

The district struggles to provide the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. The district dependably provides adequate time for collaboration and data analysis. The district has a comprehensive professional development plan that provides faculty sufficient time for the development and revision of curriculum during the school day. The financial resources for summer work and outside professional development are rarely provided. Faculty members are voluntarily involved in book groups each year; the 2013-14 book selections are How to Use and Create Rubrics by Susan Brookhart and Schools Where Everyone Belongs: A Practical Guide to Reducing Bullying by Stan Davis. Teachers feel that professional development is not effective or focused on their priority needs such as data analysis and the use of rubrics. Each teacher is provided a 78-minute planning period each day, during which they work alone or informally share resources. Collaboration time is currently scheduled once a week after school, but students who need extra support are often given priority during this time. During the last curriculum cycle, the science department utilized data to inform curriculum decisions. Conversely, the other content-areas struggled to effectively analyze data and depended on past instructional practices to formalize their curriculum. The director of academic services leads the district's five-year cycle of curriculum review. This process has not been put into action and curriculum specialists are unclear about how the process will unfold as it was formalized in 2013 and has yet to be implemented. Curriculum specialists are expected to lead instruction, data analysis protocols, and foster collaboration amongst their departments. In return, curriculum specialists have a reduced course load and receive a stipend. All curriculum specialists have a common free period and are expected to meet with each other and the director of academic services during this time. However, these duties and responsibilities are carried out to varying degrees and curriculum meetings are infrequent. The curriculum specialists are a part of the teachers' contract, do not have evaluative responsibilities, and therefore have no authority to require curriculum revisions, alignments, or implementation by teachers. An increase in personnel, structured time, and financial resources will facilitate the collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum that will help students achieve the school's learning expectations. (teachers, self-study, school leadership)

Commendations

1. The significant work to create a common curriculum format and to ensure that all curricula were re-written in this format over the past two years
2. The sufficient time provided for collaboration among teachers and curriculum specialists
3. The professional development plans and a five-year curriculum review cycle process that are clearly articulated and available on the district website

Recommendations

1. Outline clear objectives and expectations for common planning time among curriculum specialists and teachers and prioritize collaboration among all members of the faculty in order to align the written and taught curriculum and to provide cross-curricular opportunities
2. Ensure that written and taught curriculum is aligned, driven by 21st century learning expectations, and grounded in data analysis and best practices in order to emphasize depth of understanding and application of knowledge

3. Create and implement common assessments in all courses to ensure the written and taught curriculums are aligned and calibrate grading practices in order to gather valid data that can be analyzed to ensure vertical articulation
4. Provide professional development focused on using rubrics and collecting and analyzing student data to ensure that all students achieve each of the 21st century learning expectations

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

The faculty as a whole, in order to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, frequently examines teachers' instructional practices; however, teachers on an individual basis infrequently examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs. The recent revision of the school's core values and beliefs included a formal committee process in which all teachers, students, and community members had the opportunity for input through surveys. The committee plans to revisit and reevaluate the school's core values and beliefs as indicated in a two-year review plan. School leadership has revisited the program of studies annually along with graduation requirements to ensure that the school's core values and beliefs are being addressed and reflected within course offerings. Students are required to complete a civics and government course and a community service project as a graduation requirement to further practice the school's core beliefs and values. The school established the "NR21 Committee" to review core courses for gaps in 21st century learning expectations and develop nine learning expectations and evaluation rubrics for each of the nine 21st century standards. The rubrics are comprehensive and extensively used on long-term assignments but infrequently used on formative assessments. Each department takes ownership of two of the nine 21st century standards. Newly hired teachers participate in the Mentoring Program in which they are familiarized with the school's core values and beliefs and each classroom posts the school's mission statement. However, teachers indicated that examination of instructional practices on an individual basis occurs infrequently. Examining and reflecting on instructional practices individually and collectively will provide the best opportunity possible for students to receive instruction that allows them to achieve the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.
(self-study, teacher interviews, school committee)

Teacher's instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by extensively personalizing instruction; occasionally engaging in cross-disciplinary learning; in some areas emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking; the majority of teachers frequently applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; collectively engaging students in self-assessment; and the vast majority integrating technology. Instruction is personalized in a variety of ways which include offering alternative learning techniques such as graphic organizers, assorted choices with assignments to accommodate wide-ranging learning styles, varied expected outcomes, and differentiated instruction. A science and math class both offer flipped classroom opportunities to provide students with self-paced home study. Students enrolled in the Forensics class learn skills using a variety of instructional strategies to conduct a thorough CSI investigation. The project includes opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning as students are expected to use mathematical procedures to measure and analyze data and to communicate effectively their findings through writing to peers. Cross-disciplinary learning is evident to varying degrees in summative projects that incorporate reading, writing, a technology component, and other disciplines. Ceramic art pieces designed by students offer not only authentic task opportunities, but also demonstrate interdisciplinary historical study, and visual arts students integrate technology, historical research, drawing, and presentation skills in an industrial design project. Most disciplines engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking through an extensive amount of student-directed projects and assignments. Chemistry students have the opportunity to design their own experiment and to create specified procedures. Social studies students have the opportunity to create and defend their own law, which includes a video-making component while in English PowerPoint students often design presentations.

Most classes incorporate authentic tasks connected to learning such as creating model bridges and building floor plans in Physics and Architectural Design, and developing graphic designs for school and community use. Students are provided with many internship opportunities available through the town including local businesses and physical therapy offices to support 21st century learning experiences through skills acquired in the classroom.

Students are often provided by teachers the opportunity to improve their depth of learning through continued revision of assignments, self-assessments, and self-evaluations. Students are frequently instructed to assess themselves using the school-wide rubrics to further understand weaknesses and strengths of summative projects and to determine the best direction for continued improvement. Students are also instructed to take advantage of the Power Block to seek out the appropriate teachers and improve work.

Technology is utilized to appropriately and effectively enhance instruction within most classrooms. Teachers use classroom websites to improve communication and offer personalized instruction at students' own pace. SMART Boards improve presentations and offer 21st century educational tools within the classroom. The Google Suite including Gmail and enable teachers to assign student work that requires collaboration and 21st century skills. All teachers have access to the technology integration specialist and are able to seek out assistance in how to best incorporate technology into the classroom and in student activities. By consistently utilizing personalized instruction, inquiry-based learning and problem-solving strategies, employing current technology applying authentic tasks and self-reflection. North Reading High School enriches the overall student experience and extends the acquisition of knowledge to develop strong lifelong learners and well-informed citizens. (classroom observations, self-study, teacher interviews, students)

Some teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time; strategically differentiating through a co-teaching program; consciously organizing group learning activities; and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. All core academic language-based classes are provided with a co-teaching team to ensure that the diverse needs of students in the classes are being met. However, teachers continually expressed the desire for continued professional development to ensure that the co-teaching method is being utilized in the most efficient and effective way to enhance instruction. In some areas, teachers informally analyze formative assessment data to assist in the employment and implementation of differentiated instruction. Teachers also indicated that due to large class sizes, it is difficult to ensure that all students' needs are being met through differentiated instruction. Calculus teachers allow students to share difficult homework problems as a class and engage in reteaching activities when necessary. Science teachers incorporate activities such as "Inside Outside Circle" to formatively assess student product and adjust instruction appropriately. Students and parents alike indicated that some teachers consistently provide specific feedback through formative assessments and are required to update EdLine every two weeks.

Most teachers employ a variety of student collaborative assignments to promote positive group work activities. By assigning collaborative activities across all disciplines, teachers are provided opportunities to coach the students and informally assess student understanding and progress toward learning objectives. Often times, teachers will consciously pair or group students together depending on ability levels or general interests. Graphic design students who excel and complete projects early are paired with students who are struggling to ensure that all students achieve the learning objectives. Science students are often paired both by ability level as well as by common interests to ensure that peers are able to collaborate effectively. Power Block provides teachers from all subjects the opportunity to provide further instruction and to improve student learning. Alternative strategies such as the flipped classroom also provide supplemental instruction to promote student learning. The adjustment by some teachers of instructional practices, occasional use of formative assessments, purposeful differentiation, implementation of a co-teaching program, use of effective and strategic collaborative groups ensure that the diverse needs of students across all grade levels are being met. (classroom observation, self-study, teacher interviews, students)

Teachers, individually and collaboratively, to varying degrees, improve their instructional practices through informally using student achievement data from a variety of summative assessments; examining student work; occasionally using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; examining current research; and occasionally engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice. In most content areas, teachers are utilizing informal and formal time to develop common assessments. However, it was indicated by teachers that assessment result analysis is not consistently used to improve instructional practices. The biology teachers have collaborated to develop quarterly assessments to evaluate student learning and to improve instructional practice. Most disciplines have implemented midterm and final common assessments and plan to use formal time to review assessment results and to implement quarterly common assessments. The English department is striving to incorporate an effective summer reading program as a common assessment. In some areas, MCAS scores are being used to adapt common assessments to most effectively assess students and to drive modifications in instructional practices. Advanced Placement teachers utilize AP assessment scores to review current assessments and AP instructional planning reports. Some teachers utilize student assessment results to modify teaching practices and to drive instruction and have indicated that the formal evaluation and analysis of student assessment data to drive instruction occasionally takes place

Several teachers expressed the need for departments to continue to examine student work and to share exemplars in department meetings. In the past the English department established a rotating share schedule in which teachers were assigned department meetings to present examples of their student work and lesson plans. The science department took strides to share inquiry-based labs and related activities. Teachers infrequently make adjustments in instruction based on parental feedback. However, across the school, students indicated that teachers are receptive to feedback on instructional methods and strategies and explained that teachers occasionally modify instruction based on student feedback. Teachers also provide students with opportunities to share feedback through student learning surveys at both the beginning of the school year and mid-year point. Students also had the opportunity to participate in the “My Voice” survey in which they indicate opinions in relation to the school’s core values and beliefs. Some teachers regularly offer teacher evaluation forms at the end of each semester.

The entire faculty has the option to engage in frequent book readings related to the latest research in instructional practices. In the past, teachers were provided with formal time to review current research in best practices; however, teachers are currently informally sharing the latest research to impact instruction. The library media specialist is able to provide teachers with a professional library and database access to academic peer-reviewed articles and research. School leaders consistently communicate an expectation that improving instruction is important through the facilitation of the faculty book readings and the continued sharing of up-to-date research articles on instructional best practices. Teachers’ informal efforts in the analysis of assessment results and data lack a collaborative and common method for modifying teaching practices and instruction; however, individual efforts to analyze assessment data to modify instruction, a willingness to accept feedback from the school community, and formal opportunities to review current research, facilitate opportunities for teachers to improve instructional practices. (self-study, teacher interview, school handbooks)

Some teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners maintain expertise in the content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Periodically, faculty members volunteer to engage in a book discussion to analyze current research and engage in professional discourse to focus on improving instructional practice. A variety of resources such as 21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in our Times, The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander, On Common Ground, Flip Your Classroom, How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading are examined. However, according to the Endicott survey, 50 percent of the faculty reads content-specific literature. In addition, there is a Mentor Teacher Program to support new teachers. Veteran teachers participate in a summer training program and new teachers work with the mentor teachers throughout the year. In the past, some teachers in all departments participated in content-specific professional development opportunities offered outside the district. Some teachers presently attend conferences, daylong workshops, and weeklong Advanced Placement institutes. Presently the school budget is level funded and staff expressed concern that due to financial constraints further limits on professional development opportunities will take place. Many teachers also belong to professional organizations. According to the Endicott survey, 70 percent of the faculty states they would like to see more professional development around the Common Core State Standards. In addition, all staff is involved in their individualized education plan and the new teacher evaluation, and 86 percent of the faculty reports they are encouraged to reflect on their own practice. Further training opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices will raise the level of expertise for each teacher in the content area and will improve teaching instruction in the classrooms. (self-study, teacher interviews, school handbooks)

Commendations

1. The personalized instruction that enriches the overall student experience
2. The use of inquiry-based learning and problem-solving strategies that engages students and improves depth of learning
3. The incorporation of opportunities to apply knowledge and skills through authentic tasks
4. The implementation of the Google Suite to improve instructional practices and collaboration
5. The implementation of a co-teaching model to improve instructional practices

6. The utilization of the Power Block to provide additional instruction to ensure that all student needs are being addressed
7. The continued use of a professional book discussion group to ensure teachers are educated on the most recent instructional practices

Recommendations

1. Ensure that individual teachers examine instructional practices to ensure alignment with core values and beliefs
2. Provide professional development to ensure the co-teaching method is being used appropriately to improve instructional practices for all students
3. Alleviate high student-to-teacher class ratios to ensure that differentiated instruction meets the needs of all students
4. Prioritize formal collaborative time to analyze formative and summative assessment results to improve instructional practices
5. Continue to participate in formal faculty book discussions to ensure that teachers are informed on the latest instructional practices



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

Across the school, 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. North Reading High School has created and implemented school-wide rubrics beginning in the fall of 2012. Each academic department is responsible for assessing two 21st century learning expectations as related to the core values and beliefs. Teachers report results of these assessments to parents via report card comments on a quarterly basis. North Reading High School is in the process of gathering data based on report card comments as related to core values and beliefs. This information will be compiled using Microsoft Access and will allow professional staff the ability to view a more complete picture of individual and whole-school data and achievement. North Reading High School offers a variety of courses, at the academic, honors, and Advanced Placement levels. Students are encouraged to take a challenging course load that meets their individual needs. During the current school year (2013 – 2014), teachers have improved usage, but rubrics are still most commonly used for summative assessments. Despite being limited to summative assessments, the rubrics are clear and accessible by students and teachers, and 97 percent of staff believes that the rubrics define all the learning expectations for the school. School leadership has expressed their desire for the rubrics to extend to formative assessments in a more frequent and holistic manner. The implementation of a formal process to employ the use of the school-wide rubrics will ensure that every student and the entire school's progress toward achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations are assessed. (self-study, department leaders, school leadership)

Across the school the professional staff communicates individual student and school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students, their families, and the community. The school has identified benchmark dates and times throughout the school year when it communicates in writing to all students and their families related to individual students' progress in achieving each of the 21st century learning expectations. At the beginning of the school year, school-wide rubrics, which assess 21st century learning expectations, were sent home for parents and students to review. This information is also posted on the school's website. A letter explaining the newly implemented report card comment codes related to the school's 21st century learning expectations was sent to families in June 2013. Report cards are distributed quarterly with report card comment codes explained on the back. In addition, parents are able to view student academic progress for all classes via EdLine. Teachers are required to update this system every two weeks, although some teachers update more frequently. The annual North Reading High School Informational Report Card is made available to the public and mailed home to all families, giving them an overview of data, based on standardized tests and the Progress and Performance Index. The principal sends home Hornet Highlights, a quarterly newsletter highlighting the school's happenings. This is also posted on the school's website. Also, the principal utilizes the local newspaper, as well as Twitter, to inform the community of school events and progress in achieving the 21st century learning expectations. The school's professional staff communicates individual student and school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students, their families, and the community, which ensures all stakeholders are working collaboratively to promote and maintain student achievement. (self-study, panel presentation, teacher interviews, school leadership, department leaders, parents)

Professional staff occasionally collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. According to the Endicott survey "less than half of the staff (43 percent) agrees that 'the professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in students' achievement.'" Most academic departments are in the process of creating and implementing common assessments (aside from mid-year and final exams which are already implemented in some departments); therefore, data collection is limited. Teachers indicate a need for professional time devoted to creating common assessments and using data to drive and adapt instruction. MCAS data is provided through a test item analysis roster to staff for review on an annual basis. Teachers identify inequities in student achievement and make recommendations for course scheduling related to MCAS preparation courses. The guidance department notifies parents if their child needs additional MCAS preparation and for which courses their child has been recommended. Advanced Placement test results are provided to the AP teachers during the summer. Teachers identify inequities in students' achievement and utilize the data to refine their curriculum and assessments as a way to address those inequities. Curriculum specialists are provided with grade distribution reports by course and department. The report displays the frequency and percent of each letter grade for each section of each course. Curriculum specialists share this information with members of their departments to ensure that grades do not reflect

inequities in student achievement. As North Reading High School begins to increase the data that is collected, disaggregated, and analyzed it will be able to address any student inequities in achievement that are identified. This will continue to improve the ability of all students to maximize their learning potential. (self-study, Endicott survey, teacher interviews)

Prior to each unit of study, most of the teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Most teachers indicate that they provide students with rubrics and expected learning outcomes prior to beginning new units of study and to administering assessments. Students validated this information with visiting team members. The majority of teachers expressed autonomy in using the rubrics. They are able to assess students in their ability to meet 21st century learning standards and content-specific standards. Student work samples provide evidence of teachers communicating learning expectations and goals. However, this practice has not been clearly communicated to everyone because the Endicott survey indicates, "59 percent of students, 65 percent of parents, and 53 percent of faculty agree that this is being done." If North Reading High School continues to communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study, students will continue to make positive strides on summative and formative assessments as related to the aforementioned expectations and goals. (students, teacher interviews, self-study, Endicott survey)

The vast majority of teachers provide students with corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments. At the beginning of the school year, teachers reviewed the school-wide rubrics with their classes. Teachers explained which 21st century learning expectations would be assessed throughout the year in that course. Teachers report that before students engage in summative assessments, they are provided with the grading rubric. These rubrics outline the 21st century learning expectations and the content-specific objectives that will be assessed. Student interviews confirmed this practice. Students state that teachers distribute rubrics and explain expectations prior to administering a summative assessment. Student work samples support the use of teacher provided rubrics as a means of grading summative assessments. As a result of providing students with rubrics and communicating learning expectations prior to assessments, students are better prepared to meet learning goals, which will improve their academic achievement. (self-study, students, teacher interviews)

Some teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. A few teachers report using a variety of effective formative assessment strategies, including frequent check-ins, homework review, essay drafts, exit tickets, and review of student progress. Some teachers allow for reworking of assignments and projects. Students report that some teachers hold conversations with them to check their understanding. Teachers are available before school, during Powerblock, and after school to ensure that students gain a full understanding of formative and summative assessments. Most teachers are using a number of summative assessment strategies. Student work samples indicate that essay testing, multiple choice testing, group work assessments, and project-based assignments are given. Student interviews indicate that some teachers provide exemplars for assignments and projects. Student work samples contained more summative assessments than formative assessments. The use of varied assessment strategies, including formative and summative strategies, will result in higher student achievement and will promote a more effective learning experience for North Reading High School students. (teacher interviews, students, self-study)

There is limited teacher collaboration in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. According to the self-study, North Reading teachers are encouraged to collaborate formally on the creation, analysis, and revision of assessments. Although teachers are encouraged to collaborate formally, teacher interviews indicate that a lack of time prevents them from practicing this. The need for growth in the area of formal teacher collaboration on assessment is reflected in the Endicott survey in which 61 percent of staff agrees that, "teachers meet formally to discuss and improve both formative and summative assessment strategies." It is also stated in the self-study that administration recognizes the need for more formal time devoted to teacher collaboration on formative and summative assessments that will allow for increased data analysis and purposeful modifications to the curriculum. Currently, common assessments are administered during mid-year and final examinations in math, science, history, and world languages, however common assessments have not been implemented in English classes. Staff indicates they have informal conversations regarding formative assessments, but there is no formal collaboration to create common formative assessments. If North Reading High School were able to provide an increase in formal collaborative opportunities for teachers to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments, including common assessments,

student achievement could be positively impacted and all students would be more able to attain the school's 21st century learning expectations in all content areas. (teacher interviews, Endicott survey, self-study, department leaders)

Some teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure that students revise and improve their work. A few student work samples contained feedback beyond the prescribed rubric remarks. Some teachers state that they allow students to revise their work and resubmit, while others do not. According to the self-study, "65 percent of teachers regularly encourage students to resubmit work and/or allow for retaking of assessments." Student interviews confirmed this practice of being able to revise in some classes and not being able to revise in other classes. The self-study results show that 58 percent of student respondents feel teacher's assess/correct schoolwork in a reasonable amount of time. However, student and teacher interviews confirmed that most teachers give students their work back within two weeks. Students who were interviewed feel that this is a reasonable amount of time. Teachers comment that large class sizes make it difficult to provide feedback to individual students during class. Some teachers use the data for summative assessments to provide feedback to students prior to beginning a new unit of study. Teachers provide timely feedback; however, in some cases this feedback lacks the specificity that students need to grow as learners, and when all students are given consistent opportunities to revise, they will maximize their potential to meet the 21st century learning objectives in all content areas. (self-study, students, teacher interviews)

Teachers occasionally use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Teacher interviews revealed the types of formative assessment strategies being used, such as check-ins, homework reviews, essay drafts, exit tickets, and student response/clicker system. Students report that some teachers hold conversations with them to check their understanding. Some teachers indicate they use formative assessment results to adapt their instructional strategies within a lesson or prior to the next lesson to ensure that all students understand the topics. Student work samples showcased some use of formative assessments such as "Check Your Understanding Questions" from a marketing textbook, MCAS questions used as warm-ups in biology class and a "Question of the Day" from a chemistry class. Visiting committee members observed students in an Algebra 2 class using individual whiteboards to demonstrate understanding of content. Adaptations to instructional strategies include reteaching of concepts, small-group instruction, after-school help, and peer tutoring. Limited formative assessments were included in student work samples. Visiting committee members observed occasional use of formative assessments in classrooms. Teacher interviews revealed that collaboration does not occur on a regular basis for the expressed purpose of using formative assessment results to determine appropriate, necessary changes in instructional practices. Teachers would enhance student academic growth with the increased use of formative assessments as a means of adapting instructional strategies. (teacher interviews, students, self-study)

Some teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. According to the self-study report, examining student work occurs during monthly academic department and leadership team meetings and weekly common planning time. However, weekly common planning time is often interrupted by other professional responsibilities such as IEP and 504 meetings as well by providing extra help to students. Teachers indicate that they review student work on a more informal basis. Some teachers indicate they use this data to improve instructional practices. Some teachers examine common course assessments and grade-level assessments, both individual and collaboratively, in order to revise curriculum and improve instructional practices; however, common assessments do not exist across all content areas. Teachers have had limited opportunity to analyze data related to individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The majority of the professional staff examines standardized assessment data both individually and collaboratively. An MCAS line item analysis is provided to teachers to review and analyze results during monthly department meetings. Advanced Placement test results are provide to AP teachers during the summer for review to revise, and improve instructional practices. There is no formal process for placing incoming freshmen into the leveled classes. Placement is based on 8th grade teacher recommendation, but parents have the final say in course placement. According to the self-study, the guidance department is developing plans to use data from the National Clearinghouse through the Naviance program. This data includes transfer schools, semesters that students have completed, and the degrees that students have earned. Since some teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, student

achievement gaps may exist and progress toward 21st century learning expectations may be hindered. (self-study, department leaders, teacher interviews)

Grading and reporting practices are occasionally reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Teachers indicated that they do not regularly review and discuss the school's grading practices in light of the core values and the beliefs about learning. This is reflected in the Endicott survey where when asked about whether grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, only 47 percent of teachers agree with this statement. Curriculum specialists receive quarterly grade distribution reports for their review. These reports are shared with department members during monthly department meetings. Teachers review, analyze, and discuss the grades to ensure consistency among all content areas. However, no consistent practice is in place for the review of grade distribution reports across departments. School-wide rubrics were introduced in the fall of 2012 to assess the school's achievement of its 21st century learning expectations. Staff indicates that there is limited training provided on the use of these rubrics. Training consists of a PowerPoint presentation delivered by the assistant principal at a faculty meeting. Currently, comment codes on report cards related to 21st century learning expectations will allow administrators to track data and student progress toward these expectations. Students report that grading practices are not consistent across curricular areas. Teachers confirm that grade calibration is done on a limited basis. Increased review of grading and reporting practices will ensure alignment of the school's core values and beliefs about learning with its assessment practices. This will allow for the accurate measurement of individual and school-wide student achievement of the school's 21st Century Learning Expectations. (teacher interviews, self-study, students, Endicott survey)

Commendations

1. The creation and implementation of school-wide rubrics based on the school's core values and beliefs
2. The staff members who continuously communicate individual progress to all stakeholders
3. The vast majority of teachers who consistently provide rubrics and expected learning outcomes to students prior to administering summative assessments
4. The varied summative assessments that provide students with many opportunities to showcase their knowledge
5. The math, science, history, and world languages departments that have created, implemented, and analyzed common summative assessment data
6. The science teachers who use formative assessments frequently to adapt instructional strategies to ensure all students understand concepts
7. The teachers in various departments who use formative assessments frequently to adapt instructional strategies to ensure all students understand concepts

Recommendations

1. Continue the reporting of individual and whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
2. Create, implement, and analyze data from assessments of student achievement of the school's expectations in all content areas
3. Analyze student work and other sources of data to discover inequities in student performance
4. Develop and implement formative assessments such as activators and summarizers to assess student learning
5. Collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments in all content areas
6. Create common formative assessments in order to improve instructional practices
7. Examine the data associated with the use of school-wide rubrics to revise curriculum and to improve instructional practices
8. Continue to review grading policies and procedures annually to ensure that they reflect the balanced use of assessments by all teachers
9. Provide professional development in the areas of teaching in the long block, formative assessments, and the use of rubrics

SUPPORT STANDARDS

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

5

School Culture and Leadership

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, 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 board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

Conclusions

The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. According to the Endicott survey, nearly 80 percent of students respond that they feel physically safe at the school. Teachers and parents also recognize the positive environment that is fostered at the school. In spite of spending the last days in a lackluster facility, the students and staff exhibit a positive attitude and demeanor in their school environment. Students feel that their ideas and suggestions are valued and well received by administrators and faculty members. North Reading High School sustains a mentoring program for all incoming freshmen led by the Student Leadership and Mentoring (SLAM) program. All aspects of the school culture are celebrated which is evident in the hallways where photographs of the various activities line the wall and are changed regularly. On a daily basis numerous faculty members and students wear North Reading attire. Many teachers express gratitude to work in such a positive school community. The main core values of citizenship, leadership through service and lifelong learning were regularly referenced in meetings with students, teachers, parents, and school committee members. The school administration works with town organizations including the police department. Together they examine annual data on disciplinary issues including incidents of vandalism, bullying, and drug and alcohol use in order to plan programs to improve the school climate and to reduce the occurrence of such events. School administrators also work closely with the school resource officer to address other student concerns including difficult family situations and student attendance problems. In crowded hallways and busy intersections during passing times, students conducted themselves in a respectful and accommodating fashion. Students are in the regular habit of signing out of class, signing in and out of the bathroom and then signing back into the classroom upon return. Teacher monitors are located at all key locations in the building to provide added security and supervision. As a result of the energy and effort to create a safe, positive, respectful and supportive climate, the school culture exemplifies core beliefs of high expectations, pride and ownership in the school, and student responsibility for learning. (Endicott survey, student interviews, classroom observations)

Although North Reading High School believes that all of their core courses are, by default, heterogeneously grouped, all classes are clearly leveled. However, it is noteworthy that tracking does not exist. Students have the ability to access all course levels including Advanced Placement, but not every student is guaranteed a heterogeneously grouped core course, although this number is minimal. Students are able to take heterogeneously grouped classes in physical education, health, and fine arts/business education electives, however, not in the core areas. The inclusion of special education into the regular education classroom and the number of co-taught classes is notable. Heterogeneously grouped core classes will ensure that all students are provided with equity and access to challenging academic experiences. (program of studies, self-study, teacher interviews)

There is a program assuring that each freshman student is matched with an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school values the need for a formal mentor program and has been working to refine the program and to connect students with adult mentors in the school. The HIVE program (Helping Individuals Value Everyone) was implemented in the 2009-2010 school year. This program randomly grouped students by grade and had them meet in small breakout sessions with mentors up to six times during the year. Sessions were devoted to team building, goal setting, and other 21st century learning skills-related topics. Both teachers and students reacted to sessions in the first year with mixed reviews, and the program was suspended during the 2012-2013 academic year to regroup and focus attention on creating a more meaningful and sustainable program. The Climate Study Team, led by the school psychologist, administered a survey that led to the formation of the current freshman advisory program. During the 2011-2012 school year, student and faculty feedback was collected to identify strategies to improve the design of the HIVE program. The freshman advisory program provides an opportunity for students to see their advisor daily and participate in ten to twelve planned sessions throughout the school year. The advisors have access to the students' grades and progress, and communicate with the students and their parents about the school's 21st century learning expectations. The Power Block period provides the structure to expand this program across all grades. Despite the lack of a formal program across all grades, most students feel as if they have a strong connection with their teachers.

Adding a formal program that guarantees for each student an adult connection in the school in addition to the school counselor who knows the student well, will assist all students by ensuring they benefit from the personalization of working with an adult to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, students, teacher interviews) The principal and professional staff provides professional development to improve student learning; however, there is a lack of consensus about the effectiveness and efficiency of the professional development. The district provides various professional development opportunities including two full day and five half-day professional development sessions during the 2013-2014 school year. In addition there are opportunities available through the school's My Learning Plan (MLP), an electronic database that collects a record of educator activities, approves professional development credit, and lists a catalog of district offerings. My Learning Plan lists workshops and conferences, including sessions on curriculum development, educator evaluation, study/book groups, committee work and additional instructional initiatives. Teachers are also able to participate in training through the additional summer professional development opportunities. The principal often shares literature regarding best practices and participates in book study groups. Despite all of this, there is a strong belief among teachers that many of the professional development topics do not directly improve curriculum and instruction. The Endicott survey reveals that the majority of the faculty does not believe that professional development and collaboration time are sufficient to improve student learning at the level desired. The same survey notes that 57 percent of the faculty agrees that the school's professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills to improve instruction and assessment. Student learning can achieve significant improvement through staff implementation of best practices gained through the professional development process when focused strategies are implemented in the classroom. (teacher interviews, self-study, professional development program)

North Reading High School uses the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation system, which is research-based and focuses on instruction and student learning. The faculty has received training on this evaluation system and its implementation. Prior to this state mandate, the school utilized a four-year Professional Growth Plan in which the teacher and the principal jointly set plans for self-growth. The principal and other evaluating administrators have been provided training in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation system, and have provided training for the staff in this new evaluation model. The district has also engaged the services of Teachers21 to provide further instruction in the area of the new Educator Evaluation Model. The teacher evaluation and supervision process is research-based and will improve student learning by providing specific data linking supervision and instruction evaluation specifically to student outcomes. (self-study, teachers, central office personnel)

North Reading High School's organization of time has yet to fully support research-based instruction and professional collaboration among teachers. There is considerable concern among the faculty about how the organization of time supports professional collaboration among teachers. Thirty-minutes of formal collaboration time is scheduled into each week for teachers after school one day per week. However, the reality is that this time period is often interrupted with the participation of the teachers in IEP and 504 meetings as well as for students seeking extra-help right after school. The current block schedule has been in place for approximately 14 years and there has been no discussion to review or revise the bell schedule. A number of classes observed by the visiting committee did not make full use of the 78-minute block. Teachers also report that the master schedule poses challenges in that the large number of electives results in a high number of students enrolled in the core courses. Teachers overwhelmingly reported in interviews with the visiting committee that there is not enough time for professional collaboration. Seventy-seven percent of the staff indicated on the 2012 TELL Mass Survey, that they do not have adequate time to collaborate with their colleagues. Teachers report welcoming any opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration or common planning time, but it does not currently exist. Although teachers say they try to use informal time to collaborate with colleagues, they would like formal time for this. The school has worked to enhance student personalization through the freshman advisory program, freshman seminar, SLAM and other mentoring opportunities for students. The school also provides opportunities for students such as credit recovery through local community colleges or BYU Independent Study online courses. The overwhelming sentiment of North Reading teachers is that they need more professional collaboration time to support the needs of all students, to review student work, to analyze data and to enhance student personalization. When the school evaluates its bell schedule and builds time for professional collaboration into the master schedule, it will better support research-based instruction and the learning needs of students. (meetings with teachers, self-study, teacher interviews)

At North Reading High School the student load and class size limit the teachers abilities to meet the learning needs of individual students. Nearly half of the English, science, social studies and business classes have 26 or more students – with many classes having 29 or 30 students. As a result, teachers state that student load and class sizes impair their ability to meet the learning needs of individual students. The current alternating-day block schedule allows for the implementation of a variety of instructional practices. North Reading High School offers a large number of electives in addition to its core courses. While the variety of electives is notable, many teachers feel that the increased number of elective offerings contributes to the large class sizes in the core subjects. Student load for some teachers exceeds 150 students. While parents and students feel that class size is appropriate, the teachers frequently mentioned that large class sizes affect the types of activities they are able to do in class as well as the individualized learning they are able to provide their students. It is a consistent concern throughout the North Reading High School faculty that large class sizes do not enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students, and make it difficult to give students the individual attention they may need. Reasonable student loads and class sizes enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students (Endicott survey, parents, students)

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides highly effective instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal "lives" the schools core values, and is a power of example for the school community. The high school principal leads by example and serves as a connected citizen, leader through service, and lifelong learner. He knows most students by name as well as many of their parents and community members. He meets with teachers regularly both formally and informally. He communicates effectively with parents and the broader community through newsletters, notices, mailings, emails and tweets. The school newsletter, Hornet Highlights, frequently draws attention to examples of the higher order thinking, problem solving, risk-taking and innovation combined with academic rigor that is fostered at North Reading High School. He issues an Informational Report Card to the community detailing the MCAS scores, ACT data, and SAT data. This information communicates the high expectations of the school. The principal conducts faculty book discussion groups to help foster a community of knowledgeable teachers as well as shares current academic literature with faculty and staff. He also was an integral part of the rewriting of North Reading High School's community service program for juniors and seniors. These changes were designed to help develop respectful, caring, trustworthy individuals who are connected to their community and who share in their obligations and duties of citizenship. The North Reading school community feels very strongly that their principal, along with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership rooted in the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations. (parents, students, self-study)

There are many examples of teachers, students, and parents having meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Organizations such as Student Council, Student Senate, School Council, and North Reading High School Parents' Association provide students and parents with a voice in the school and encourage their participation in decision-making. North Reading High School's School Improvement Plan for 2013-2014 addresses the need to enhance open communication with parents, students, teachers, and the entire North Reading community. There are over 20 community events listed that highlight this practice. The principal frequently surveys parents for their input. There have been many initiatives which the principal has moved forward following feedback from the parents including the institution of the freshman seminar class and parental participation on search committees to hire new staff. Interviews with students reveal that students feel that the principal is always available to them and they feel comfortable going to the principal for anything. Students report that their principal is genuinely interested in hearing their input and that their teachers are equally accessible. The My Voice student survey was instrumental in the revamping of the advisory program. Because teachers, parents and students are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership, a healthy climate exists at North Reading High School promoting openness and trust. (central office personnel, students, parents)

Teachers play leadership roles as curriculum leaders by planning professional development and by promoting initiatives that address school climate and student engagement. A teacher developed and facilitated the NR-21 Committee to identify the 21st century learning skills critical to North Reading High School and to identify enhancements and additions to the curriculum to afford students exposure to important skill development. Members of the faculty volunteer to design and teach courses and conduct professional development workshops. The National Honor Society Tutoring Program and the school's participation in the Tech Prep program are direct results of teachers taking initiative. Teachers are encouraged to design new courses offerings, which the principal

brings to the school committee. The Climate Study Team administered a survey to students and used the data to develop the current freshman advisory program and to improve the overall climate and life of the school. Due to the collective commitment and shared ownership on the part of teachers to improve the school and to increase student engagement, the overall climate and life of the school are further enhanced. (self-study, teacher interviews, central office personnel)

The principal of North Reading High School enjoys a collaborative and reflective relationship with the school committee and superintendent to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. Both the high school principal and the superintendent of schools speak highly of one another and both very much believe that they have a collaborative and constructive relationship with each other. The superintendent of schools started with the 2010-2011 school year and she notes that the high school principal was the first administrator to help her form an opinion of the culture of North Reading, and he was pivotal in her decision to accept the superintendent's position. Both the principal and the superintendent report that there is a constant, informal, free flow of ideas between them. Regularly scheduled school committee meetings are held which involve the superintendent and school administrators. The principal takes advantage of the opportunity to speak about school matters to the school committee. The high school principal and the superintendent also meet once a month for two hours to discuss topics that are specific to North Reading High School. The superintendent also uses this time as an informal observation period of the high school principal in his role. Twice a month, both the high school principal and the superintendent participate in Administrative Council meetings during which the principal is an active participant. Additionally, the high school principal and the superintendent serve on several committees together, including NRPS 2016, the Youth At-Risk Committee, and the Secondary Schools Building Committee.

There is a formal evaluation process that the superintendent utilizes to assess the performance of the high school principal. This process is extensive, detailed, and very reflective. Goals are set by the high school principal in five different areas during this three-year process. Over the years, three goal conferences are held to review the principal's progress on achieving his goals. Prior to these meetings, the principal writes a reflective narrative on his progress with achieving each goal. This narrative is reviewed and discussed at each meeting, and then the superintendent writes a response for each of the principal's narratives and offers any recommendations that she may have. The entire evaluation process is designed to be very reflective and constructive and furthers the school's goal of achieving 21st century learning expectations. The principal's evaluation process will now be conducted with the Massachusetts Educators Evaluation system.

The Endicott survey indicates that 67 percent of the North Reading High School staff agrees that the school committee, superintendent, and principal collaborate in the process of achieving learning expectations. This is evident through their collaborative relationship in the process of securing the new high school building. The North Reading High School community benefits greatly from the harmonious relationship among the principal, the superintendent, and the school committee. (self-study, central office personnel, school committee)

The superintendent and the school committee provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The official North Reading High School principal job description states that, among other things, "the principal is responsible for all areas of operation and management of the high school including interviewing and recommending staff for appointment; being responsible for the supervision and evaluation of staff; maintaining high standards for teaching and learning; assisting in the development, revision and evaluation of curriculum and instruction."

Forty-one new course offerings have been initiated at North Reading High School since 2003, although whether or not they run is based on student enrollment in the courses. Each new course offering was personally reviewed by the principal and presented for approval to the school committee by the principal. In addition, the high school principal has been active with teachers and curriculum specialists in the development of new courses and he has played a significant role in expanding the Advanced Placement program. High standards for teaching and learning have been set, maintained, and are engrained in the school's culture. Strong community support exists for the North Reading High School and its initiatives largely due to the principal's leadership and visibility in the community, as also evidenced by the passage and building of the new school facility. The Endicott survey reflects that 85 percent of parents and 80 percent of staff believe the principal has and exercises sufficient decision-making authority. It is clear that the principal has been provided with sufficient decision-making

authority to lead the school; as a result the principal has created a positive, equitable, and inclusive school culture. (self-study, school committee, central office personnel)

Commendations

1. The principal at North Reading High School embodies the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. The positive and healthy school climate in which students and teachers feel safe, respected, and have shared ownership and pride in their school
3. The dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning led by the principal
4. The energy and effort given to the creation of the freshman advisory program
5. The variety of professional development opportunities provided to improve instruction and to analyze teaching and learning.
6. The principal's leadership of the best-practice book study group
7. The principal's embodiment of the school's core values and beliefs
8. The variety of media used to communicate with stakeholders
9. The teachers who regularly volunteer to provide professional development and leadership essential to the improvement of the school
10. The collaborative relationship between the superintendent and the principal
11. The collaborative, reflective and constructive relationship among the principal, school committee and superintendent
12. The work of the school committee, the superintendent and the principal with the new school initiative

Recommendations

1. Ensure that all students take at least one heterogeneously grouped core course
2. Create the schedule and Power Block assignments that guarantee each student an adult connection in the school in addition to the school counselor who knows the student well
3. Bridge the gap of the teacher perception regarding the usefulness of professional development to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment, and the number of offerings provided
4. Provide formal opportunities for professional collaboration for all teachers
5. Ensure equitable student load and class size that enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students
6. Provide professional development opportunities for teachers in the area of District Determined Measures
7. Revise curriculum to reflect the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

8. Ensure staffing to support the burgeoning needs of the growing student population to support all students in achieving the 21st century learning expectations
9. Expand the advisory program to upper grades in order to further support student-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

North Reading High School has a variety of timely, coordinated, and directed intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, which fully support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning. The Endicott survey data reflects that 69 percent of parents are in agreement with this statement. All students in their freshman year participate in a mentoring program hosted by the Student Leadership and Mentoring (SLAM) program, which links them with trained sophomore, junior, and senior students in order to assist with the transition to high school. All freshman students also participate in the freshman seminar course, which includes modules in public speaking, study skills, Microsoft Applications®, and math applications in science which provide foundation tools for success. Every day most students are provided with thirty-eight minutes of unscheduled time (Power Block) to access support from regular education teachers, special education teachers, peer tutors, guidance counselors, the school psychologist, to use the library and computer labs, and to attend occasional meetings for school-based clubs and specialized academic classes.

Freshmen participate in a freshman advisory program where each student is assigned to an additional adult in the building who facilitates ten to twelve lessons throughout the freshman year. The advisor has access to his/her advisee's grades, attendance, IEPs, and 504 Plan, can make a referral to the Student Assistance Team when academic or social emotional concerns arise, and thus result in early identification of a student in need of attention.

MCAS tutoring is offered for free after school to any student who chooses to participate. MCAS preparation classes in English language arts and mathematics are available during the school day to identified students. Educational Proficiency Plans (EPP) are coordinated through guidance counselors and special education liaisons for each student who requires one.

The Learning Center provides support for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Many of these students have an academic support class in the Learning Center and/or during Power Block; other students on an IEP may access the Learning Center as needed. Students with language-based disabilities may have access to a reading class, academic support class with a reading teacher, and/or specialized instruction during Power Block. In addition, a co-teaching model is used to assist student understanding and achievement of the stated learning expectations. Students identified with certain other disabilities may also have access to such services as counseling, speech therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. District-funded tutoring is an additional service offered to students with disabilities including, but not limited to anxiety, migraines, and concussions which interfere with school attendance. Within the school building there are substantially separate classrooms for students identified with disabilities (Educational Life Skills Program). A transition-planning course is provided to students identified through the Special Education TEAM process and is dedicated to post-secondary school opportunities available to students including college, vocational/technical training, independent life skills, and employment. North Reading High School is the location for the Transition Academy, a new special education program for students who have aged out of traditional high school, but are still eligible for educational services under the special education laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This program was developed to bring students previously placed out of district back into the school community.

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) determines ways to address the needs of at-risk students. This group consists of the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselors, school psychologist, nurse, adjustment counselor, and assistant director of pupil personnel services. The Student Assistance Team meets once per month to discuss strategies to assist students struggling academically or emotionally. Teachers, counselors, and administrators make referrals to the SAT, which then creates an action plan to move student closer to achieving student learning expectations through interventions and/or accommodations.

The Community-Based Justice (CBJ) team comprised of a representative from the district attorney's office, school resource officer, administrators, and counselors meets every other month. Participants create action plans for court-involved students so they can achieve the student learning expectations.

The guidance department assists students with academic, post-secondary, and career planning by hosting informational seminars and assemblies (both during the school day and in the evening), and individual meetings

with students and with families. Each year, every student has a one-on-one appointment with his or her guidance counselor to discuss academic progress and to select the next year's courses.

North Reading High School administration, guidance, and special education departments are collectively effective at addressing timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including at-risk and identified students, so that each of these students can achieve the school's learning expectations. Examples include the freshmen seminar and the freshman advisory program. Because North Reading High School has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies in place for all students, including identified and at-risk students, each student's progress towards achievement of the schools 21st century learning expectations are monitored. (self-study, panel presentations, teachers, department leaders)

North Reading High School provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services and utilizes a variety of methods for delivery. The school's website includes referential documents such as the student handbook, program of studies, core values and beliefs, curriculum, and learning expectations, but also more timely information about school events and duplicates information disseminated through other communication formats like email, regular email, and Twitter.

Evening events such as Back-to-School Night, College Financial Planning Night, College Information Night for Seniors, and Alumni Night in addition to parent-teacher conferences afford opportunities to furnish information about support services. Additionally, the principal utilizes the Hornet Happenings newsletter in electronic and print formats, email, and Twitter to update families.

Academically, students and families have access to EdLine, an online grading portal, to monitor student progress toward fulfilling learning expectations. Updates by classroom teachers are timely as expressed in student and parent interviews. Special educators closely monitor student growth and complete quarterly progress reports and weekly progress reports to those students most in need of more frequent updates. Guidance counselors, special educators, and school administrators initiate individual communication to families when there are social, academic, or other concerns. Due to the variety and amount of print and electronic communication tools utilized by school personnel, the families, especially those in most need, are provided necessary information about student support services. (parents, students, panel presentation, self-study)

Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. Support staff use computers to facilitate communication with families, outside service providers, and staff members; they write reports and complete tasks to support student-learning expectations and communicate with students through their Google accounts.

Available guidance technology applications include Naviance, EdLine, Administrator Plus, PsychCorpCenter as well as Microsoft and Google applications to deliver and assess services.

The school nurse uses School Nurse Assistant Program (SNAP), a student health record management tool, in order to track and store student health issues. Email alerts regarding upcoming state-mandated testing are sent to families primarily by the school principal. Using the school's website to advertise services and support student health issues could be an additional vehicle for communication.

Special educators utilize Student Education Management System (SEMS Tracker) to manage 504s and IEPs, EdLine to monitor academic student progress, Dragon Naturally Speech, and Kurzweil. Kindles, iPads, audio books, desktop computers and Google Chromebooks are available to students as needed.

Library media delivers services through desktop computers and mobile hardware that can access the Internet through the school Wi-Fi, online library catalog, research databases, SMART Board located in the model classroom, eReaders, audio books, DVDs and DVD players, and an ever-changing library media center website tailored to support current classroom research needs. Given the variety of appropriate technologies available to support staff, the school provides technologies to provide an effective range of coordinated services for each student. (self-study, school website, students, panel presentation, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a comprehensive written, developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; regularly engage in individual and group meetings with all students; consistently deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and are developing ways to more consistently 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. Three guidance counselors serve the 720 students at North Reading High School. Each counselor has a student caseload spread across the four grade levels. The director of guidance's caseload averages approximately two hundred students, while the other two guidance counselors' caseloads average approximately 260 students. An adjustment counselor was added for the 2013-2014 school year and provides individual and group counseling, coordinates with outside agencies, and educates students and families on how to deal with various mental health issues.

The school psychologist conducts all of psychological evaluations (Initial Evaluations, Three-Year Re-Evaluations, and Functional Behavioral Assessments) for high school-aged students in North Reading. Additional responsibilities of the school psychologist include social skills training, individual and group counseling, and supporting students in crisis. The school psychologist leads the school's Climate Study Team, which implemented the HIVE (Helping Individuals Value Everyone) program in the 2009-2010 school year. HIVE randomly placed students in small groups with a faculty mentor. Analysis of HIVE survey data by the committee resulted into the current freshman advisory program.

At a minimum, Power Block is an opportunity for students to meet one-on-one with their guidance counselors. Student/guidance counselor meetings increase as each student progresses through high school. Student interviews indicate that students meet with their counselors at least one time per year to plan their schedule for the following school year.

The guidance department regularly and effectively delivers a written developmental counseling program. The guidance counselors meet students at each grade level in small-group seminars to deliver programming as follows: freshman seminars focused on the transition to high school and an introduction to the Naviance Succeed© program; sophomore seminars primarily focused on career planning; seminars for the juniors concentrate on beginning the post-secondary planning with an emphasis on the college search and application process; and senior workshops focused on finalizing post-secondary plans. Additional seminars and assemblies are also held at each grade level for the purpose of providing information for the course selection process each year. Also, the guidance department provides a series of seminars in the evening for parents and students. Such annual programs include the College Information Night for Seniors, the College Information Night for Juniors, the College Financial Planning Night, the College Fair, and Alumni Night.

Although North Reading High School does not have an official partnership with a mental health agency, student support staff regularly refers students, and sometimes families, to a number of local agencies for outpatient counseling. It is common for the guidance counselor, school adjustment counselor and or the school psychologist to consult with a student's outpatient therapist to determine how to best support the student at school. At times, students with more serious mental health issues are referred to the Department of Mental Health (DMH), emergency services, in-patient care, and/or day treatment programs. If a student misses school to receive treatment at a facility, student support staff coordinates with the outside agency to provide the student with academic resources and materials in an effort to keep the student current in his/her classes. When the student is ready for re-entry, school student support staff consults with the professionals treating the student to develop a transition plan. The Department of Children and Families has cooperated with the school when issues of abuse, neglect and dysfunction have arisen.

Members of the guidance department at North Reading High School are developing ways to more consistently 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. Guidance counselors use data from the Naviance Succeed© program to assist students in making informed decisions regarding their post-secondary options. Members of the guidance department use the EdLine program to monitor students' academic progress and help students set academic goals. Administrator's Plus is another tool used to track student progress. In 2012-2013, members of the guidance department collaborated with the high school principal to create and

disseminate an Alumni Survey. Analyses of survey results are still in the early stages. Parents and students are regularly surveyed in order to attain feedback on the various evening programs that are provided by the members of the guidance department. Information from these surveys is reviewed and considered when making adjustments to future programming. In the spring of 2012, 102 students from the senior class at North Reading High School participated in a survey that was designed by the Massachusetts School Counselor Association (MASCA) to evaluate the extent to which faculty at North Reading High School were implementing the Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. Another reason this survey was implemented was to learn more about the role the school counselor and the MASCA Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs play in promoting post-secondary transition. The guidance department will use this data to plan future programming.

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a comprehensive written, developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; regularly engage in individual and group meetings with all students; consistently deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and are developing ways to more consistently use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The addition of a school adjustment counselor in the 2013-2014 school year has freed up the guidance counselors to concentrate on academic counseling, scheduling, and group meetings with students and the various annual evening presentations. The school adjustment counselor delivers collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers. The guidance department develops a survey for each of its events to solicit feedback from the school and community to improve programs. The department's goal is to obtain further professional development on relevant assessment data, specifically, DESE's Early Warning Indicator Systems.

School counseling services at North Reading High School have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff that deliver a comprehensive written, developmental program. The addition of a school adjustment counselor has helped the counseling staff to be able to meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling. The counselors regularly engage in individual and group meetings with all students; consistently deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and are developing ways to more consistently 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. (self-study, teacher meetings, Endicott survey)

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 and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. An adequate number of certified/licensed health personnel solely manage the health services center. Parents and staff agree there are an adequate number of certified/licensed health personnel and support staff. In addition to meeting the daily medical needs of students and staff and completing mandated student assessments, the school nurse performs administrative tasks such as entering school athletics physicals into SNAP program and ordering supplies. The school nurse works collaboratively by teaching lessons such as how to monitor blood pressure, demonstrating how to take a pulse in the Anatomy and Physiology class, explaining the use of an EpiPen in Health class, or in teaching personal life skills.

Distribution of information to families is primarily achieved through email as well as by paper notices. A description of available services is included in student/parent handbook. The nurse utilizes the school's website to advertise available services and disseminates brochures geared toward issues/concerns facing high school students.

The school nurse uses an appropriate referral process to address student needs highlighted by school staff, family members, or by students. When additional student services are warranted beyond what can be provided in school, the school adjustment counselor is alerted and assessment of available services appropriate to meeting the 21st century student learning expectations. The nurse participates on the Student Assistance Team and handles action plans for students with health issues.

The nurse conducts ongoing state-mandated tests of vision, hearing, postural, and body mass index. Families are informed of upcoming testing through email, posters, and other forms of communication. However, only 48 percent of parents agree that health services personnel provide preventive health and direct intervention services.

There is no private space for the nurse to meet with students and staff to discuss health concerns and she sometimes initiates health consultations in the hallway. Although there is a dedicated entrance to the health office from the hallway, the doorway also serves as an entry point into another office. Additionally, the small space mandates a rearrangement of furniture if a wheelchair-bound student requires services. The new school building is expected to address the physical limitations of the current health office in regard to lack of privacy and space violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, but immediate action to correct deficiencies should be implemented. The school's current health services space is limiting, however the health office in the new facility will alleviate many of the current concerns. (self-study, parents, facility tour, nurse interview, teacher contract)

Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel 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, ensures that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers during and after school, are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning, conducts ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The library media services are integrated into the curriculum through collaborative planning activities developed in conjunction with academic teachers on a variety of projects across disciplines. Lessons include access to the online databases, effective research strategies, utilization of school print and electronic collections, and use of available technologies are delivered when needed to successfully complete learning activities. A flexible scheduling model is employed and facilitates an ease of access to resources when needed by staff designing learning activities.

The library media center houses approximately 10,000 items in its collection including but not limited to print resources, audio books, DVDs, iPad's, cameras, 18 desktop workstations, and printers. Electronic resources include access to state-funded reference databases, approximately 3,000 eBooks, and additional research subscriptions such as EbscoHost, online encyclopedias, and Culturegrams. Print magazines are available to support student learning and independent reading. Seven eReaders are available. The collection is accessible online and uses Follett's Destiny Library Management software. Additional website links supporting research projects as well as appropriate print resources lists are available in Destiny to improve student use of appropriate research tools. Located within the library media center is a model classroom of 24 computers and SMART Board. Students can access the library media center's Wi-Fi when using one of the 30 available iPad's and enables each student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. More than 70 percent of students report that the library media provides a wide-range of materials that they need. Additionally, students and staff feel present personnel are supportive of 21st century learning expectations. An annual budget is allocated for library services.

Certified library media personnel staff the facility during and after school. Students use the library media center when working with a class, but also have access to library media services during Power Block. Approximately thirty student Power Block passes are available each day and are obtained directly from library personnel. Independent student visits are allowed during non-Power Block periods with a pass from classroom teachers. Library personnel state that contractual lunchtime is often sacrificed in order to allow additional student use of resources during the entire Power Block and also provides services after school. Before school access to library media resources is not available.

Library media staff is 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. Library personnel surveys staff when purchasing new materials, considers student material requests and their alignment in supporting independent learning and fulfillment of student learning expectations, and uses collection development reports accessed through the online catalog and vendor websites to improve the collection. Space design maximizes use of the facility with separate areas for computer activities, collaborative working areas, and independent, more casual use. Overall, library media services including, but not limited to, a variety of available

print and electronic resources, integration into curriculum, and curriculum needs support 21st century student learning expectations. Facility design, budget allocation, and library personnel support student-learning expectations and continuously assess resources to find areas for improved services. (self-study, panel presentation, teacher interviews, school support staff, parents, teacher contract, classroom observations, students, student work, media center website)

The support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. The district's Department of Pupil Personnel Services is responsible for the coordination of all personnel in the area of special education, Section 504, and English language learners, guidance, and nursing services. The district employs specialists to service identified high school students who require English language learning programming, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. The Department of Pupil Personnel Services consists of two clerical support persons, a director and an assistant director. Special education teachers support two separate, self-contained classrooms for cognitively challenged students. Other special education teachers support the co-teacher model and serve as liaisons for 12 to 14 students in their assigned caseload. Collaboration exists between general education and special education teachers engaged in the co-teaching model. General education teachers work in conjunction with special education teachers to provide accommodations and modifications in the classroom for identified students. Special education and general education teachers collaborate to meet students' needs as specified in students' IEPs. Co-taught classes are available in each of the four core subject areas: English, social studies, mathematics, and science, and at each of the four grade levels. The special education teachers also provide reading support to students with language-based disabilities. Input from the Student Assistance Team (SAT) is also used to help meet the needs of all students. The SAT meets regularly throughout the school year and collaborates with faculty to identify and assist students who are struggling academically, behaviorally, emotionally, or have medical issues.

North Reading High School adheres to all federal and state laws regarding the identification, monitoring, and referral of students for special education services. The high school principal serves as Section 504 Plan coordinator. Each guidance counselor is responsible for the writing and monitoring of each 504 plan based on the students who are within their assigned caseload.

North Reading High School has in place an inclusion model, which has evolved over the last several years to best serve special education students by providing them with the least restrictive educational environment possible. General education teachers work with special education teachers to provide accommodations and modifications in the regular education classroom environment. Currently, there are eight co-taught English classes, nine co-taught science classes, eight co-taught social studies and nine co-taught math classes. Students with an IEP are placed in core courses with their typically developing peers. According to the Walker Partnership report, an independent evaluation of the school district's special education programs completed in 2012, 82.9 percent of the special education students across the school district are engaged in full or partial inclusion in general education classes. In addition, the report clearly states collaborative, scheduled planning time is needed.

The Department of Pupil Personnel Services allocated the financial resources to enlist the Walker Partnership Group to conduct a district-wide evaluation of special education programming services. The report identified current programming strengths and recommended areas for improvement. The Walker Partnership report utilized classroom observations, written documentation, examination of the special education budget, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data, a comparison of special education student data with "like" districts, coordinated program review material, staffing patterns, the organizational structure of programs and services, caseloads and schedules of special education personnel, professional development information, program descriptions, procedural manuals, and other written material pertinent to the evaluation.

The school district conducts a Special Education Team Meeting Survey of parents of students on IEPs. Parents are provided the opportunity, through this survey, to rate their experience at their child's IEP team meeting. Questions were asked relating to professionalism, knowledge, and expertise of the staff, and parent/team collaboration. The parents are also afforded the opportunity to provide an overall rating of the team meeting. In the 2012-13 school year, the results of the survey reveal that 83 percent of parents report that their team meeting experience was "excellent" in all categories.

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504, and English language learners have an adequate number of certified personnel. Most special education students are placed in co-taught classes. NRHS's co-teaching model is impressive; however, common planning time is insufficient. North Reading High School utilizes a variety of tools like Walker Partnership Program, specialized personnel to deliver services, an inclusive co-teaching model, to help improve services and to ensure that each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The adequate number of certified personnel; the co-taught teaching model in special education, the guidance department's management of 504 Plans, the District English Language Learners, and the district's efforts to evaluate its overall special education program services, ensure progress toward achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, self-study, panel presentation, teacher interviews, department leaders, school support staff)

Commendations

1. The implementation of a successful freshmen advisory program that provides intervention strategies, which support achievement of school's 21st century learning expectations
2. The Student Leadership and Mentoring (SLAM) program that provides intervention strategies which support achievement of school's 21st century learning expectations
3. The Climate Study Team whose analysis of survey data led to the current freshman advisory program designed to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations
4. The Transition Academy program that reconnects previously placed out-of-district students to the school community
5. The variety of communication tools used to provide information to families of available support services
6. The staff's outreach to families when social, academic, health or other concerns arise that could impact a student's ability to achieve 21st century learning expectations
7. The collective and effective coordination of services for identified, at-risk students
8. The use of Massachusetts School Counselor Association survey to analyze effectiveness of guidance programs
9. The variety of current hardware and software programs available to support staff to deliver services in support of 21st century student learning expectations
10. The written and implemented developmental guidance program
11. The addition of a school adjustment counselor in the 2013-2014 school year to deliver collaborative outreach and referrals to community/area mental health and social service agencies
12. The collaboration of health service staff and classroom teachers in order to provide authentic learning experiences
13. The integration of library services into curriculum and instructional practice that supports student learning and achievement of 21st student learning expectations
14. The variety of print and electronic resources available in the library media center to support 21st century student learning expectations
15. The creative and welcoming library media center space planning that allows simultaneous classroom use in order to maximize 21st century student learning experiences
16. The hiring of an outside contractor to conduct a district-wide evaluation of special education programming services
17. The positive special education team meeting experience for parents

Recommendations

1. Continue to ensure that each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations
2. Implement changes reflective of Alumni Survey data results to support each student's achievement of 21st century learning expectations
3. Create a plan to provide confidential services in health office and meet ADA requirements

4. Implement a plan to address future staffing needs of combined middle/high library media center that will continue delivery of current services before, during, and after school to ensure continued student achievement of 21st century learning expectations
5. Analyze data to assess if co-teaching models improve student performance and achievement of the 21st century learning expectations
6. Increase and varied the methods of communication from the office of health services to ensure all families are cognizant of the school's preventative health services



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 engages 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 of North Reading High School and the district's governing body provide "level" funding for a wide range of school programs and services; sufficient professional and support staff; ongoing professional development and curriculum revision; a moderate range of technology support; sufficient equipment; and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. The North Reading High School Profile indicates a wide range of programs and services available to students. Academic courses are offered at three levels: academic, honors, and Advanced Placement. In addition, there are a number of wide-ranging extracurricular and athletic opportunities available and participation rates are consistently high. Numerous support services are also funded and include physical and occupational therapy, reading support, a full-time psychologist, and a school adjustment counselor, and co-taught classes.

Interviews with teachers suggest that there are conflicting ideas about the need for additional and well-organized professional development. Much professional development is offered by the school district and educators are encouraged to access the offerings through the My Learning Plan program. Educator requests for participation in off-site professional development activities are honored with few exceptions. The self-study reports that there has been a significant focus at the district and school level to provide the time and financial support for professional development on topics including data analysis to inform instruction, the co-teaching model, and the development of common assessments and scoring rubrics. Teachers at North Reading High School participated in five half days and two full days of professional development. All high school staff recently completed a multi-year initiative to update all course curricula. In discussions with staff members at all levels of the high school, there does not seem to be any unity in the definition of what professional development entails nor how it should be accrued. There was mention of North Reading Professional Development Points Credits that involved offerings provided by the district for staff members to work on their certification.

The community and the district's governing body provide funding for a moderate range of technological support. The support staff at North Reading High School consists of a part-time instructional technology specialist, part-time data specialist, and a full-time technology support specialist. While these individuals provide valuable service to the students and the staff at the high school, there is a recognized need for additional staff to support the burgeoning needs of the school and its population. The fiscal 2014 preliminary budget for the school district included a request for a full-time assistant director of digital learning, and a full-time digital learning specialist. Funding for the assistant director of digital learning position was not included in the fiscal year 2014 final budget.

In addition to providing a dependable level of funding for equipment, instructional materials, and supplies the citizens of North Reading have provided funding for a new facility. The new school, being built on a hill behind the current school, is a demonstration of the community's support for the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for sufficient equipment, instructional materials, and supplies. In recent years, the high school's operating budget has experienced little growth and funding often remains level from year to year. However, faculty and staff are resourceful and there is community support beyond the tax base that sometimes provides money for the needs of the high school. Some staff members did complain about crowded space and a need for additional texts for the incoming freshmen that will comprise a larger class than the current freshman class. There are no concrete plans to fund an increase staff as of yet due to inconsistent funding. School committee members, central office personnel, and school leadership all state that there is no expectation of additional funds for the upcoming academic year. The new North Reading High School, as part of the master building project, will be receiving adequate technology resources, equipment, and materials and supplies. The community must recognize the need for sustaining the aforementioned and must further support the funding for programs, personnel, professional development, and curriculum revision; if this is not supported students will not be able to achieve the learning expectations set forward by the school community, and the district will risk losing forward momentum. (teacher interviews, teachers, self-study)

The current North Reading High School develops, plans, and adequately funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the present building and school plant to properly maintain, catalogue and replace equipment and to keep the most common areas of the school clean on a daily basis. Considering the age of the structure and the resources available, the building and grounds department has done a commendable job of

maintaining the current facilities. The school has a well-planned and established facility and maintenance program. The director of buildings and grounds creates the schedule for the custodial and maintenance staff that maintains the school facility; as director he coordinates training, oversees four custodians and the acquisition of supplies and equipment, and manages his department's budget.

There is a formal schedule that the director of buildings and grounds has developed and follows to maintain all major facilities and equipment. The fire alarm inspection report and a maintenance plan are among the documents submitted as evidence. Repairs and maintenance are addressed immediately, often performed and maintained by tradesmen who also care for North Reading's other school buildings.

The school is proactive and has a preventative maintenance program, which addresses possible breakdown and replacement needs. As a result, the building is generally clean and neat. Likewise, despite logistical difficulties with the school's floor plan and having had successive additions throughout the years, there is a particularly strong sense of teacher, student and community pride in keeping the school clean. While North Reading High School has a well ordered preventative maintenance plan ensuring the educational facility is safe and functional, the age of the structure and many of its internal features necessitate continuous care and budgeting for possible repairs or replacement. (facility tour, director of buildings and grounds interview, self-study)

The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that does not fully address programs and services; enrollment changes and staffing needs; facility needs; technology; and capital improvements. While the self-study states that the new middle/high school has been designed to provide students with a state-of-the-art learning environment with regard to advanced wireless networks, communication capabilities, updated technology hardware, and other updates and improvements, the cycle is not complete if learning materials and texts are several years old and do not reflect 21st century learning expectations. In 2012, North Reading citizens voted to fund a plan to fund a new combined middle/high school, which is scheduled for occupancy in 2014. The new middle school/high school, with a shared core facility, which has been designed to provide students with a state-of-the-art learning environment, will accommodate a combined student body of 1,350. According to the self-study and several interviews with personnel, funding has been somewhat inconsistent to implement a long-range plan that addresses programs and services; enrollment changes and staffing needs; facility needs; technology and capital improvements. Increases to the operating budget often vary from level funding to increases as high as five percent. The funding for requested capital expenses is provided through local town meeting action. Also in March 2013 the school department had to ask the citizenry for an additional fifteen and a half million dollars to complete the school project, in numerous interviews, school committee members, school administrators and parents all stated that designating more money for the school department would be a challenge. The principal stated several times the need to fund new textbooks in social studies and biology next year. Funds will have to be reallocated in order to accomplish this goal. Financial plans are reviewed annually by building administrators and the superintendent, are modified as needed, and are subject to the approval of the school committee.

The new building will address the needs for updated science and computer labs, adequate sports facilities, designated conference rooms and spaces for educator collaboration, but additional money has not been earmarked for staff to reflect the enrollment increases that are projected at the high school for the next academic year. Recently, the adoption of the school district's strategic plan, NRPS 2016, which was developed with the input of the entire school community, has served as the guiding document to identify the priorities of the school district, many of which are contingent upon budgetary funding in order to be enacted. According to the Endicott survey, 90 percent of staff believes that North Reading High School "has a long range plan to address facilities, future programs, services, staffing levels, and capital improvements," but this does not fully reflect the financial reality. The acquisition of school funding and the ranking of the district's needs remain top priorities.

The community of North Reading is in the process of implementing a long-range plan that will address the space needs of the students and faculty of North Reading High School. There is however a need for a comprehensive plan to ensure that programs, services, technology, enrollment changes, and staffing needs are addressed when the faculty and staff move into the new North Reading High School in the fall of 2014. (Endicott survey, school leadership interview, central office personnel)

Building administrators, curriculum leaders, and faculty are involved in the development and the implementation of the budget. This represents a collaborative effort between administrators and faculty members who wish to attend and learn more about the budget process. Members of the school committee, central office personnel, school leadership teams, and curriculum specialists state that the budget is developed after solicitation from respective departments at the school which are then submitted to the principal for inclusion in the preliminary budget. Ultimately, the principal makes the decisions for the allocation and spending the major proportion of monies designated for teaching and learning at the school level. In the spirit of collaboration, all school principals in North Reading and the superintendent meet together in order to determine district-wide needs. This budget is then sent to the director of finance and operation for approval by the superintendent and the school committee. The completion of North Reading's new high school in September 2014 represents a fine collaboration among, faculty, department chairs, principal, and high school council. The faculty, building administrators, and district administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the school's budget. (self-study, teachers, department leaders, school leadership, central office personnel)

Currently, the school site and plant only minimally and inconsistently supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The age and limitations of the school buildings present a number of deficiencies and constraints to sustain success in some programs and services. The current high school facility was built in 1957, and was renovated in the years 1989-1991; two modular classrooms, which also serve as an addition to the cafeteria, were constructed in 2003 and six modular classrooms were installed in 2004. Because of the recent increase in special education programs, some classrooms have been converted into special education classrooms. Some teachers who do not have a dedicated classroom are required to move to different rooms in the school to teach their classes. Science labs are not sufficient in number, as there are three laboratories that accommodate over thirty-five science classes. Additionally, in teacher interviews, science teachers expressed safety concerns about having more than 25 students in class and in workspaces that are too small. According to the Endicott survey, 49 percent of teachers disagree with the statement that "Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students." Most respondents, when asked, noted that faculty positions have been eliminated in the past been in order to balance the school's budget. Although praise of the library staff is universal, the library is not fully equipped to support the school's 21st century curriculum because of size restrictions and intermittent Wi-Fi access. This connectivity concern also occurs in the auditorium, which also has lighting problems. Modular classrooms that double as the cafeteria provide sufficient space for students to eat at each of the three scheduled lunches. However, as is the case with many other areas of the school, student movement must be carefully regulated to ensure that people traveling from place to place are able to arrive on time. In one panel, a senior administrator stated that staff has shown compassion and understanding towards students arriving late to class due to "traffic" in the hallways.

The gymnasium, library, cafeteria, teacher workroom and teacher dining room are often used to hold meetings, and in some cases classes are held in non-classroom spaces. Additionally, the gymnasium and library are used to accommodate the administration of Advanced Placement exams each spring resulting in limited access to these spaces. The current North Reading High School does not have adequate and suitable space for private conference rooms, guidance reception, meeting or collaborative spaces, or storage. The nurse's office was renovated in 2003-2004, but still lacks space that provides for privacy. The athletic director's office is a converted closet and there is a subterranean batting cage that is utilized by students. Guidance staff mentioned their lack of private space for counseling and the need to occasionally to hold meetings in public spaces in the school. Maintenance referred to the lack of storage throughout the school, and certain gymnasium and other equipment is stored in hallway spaces. One health classroom is a converted automotive garage. The current high school also lacks common meeting space for students to sit, use technology, or simply congregate before or after school. There are major temperature control issues due to single paned windows, particularly in the hallways. There are some leaks in the roof, there are some windows in disrepair that do not allow for them to be opened, the weight room and locker room facilities are outdated and generally substandard, computer networking is insufficient to support the number of computers currently in use, and the wireless connectivity is often unreliable. Because of crowded labs and halls, inadequate space, lack of reliable Internet access and absence of collaborative space, North Reading High School is not able to always deliver the high quality school programs and services it would like to and that its students, teachers and support staff merit. (self-study, facility tour, Endicott survey, school support staff, teacher interviews)

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 local fire, health, and safety regulations and maintains documentation. The director of buildings and grounds is responsible for maintaining all documentation and for scheduling all required inspections by local, state and federal agencies. He indicated that the school proactively contacts state inspectors to invite them into the school. There are a number of practices that are conducted on a regular basis to meet fire, health, and safety regulations. The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning technician, employed by the school department, tends to related maintenance issues. Fire extinguishers, sprinklers, boilers and compressors in the school are maintained and inspected annually. A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) file is maintained to keep track of all chemicals used at the school. Air quality is conducted regularly and the director of buildings and grounds maintains records of such testing. Copies of these records are also maintained in the main office at the high school. The science department conducts an annual audit of all stored chemicals in the school and is advised by an outside authority on proper storage, handling, and other safety features. The school maintains an up-to-date Emergency Operations Plan that is reviewed annually and is updated as needed.

Heating and ventilation units are maintained regularly and deep cleaned annually. Fire alarms and smoke detectors are tested and upgraded regularly. Water and sewer systems contain regulators that prevent backup or compromising chemical intrusions. Before the beginning of the school year, the local fire department inspects the school building and issues an occupancy permit. And at the beginning of the school year, staff is required to attend EpiPen and allergy training conducted by the school nurse. The food services director reports that cafeteria staff all have ServSafe Certificates and are annually trained relative to safe food handling practices, other food safety issues, food allergies, CPR, health and wellness and nutrition. North Reading High School's compliance with local, state and federal laws and regulations regarding health and safety mean that it is a safe building to attend school. (facility tour, food service director, self-study)

All professional staff actively engages parents and families as partners in every student's education, and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. A significant strength of North Reading High School is its continued development of various connections with the community, specifically parents, relative to the ongoing education and development of students. In several interviews, parents, central office staff, pupil services personnel, school leadership and teachers indicated that there is an expectation in North Reading that most parents will be actively engaged with their children's education, through e-mail, phone calls or school meetings. The principal frequently reaches out to the community by notices, tweets, mailings, e-mail and a quarterly newsletter. The school schedules events such as a Back to School Night and two open house evenings. The principal's articles, "Around the Schoolyard," are printed regularly in the local newspaper. There is an active Parents' Association, and an Open House for Middle School Students and Parents is held each winter. Parents also have access to teachers, academic support liaisons, and the school administration via the phone system with individual voice mail and system-wide e-mail. The school website is updated on a daily basis, keeping parents informed of events and programs offered at the North Reading High School. According to the Endicott survey, 69 percent of parents are in agreement that "the professional staff actively engages my family as partners in my son's/daughter's education.

Further examples of support that enable parent engagement include EdLine and Naviance for parents to follow up with their students' grades and access college and career planning information. The North Reading High School Handbook for Students and Parents, which is also posted on the school's website, provide parents and students with information about the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, the code of conduct that governs the school, rules for participation in co-curricular activities, relevant state and federal laws and regulations, health services, and a host of other important information related to the overall operations of the high school. A detailed school calendar that lists planned meeting dates and events is also included with the handbook and a monthly calendar is posted on the high school's website and is made available to each teacher for review with students. The North Reading High School Council and the North Reading High School Parents Association are both active organizations, as are the various booster groups for arts and athletics. The strong sense of community and connectedness and engagement at North Reading High School makes parents and guardians aware that adults at the school know, care about and are advocates for their children. (self-study, parents, teachers, school support staff)

The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. North Reading High School has four articulation agreements with North Shore Community

College in which students may attend classes at the high school and receive college credit at North Shore Community College. Several other organizations host conferences and competitions that permit students from North Reading High School to attend or participate.

North Reading High School has developed many partnerships with local businesses and merchants that provide a range of opportunities to support student learning and development, including a Senior Internship Program at the Stone Zoo, and a local physical therapy office as examples, and programs such as The Power of Healthy Decision-Making, the Interact Club, and the North Reading High School Masquers. The Transition Academy was recently created and is housed at the school, and provides skills development for identified students with special needs. The Transition Academy engages with the local business community to provide internships and/or paid work opportunities for the students. Results from the Endicott survey indicate that 79 percent of parents agree that the “school has effective partnerships with parents, community organizations, businesses and higher education to support student learning.” North Reading High School has developed productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support the achievement of the school’s 21st Century learning expectations for all students. (parents, self-study, evidence box, students)

Commendations

1. The custodial and maintenance personnel who take great pride in their work
2. The collaborative and transparent budget process
3. The collaborative fiscal approach by all elected officials in North Reading and school personnel
4. The overwhelming pride in the school program and facilities
5. The use of a model classroom to make collaborative decisions about the purchase of furniture and technology
6. The proactive and preventative maintenance program and the use of a certified technician of staff for HVAC repairs
7. The collaborative effort and nine year planning process of the taxpayers and citizens of North Reading which has resulted in the completion of the new school

Recommendations

1. Provide instructional materials that support achievement of the 21st century learning expectations
2. Provide funding for a technology plan to cover the technological needs of the new school
4. Ensure safety and sanitary conditions throughout the school and its grounds
5. Eliminate student access to the batting cage in the subterranean basement
6. Budget for burgeoning needs of the school population

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change, which negatively impacts, on the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact, which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 56. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report, which is required of each member school to ensure that the Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The Visiting Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the administration and staff of North Reading High School for the hospitality extended to the Committee during our visit. Everyone in the school community was welcoming and gratuitous.

**North Reading High School
NEASC Accreditation Visit
March 2 - 5, 2014**

Visiting Committee

<p>Philip Conrad Rockport Middle/High School Rockport, MA 01966</p> <p>Michael Regan Marine Science Magnet High School Groton, CT 06340</p> <p>Lisa Richard Narragansett Regional High School Baldwinville, MA 01436</p> <p>Joseph Concannon Boston Latin School Boston, MA 02115</p> <p>Amanda Grundel Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School Smithfield, RI 02917</p> <p>Elaine Aschettino Chatham High School Chatham, MA 02633</p> <p>Stephen Gervais Lowell High School Lowell, MA 01852</p> <p>Meredith Reardon Marblehead High School Marblehead, MA 01945</p>	<p>Jennifer Rigano Medford High School Medford, MA 02155</p> <p>Laura Lanza Farmington High School Farmington, CT 06034</p> <p>Susan Smith Braintree High School Braintree, MA 02184</p> <p>Catherine Wilkins Greenfield High School Greenfield, MA 01301</p> <p>Lisa Herzl Triton Regional High School Byfield, MA 01922</p> <p>Nick Pilla Fairhaven High School Fairhaven, MA 02719</p> <p>Debra Mitchell Holbrook Junior - Senior High School Holbrook, MA 02343</p>
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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

North Reading High School

Commendations

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

The dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning led by the principal

The North Reading High School community that is actively involved, informed, and extremely supportive of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

The clear and specific rubrics for each learning expectation that have been disseminated to all students, parents, and faculty

The pervasive understanding, dissemination, and use of the 21st century learning expectations rubrics for summative assessments

The school culture that exemplifies North Reading High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

The school's policies and procedures that promote citizenship and leadership

The school's updated community service requirement for juniors and seniors that adheres to its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations and promotes authentic citizenship and leadership experiences

The high school's process for revisiting and reviewing its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Curriculum

The significant work to create a common curriculum format and to ensure that all curricula were re-written in this format over the past two years

The sufficient time provided for collaboration among teachers and curriculum specialists

The professional development plans and a five-year curriculum review cycle process that are clearly articulated and available on the district website

Instruction

The personalized instruction that enriches the overall student experience

The use of inquiry-based learning and problem-solving strategies that engages students and improves depth of learning

The incorporation of opportunities to apply knowledge and skills through authentic tasks

The implementation of the Google Suite to improve instructional practices and collaboration

The implementation of a co-teaching model to improve instructional practices

The utilization of the Power Block to provide additional instruction to ensure that all student needs are being addressed

The continued use of a professional book discussion group to ensure teachers are educated on the most recent instructional practices

Assessment of and for Student Learning

The creation and implementation of school-wide rubrics based on the school's core values and beliefs

The staff members who continuously communicate individual progress to all stakeholders

The vast majority of teachers who consistently provide rubrics and expected learning outcomes to students prior to administering summative assessments

The varied summative assessments that provide students with many opportunities to showcase their knowledge

The math, science, history, and world languages departments that have created, implemented, and analyzed common summative assessment data

The science teachers who use formative assessments frequently to adapt instructional strategies to ensure all students understand concepts

The teachers in various departments who use formative assessments frequently to adapt instructional strategies to ensure all students understand concepts

School Culture and Leadership Commendations

The principal at North Reading High School embodies the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

The positive and healthy school climate in which students and teachers feel safe, respected, and have shared ownership and pride in their school

The dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning led by the principal

The energy and effort given to the creation of the freshman advisory program

The variety of professional development opportunities provided to improve instruction and to analyze teaching and learning.

The principal's leadership of the best-practice book study group

The principal's embodiment of the school's core values and beliefs

The variety of media used to communicate with stakeholders

The teachers who regularly volunteer to provide professional development and leadership essential to the improvement of the school

The collaborative relationship between the superintendent and the principal

The collaborative, reflective and constructive relationship among the principal, school committee and superintendent

The work of the school committee, the superintendent and the principal with the new school initiative

School Resources for Learning

The implementation of a successful freshmen advisory program that provides intervention strategies, which support achievement of school's 21st century learning expectations

The Student Leadership and Mentoring (SLAM) program that provides intervention strategies that support achievement of school's 21st century learning expectations

The Climate Study Team whose analysis of survey data led to the current freshman advisory program designed to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations

The Transition Academy program that reconnects previously placed out-of-district students to the school community

The variety of communication tools used to provide information to families of available support services

The staff's outreach to families when social, academic, health or other concerns arise that could impact a student's ability to achieve 21st century learning expectations

The collective and effective coordination of services for identified, at-risk students

The use of Massachusetts School Counselor Association survey to analyze effectiveness of guidance programs

The variety of current hardware and software programs available to support staff to deliver services in support of 21st century student learning expectations

The written and implemented developmental guidance program

The addition of school adjustment counselor in the 2013-2014 school year to deliver collaborative outreach and referrals to community/area mental health and social service agencies

The collaboration of health service staff and classroom teachers in order to provide authentic learning experiences

The integration of library services into curriculum and instructional practice that supports student learning and achievement of 21st student learning expectations

The variety of print and electronic resources available in the library media center to support 21st century student learning expectations

The creative and welcoming library media center space planning that allows simultaneous classroom use in order to maximize 21st century student learning experiences

The hiring of an outside contractor to conduct district-wide evaluation of special education programming services

The positive special education team meeting experiences for parents

Community Resources for Learning

The custodial and maintenance personnel who take great pride in their work

The collaborative and transparent budget process

The collaborative fiscal approach by all elected officials in North Reading and school personnel

The overwhelming pride in the school program and facilities

The use of a model classroom to make collaborative decisions about the purchase of furniture and technology

The proactive and preventative maintenance program and the use of a certified technician of staff for HVAC repairs

The collaborative effort and nine year planning process of the taxpayers and citizens of North Reading which has resulted in the completion of the new school

Recommendations

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Review class size policies in order to support all students in achieving 21st century learning expectations

Ensure that the Core Values, Beliefs and 21st Century Learning Expectations are used to actively guide the school's policies and procedures, inform and influence decisions and resource allocations

Maintain the newly adopted practice of a regular review and revision process for core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations going forward

Curriculum

Outline clear objectives and expectations for common planning time among curriculum specialists and teachers and prioritize collaboration among all members of the faculty in order to align the written and taught curriculum and to provide cross-curricular opportunities

Ensure that written and taught curriculum is aligned, driven by 21st century learning expectations, and grounded in data analysis and best practices in order to emphasize depth of understanding and application of knowledge

Create and implement common assessments in all courses to ensure the written and taught curriculums are aligned and calibrate grading practices in order to gather valid data that can be analyzed to ensure vertical articulation

Provide professional development focused on using rubrics and collecting and analyzing student data to ensure that all students achieve each of the 21st century learning expectations

Instruction

Ensure that individual teachers examine instructional practices to ensure alignment with core values and beliefs

Provide professional development to ensure the co-teaching method is being used appropriately to improve instructional practices for all students

Alleviate high student-to-teacher class ratios to ensure that differentiated instruction meets the needs of all students

Prioritize formal collaborative time to analyze formative and summative assessment results to improve instructional practices

Continue to participate in formal faculty book discussions to ensure that teachers are informed on the latest instructional practices

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Facilitate the reporting of individual and whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

Create, implement, and analyze data from assessments of student achievement of the school's expectations in all content areas

Analyze student work and other sources of data to discover inequities in student performance

Develop and implement formative assessments such as activators and summarizers to assess student learning

Collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments in all content areas

Create common formative assessments in order to improve instructional practices

Examine the data associated with the use of school-wide rubrics to revise curriculum and to improve instructional practices

Continue to review grading policies and procedures annually to ensure they reflect the balanced use of assessments by all teachers

Provide professional development in the areas of teaching in the long block, formative assessments, and the use of rubrics

School Culture and Leadership

Ensure that all students take at least one heterogeneously grouped core course

Create the schedule and Power Block assignments that guarantee each student an adult connection in the school in addition to the school counselor who knows the student well

Bridge the gap of the teacher perception regarding the usefulness of professional development to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment, and the number of offerings provided

Provide formal opportunities for professional collaboration for all teachers

Ensure equitable student load and class size that enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students

Provide professional development opportunities for teachers in the area of District Determined Measures

Revise curriculum to reflect the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Ensure staffing to support the burgeoning needs of the growing student population to support all students in achieving the 21st century learning expectations

Expand the advisory program to upper grades in order to further support student-learning expectations

School Resources for Learning

Continue to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations

Implement changes reflective of Alumni Survey data results to support each student's achievement of 21st century learning expectations

Create a plan to provide confidential services in health office and meet ADA requirements

Implement a plan to address future staffing needs of combined middle/high library media center that will continue delivery of current services before, during, and after school to ensure continued student achievement of 21st century learning expectations

Analyze data to assess if co-teaching models improves student performance and achievement of 21st century learning expectations

Increase and varied the methods of communication from the of health services office to ensure all families are cognizant of the school's preventative health services

Community Resources for Learning

Provide instructional materials that support achievement of the 21st century learning expectations

Provide funding for a technology plan to cover the technological needs of the new school

Ensure safety and sanitary conditions throughout the school and its grounds

Eliminate student access to the batting cage in the subterranean basement

Budget for burgeoning needs of the school population