

**New England Association of Schools and Colleges**



**Commission on Public Secondary Schools**

**Report of the Visiting Committee for  
Cape Elizabeth High School  
Cape Elizabeth, Maine**

**March 13 - 16, 2016**

**Peter J. Brown, CHAIR**  
**Julie Hammer, ASSISTANT CHAIR**  
**Jeffrey Shedd, PRINCIPAL**

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.  
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514

TEL. 781-425-7700  
FAX 781-425-1001

[www.neasc.org](http://www.neasc.org)

## **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 Cape Elizabeth 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 Cape Elizabeth 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.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Statement On Limitations</b>	
Introduction .....	4
School and Community Summary .....	7
School’s Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations.....	10
Teaching and Learning Standards	
Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations .....	13
Curriculum.....	18
Instruction.....	25
Assessment of and for Student Learning .....	34
Support of Teaching and Learning Standards	
School Culture and Leadership .....	43
School Resources for Learning.....	51
Community Resources for Learning .....	58
Follow-Up Responsibilities.....	66

## APPENDICES

- A. Roster of Visiting Committee Members
- B. Committee Policy on Substantive Change
- C. List of Commendations and Recommendations

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

As the responsible agency for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public secondary school member institutions, CPSS requires visiting 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 shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

### **Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study**

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Cape Elizabeth High School, a committee of eight 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 several parents and students but no school board members.

The self-study of Cape Elizabeth High School extended over a period of 28 school months from October 2012 to November 2015. The visiting committee noted that several parents and students, but no school board members, joined the professional staff in the formal 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, Cape Elizabeth 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, completed by students and some parents, 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 16 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the high school. The Committee members spent four days in Cape Elizabeth, Maine reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, student 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 public high schools in Maine and New Hampshire, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Cape Elizabeth High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 42 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 28 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on 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 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 Cape Elizabeth High School.

## School and Community Summary

The town of Cape Elizabeth website accurately provides a physical and demographic snapshot of the town:

*Extending 12 miles into open-ocean, rimmed by craggy shores and sandy beaches, Cape Elizabeth marks the entrance to spectacular Casco Bay. Most of the town's residential and commercial activity lies close to the bay's edge. The size of the community is 9,337 acres, or 15 square miles. [2010] census figures put the town's population at [9,015].*  
(<http://www.capeelizabeth.com/home/about/location.html>)

Those who are generally unfamiliar with Cape Elizabeth are often aware of one or two of its best known features: the annual Beach to Beacon 10K race, inspired by Cape Elizabeth High School graduate and women's Olympic gold medalist Joan Benoit Samuelson; and Fort Williams Park, home to the Portland Head Light. Visited by thousands of tourists each year, the Head Light is the most photographed lighthouse in the world. Cape Elizabeth is proud of its open spaces, small farms, and non-commercial feel. The largest employer in Cape Elizabeth is its school system.

The Cape Elizabeth School Department, overseen by an elected seven-member school board and an appointed superintendent, operates three schools: Pond Cove Elementary School for students in grades K-4; Cape Elizabeth Middle School for students in grades 5-8; and Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS) for students in grades 9-12. The combined population of all three schools is 1,740 students, while the current population of CEHS is approximately 540 students. Of CEHS's current students, 92 percent is Caucasian, 1 percent is African-American, 1.5 percent is Hispanic, and 3 percent is Asian. The demographic trend in Cape Elizabeth is toward a shrinking student population, which is projected to bring enrollment at CEHS down to 500 students or even below over the next several years. In fact, the high school population is down from a recent high several years ago of approximately 580 students.

Cape Elizabeth is, by and large, an affluent, well-educated, largely bedroom community six miles south of Portland. Cape's estimated median household income in 2012 was \$91,176, compared to a statewide median of \$46,709. Nearly 60 percent of Cape residents over 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher; nearly 27 percent have a graduate or professional degree. Unemployment among Cape residents is 3.7 percent, compared to a state average of 5.1 percent. Families with incomes below the poverty level in 2009 were 3.1 percent of Cape's population, compared to a statewide average of 10.9 percent. A significant demographic shift in the town over the past two decades has been the aging of the town's population: in 1990, 23.8 percent of the town's population was over 55 years of age; today, over 55's represent 34 percent of the population. In 2010, only 33.5 percent of Cape Elizabeth's households included young people under 18 years of age.

Combined municipal and school spending for Cape Elizabeth total approximately \$32,542,000, of which 65 percent of that spending, or \$21,247,000, is for the schools. Based largely on its property valuation, Cape Elizabeth is a minimum receiver of state aid for education. In fact, one of the challenges for Cape Elizabeth's budget for the past several years has been to maintain the high quality and support of its schools in the face of declining state education aid without unduly burdening the town's taxpayers. Spending per pupil in Cape Elizabeth is \$5,648, compared to a statewide average of \$4,713.

Notwithstanding reductions in state aid and the aging of its population, the citizens of Cape Elizabeth have been consistently supportive of the needs of its schools. Only once since state law made school budgets subject to citizen approval has a proposed budget for the town been turned down (2008). A minor decrease in the budget that year resulted in overwhelming voter approval.

In addition to citizen support for the school through the budget approval process, Cape's citizens also support the schools through the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation (CEEF), parents associations, and many booster groups at the high school level. CEEF supports creative initiatives of teachers and the schools. At the High School, for example, the Foundation has been instrumental in supporting the founding of the High School's Achievement Center (a hub dedicated to providing extra academic help at any time before, during, and after school), the Robotics Program, the Advisory Program, and professional development for teachers.

By most measures, CEHS is one of Maine's highest achieving high schools. In each of its first two years, the Governor's "report card" program has given CEHS an "A". Student SAT scores have landed CEHS at the top or tied for the top of the rank of all public high schools in the state in every area tested for the past several years. Sixty percent of students take and pass Advanced Placement exams each year. Over 90 percent of students are accepted and attend college each year; the vast majority of those, 85-90 percent, go to four-year colleges, although there has been an increase in the number of students over the past several years taking their first post-secondary educational step at nearby Southern Maine Community College. CEHS's four-year graduation rate typically exceeds 97 percent; the five-year rate typically is 99 percent. The annual dropout rate ranges from 0-2 percent each year. The daily attendance rate is approximately 95 percent. Teacher attendance rate is similar.

Local business connections each year support Cape seniors who participate in the Senior Transition Project (STP)—an internship experience for seniors during two of the last three weeks before graduation. A Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) career fair last spring was attended by over 40 regional and state businesses and universities. This year, Cape's sophomores will be attending a career fair sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce. Each year, a handful of Cape students earn credits at nearby Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) or the Portland campus of the University of Southern Maine. CEHS and SMCC are in the midst of working toward dual enrollment options for students for some classes.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments in several ways. Honor roll students are recognized on report cards. Every senior is recognized at the annual end-of-year Senior Celebration. Academic

awards are presented at the Senior Celebration and at the annual Undergraduate Awards assembly. In addition, student accomplishments are regularly featured on the principal's website, the athletic website, and display cases in the school's main lobby. Student artwork is on display in cases throughout the school. Over 75 percent of students participate on athletic teams; approximately 85 percent are involved in extracurricular activities, including athletics. Each student activity or team typically holds its own end-of-season or end-of-year awards banquet.

# Vision

## CEHS Opens Minds and Opens Doors

### **Mission:**

We empower students with the academic, personal, and social knowledge and skills needed to build fulfilling and engaged lives.

### **Values: Core Values of our School**

**Community.** We value the connections among our school, local, and global communities that foster meaningful participation in a dynamic and diverse world.

**Academics.** We value rich and varied learning experiences that support critical thinking, perseverance, effective communication, and independent and collaborative work inside and outside of the classroom.

**Passion.** We value personal investment in learning in an environment that nourishes joy and creativity, protects risk-taking, and cultivates individual expression.

**Ethics.** We value decision-making and actions guided by the principles of personal integrity, empathy, responsibility, and respect for self and others.

### **Core Beliefs: Core Beliefs about Schools and Learning**

We believe that all students can learn at high levels, but different students learn in different ways and at different speeds. We believe that it is the fundamental job of educators to ensure student learning by working continuously together to answer the following three questions:

- What do we want students to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

We believe that students will most readily learn in an environment that is safe; where they feel known and cared about; where the expectations are clear and the instruction is skillful; where educators collectively share responsibility for student learning; and where students are challenged to see real-life applications of their learning.

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations

All students will learn to....

## **Academic Competencies**

- Write proficiently
- Read well and reflectively
- Conduct appropriate and in-depth research
- Express themselves clearly in oral presentations
- Solve problems and challenges with creativity, insight, and persistence, using tools and resources well suited to the task

Before graduation, each student will demonstrate proficiency reflecting college and career readiness in each content area required by law.

## **Civic and Social Competencies**

- Complete work in a timely way
- Demonstrate academic honesty
- Be engaged in classes
- Persevere and seek/accept help when work becomes difficult
- Treat others with dignity, honesty, and respect
- Work productively in team settings

# **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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

## Conclusion

The Cape Elizabeth School Department developed its statement of core values using a thorough process that involved stakeholders from all parts of the school and town communities and is based on extensive research. The school district began this process in 2011, and in 2012 the district adopted the statement of core values. Parents, community members, students, faculty, and administration collaborated in a small-group process to gather input about what these stakeholders valued in education and in the community's schools. At a full-day leadership retreat, participants reached the decision to adopt the school district's vision. The Richard DuFour model on Professional Learning Communities, the Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, the proficiency-based learning model, the Maine Guiding Principles, and the NEASC Guide for 2009 were used as research to inform their discussions at the school district and high school levels. Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS) adopted the school district statement of core values for the high school in 2014. Both the central office and the high school use the acronym CAPE: Community, Academics, Passion, Ethics. During a leadership retreat at which the school district's core values were adopted, the high school leadership team began work on the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The "Open Minds and Open Doors" slogan came from this retreat. Posters with the CAPE acronym are posted in many places throughout the building. Also, teachers have been working on professional learning community (PLC) principles for several years. The three bullet points in the core values and beliefs are taken from the PLC principles and are embedded in the planning of lessons. The student directed learning (SDL) initiative, which has ten students participating in its first year, is an outgrowth of the core values. The core values and beliefs are published on the high school's website along with a history of their development. Cape Elizabeth High School's core values and beliefs about learning, based on extensive research, are reflective of values and beliefs of students, parents, teachers, and community which mirror the school district's vision. (self-study, teachers, school administrators, parents, students, Endicott survey)

Although Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS) has various rubrics that are used by most departments to assess student work, there are no school-wide analytic rubrics to measure targeted high levels of achievement that are tied to the Cape Elizabeth High School's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The 21<sup>st</sup> century school-wide academic learning expectations include writing, reading, presentation, research, and problem solving which are clearly stated. The civic and social expectations coordinate with the school's core values, but appear more difficult to assess. At this time there are no school-wide analytic rubrics to assess the 21<sup>st</sup> century academic expectations but a rubric addressing one civic and social expectation "completing work in a timely way" is available and used by all faculty. Scores for students are available on-line. Following the past NEASC visit in 2006, the school attempted to create school-wide rubrics that could be adapted to all departments. The school-wide rubrics were tied to the academic learning expectations but proved not to be workable and are no longer used. The development of school-wide rubrics tied to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations became secondary to more pressing, district and state initiatives that were presented, studied, and are being implemented. At this time, the faculty and school leadership are concentrating their efforts on these other initiatives and have put off the school-wide rubric development, as indicated by administrators and in teacher conversations. Teachers indicate that in each department there are rubrics that are used consistently among the teachers to assess

student work within each department. Teachers are beginning to work inter-departmentally to develop rubrics that will eventually be used across some departments. Several departments have created rubrics to assess student work, they are similar from teacher to teacher within departments, but vary from department to department especially within the English, social studies and world language departments. Consistent school-wide rubric construction and use is still in beginning stages. The English, social studies, science, and world language departments are working collaboratively to create a school-wide writing rubric which will hopefully be used by the entire faculty. The lack of school-wide rubrics, used by all stakeholders, to assess student achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and civic and social expectations makes it impossible to measure whether the students are meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century academic, civic, and social expectations or whether the expectations are challenging and measurable. (self-study, teachers, Core Values Standard subcommittee, school administration)

Cape Elizabeth High School's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school especially in the use of the CAPE acronym. However, they are not entirely used to guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. When students and parents were asked about the CAPE acronym, some were unfamiliar with it, but students, parents, and teachers also express the feeling of the school being a "family." The daily achievement/advisory period allows each student the opportunity to connect with an adult other than his or her classroom teachers. Students remain in the same advisory for all four years of high school. Academics and high achievement are encouraged at Cape Elizabeth High School by students, teachers, parents, and administrators. A large number of honors level and Advanced Placement classes offer challenging curriculum opportunities for most students. Several adaptations have been made to the curriculum as the faculty is trying to adapt the core values statement and expectations to the Common Core and Maine's Learning Results. The student directed learning initiative allows students to work on independently developed projects beyond the regular classroom offerings and the senior transition project (STP) affords students the chance to work in areas of interest in the surrounding communities before their high school graduation. Culminating projects are assigned and celebrated at the end of each academic year. These projects allow the students to choose the topic, research, communicate their finding in both written and spoken word, and are graded by community members who are attending these performances. Students are encouraged to follow their passions, and an example of celebrating these passions is the grade 9 World Issues Research Night, however passions and accomplishments are not always acknowledged and celebrated enough for all students at all ability levels. CEHS has an atmosphere of respect among students, teachers, and staff. Supervision in the cafeteria has been reduced to one adult because of the students' responsible behavior. Pride runs deep within all stakeholders invested in CEHS. There is some evidence connecting the school's core values and beliefs about learning to curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices that impact all students, including multiple challenging research and writing projects and class and community presentations. However, when asked, students have very little knowledge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations as they only know it is a poster on school walls. However, students are able to articulate many components of what they would need to successfully graduate from CEHS. Students know what it feels like to be educated at CEHS, but need to know what teachers may be expecting them to know and be able to do. Parents were not able to easily identify which skills a student would need to graduate from CEHS. School-wide

rubrics are needed to assess 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for all students so that students and parents can know which standards and levels of performance are expected to graduate from CEHS. All teachers need training on how to identify and craft school-wide rubrics and to have a voice in this process. Allocation of resources to make this type of professional development available is critical for the school to move forward in creating clear and measurable school-wide 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectation rubrics that drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (self-study, teachers, parents, students, Core Values Standard subcommittee)

Cape Elizabeth High School has documented the review and/or revision of its core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities. However, there are no formal plans or established time lines which indicate how the school will continue to regularly review or revise its core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for all students. Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS) shows a record of review and revisions on the school's website. Classroom posters have been added to make students, parents, and staff aware of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for CEHS. A Vision & Mission survey was completed in 2011 and used to direct the school's work on developing core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for all students. As the process continued through June 2014, further development of currently posted documents were created, however, they were lacking input from community members. Students and parents participated in focus groups to provide feedback. Currently a plan to develop school-wide rubrics to continue this dynamic process is in place to ensure all students attain 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations that are based on information and data from multiple professional sources. When Cape Elizabeth High School develops a timeline or formal plan for continued review or revision of its core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities, students will be ensured that the foundational beliefs and expectations continue to promote a strong school culture and prepare them for the future. (self-study, teachers, school administration, students, parents)

#### Commendations:

1. the use of common rubrics within certain departments
2. the development and implementation of the CAPE acronym
3. the creation of measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
4. the integration of the CAPE tenants into the school culture
5. the implementation of culminating projects at each grade level such as the senior transition project (STP) which reflect and embody the CAPE acronym
6. the high academic standards expected of all grade levels
7. the implementation of the achievement/advisory period which supports the social and civic competencies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

#### Recommendations:

1. provide allocations for professional development training in writing and developing school-wide

## rubrics

2. involve all stakeholders in the development of the school-wide rubrics
3. complete the development of and implementation of school-wide rubrics to measure the effectiveness of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century academic, civic, and social expectations
4. design and use a system to educate students and parents about the use and meaning of the school-wide rubrics for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
5. create a plan or timeline for regular review or revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations which involves input from all stakeholders
6. ensure that the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations drive curriculum, instruction, assessment, policy development, and decision-making



## Curriculum

*The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

## Conclusion

The curriculum at Cape Elizabeth High School is in the early stages of being purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. After reviewing the documents provided by Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS), and having multiple discussions with administration, department heads, teachers, and students, it is evident CEHS is in the beginning stages of implementing their 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. As a result, CEHS has few opportunities to collect data to help in the decision-making process of modifying or deleting courses or units from the curriculum. Learning expectations are found in the classrooms on posters and are incorporated into one commonly taught course within each subject discipline. The only exception is art fundamentals, which is a commonly taught course in the art department. The school has not formally assigned specific expectations to departments. Departments have created the opportunity to include 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations within the two templates used to update all content area's curriculum content, but at this time not all course curriculums in all grade levels are completed. CEHS does have multiple courses in multiple curricular areas, offering learning experiences relating to the school's learning expectations, but it is not school-wide. In the Endicott survey, only 48.3 percent of the faculty report feeling as though the formal curriculum ensures all students have the opportunity to practice and achieve the learning expectations. The teaching staff at CEHS, while there is not a formal assignment of expectations to specific subjects, report that they know what they are responsible for covering in their courses, but most teachers answered that only reading, writing, and problem solving were in their course content, leaving out the civic and social competencies. While Cape Elizabeth High School has identified its 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, the lack of consistent, formal requirements for all courses being taught to include the learning expectations does not ensure all students are being provided the opportunity to practice and achieve the expectations. (Endicott survey, curriculum evidence box, teachers, Curriculum Standard subcommittee)

The school does not have a common template that addresses units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. The school does however, have two similar templates from which faculty can choose to document their curriculum. Absent from one of these templates is a specific category for the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. The learning expectations are not evident, nor referenced in that template. In the other template there is a category for learning expectations, but only the academic expectations are listed. The school does not have curriculum guides written for all content areas or courses. Per the advice of the school's principal, and described in the self-study and interviews, teachers completed a template (either one) for one commonly taught course within their content area. At least one has been drafted for English, math, science, world languages, social studies, and health. A detailed common curriculum format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills that are aligned with the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and includes instructional and assessment strategies will ensure allegiance to a consistently focused curriculum to guide instructional and assessment practices to the benefit of student achievement. (curriculum evidence box, teachers, principal, self-study)

Many of the core courses at Cape Elizabeth High School reflect an emphasis on depth of understanding and application of knowledge through at least one or more of the following: inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, and authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, however, there was little evidence of the curriculum emphasizing cross-disciplinary learning, or informed ethical use of technology as evidenced through examining their limited number of updated course curriculum documents. Cape Elizabeth High School is in the beginning stages of updating its curriculum to ensure it emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge across all subjects and levels. Workroom evidence provided, some student work provided, classroom observations, and student interviews made it clear that most classes regularly employ inquiry and problem solving as methods to drive instruction, although it was significantly less evident in the college prep (CP) classes observed along with student work submitted for review. The evidence also supports the use of higher order thinking in most classes, again less evident in the CP classes observed. The self-study highlights inquiry and problem solving as being the “heart of the science curriculum,” and that a high percentage of students are enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement course. These exemplars were substantiated through classroom observation and were supported by the faculty, parents, and students through the Endicott survey. There is not a formal mechanism to ensure that the application of knowledge is implemented across disciplines. Some teachers reported cross-disciplinary elements happening in the classroom, but that it typically happens when it is a “natural” fit. The need for greater integration of cross-disciplinary learning was substantiated by students and in faculty interviews. It does not appear emphasis on authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school are routinely available or recognized as available by students. These opportunities do exist in the health, PE, and world language classes. A small portion of the school population does participate in alternative, outside of school, learning opportunities. CEHS does provide wonderful real-world learning events such as Technology, Entertainment and Design Youth events (TEDx Youth), the senior transition project, and Model United Nations simulations. By the small number of students enrolled, it seems as though the Portland Arts and Technology High School is under emphasized and an underutilized option at CEHS. The self-study reports a lack of a school-wide integral plan to ensure the ethical use of technology and this was substantiated through observations and interviews. Students and parents are required to read and sign a “Rules Acknowledgment Form” prior to students receiving their iPad. While the curriculum documents do not explicitly address the ethical use of technology, students and teachers both report on the Endicott Survey that they feel they are learning how to use technology ethically. Many teachers, parents, and students feel that CEHS offers a challenging curriculum to its students. While the curriculum provides students with many opportunities to employ inquiry-based and problem solving learning, higher order thinking, and some authentic learning opportunities, when the curriculum includes cross-disciplinary learning and more extensive authentic learning opportunities, all students at Cape Elizabeth High School will have enhanced opportunities to meet the expectations of the curriculum. (Endicott survey, self-study, curriculum evidence box, teachers)

While most of the departments have written curriculum documents in place for commonly taught classes, in one template or the other, there are no exemplars available that would assure consistency and alignment in curriculum writing from one department to the other. Faculty report that they are working on writing and revising curriculum using one of the curriculum templates, and plan to use common

assessments to assure alignment. Some faculty reported that the value in working on the curriculum documents was that it helped them identify what is most important to focus on in their teaching. Faculty also reported that common assessments are being continually developed as part of the teacher evaluation pilot and PLC groups. When the documents are completed, they are reviewed by the principal, but not by the curriculum coordinator. The principal does use walk-throughs, examines lesson plans and occasionally does a mini observation. Without a complete formal alignment between the written and taught curriculum, there is the risk of a lack of continuity within and across grades and courses which can negatively impact student learning. (curriculum evidence box, teachers, building administrators, student work)

Curriculum coordination within high school departments is formally underway as teachers focus on transferring their curriculum into one of the two templates. While there is no evidence of a coordinated vertical articulation, there is evidence of informal coordination of curriculum with the middle school. Faculty reported that the process of documenting the curriculum began ten years ago and the reason for two templates was that the work had been completed and some staff did not see a need to use a different template. As evidenced by the lack of a common written curriculum document, ongoing review and coordination of the entire curriculum, through written documentation has not occurred. Teachers stated that competing initiatives have put pressure on the amount of time that they have to make this an ongoing process, although there is common planning time available for core departments. Some staff members consider the curriculum templates as something to complete, not as a tool to stimulate conversations and to communicate with those outside of the school (i.e., parents, community, and other schools). Staff reported that the way they learn the curriculum content is to talk informally to each other. The cross-department conversations regarding coordination are beginning as this is the first year that time has been allocated to do so within the schedule. From the self-study, the responsibility to coordinate with the one sending school lies with the district's curriculum coordinator who has devoted most of her time to the elementary and middle school. That said, faculty in some departments, such as world languages and the library/learning commons have reached out and developed relationships with the middle school (and elementary school) to coordinate curriculum and programming. While there is a small number of staff members at the high school who informally speak to each other about the curriculum, the absence of a complete written curriculum, utilizing a common template, around which coordination can take place creates a hurdle to efficiently review, to make improvements, and to share with the community; in addition, this use of two template curriculum options, creates challenges in vertical articulation within departments and across schools which can then create gaps in learning for students as well as missed opportunities for cross-disciplinary and cross-grade-level learning experiences. (self-study, teachers, Curriculum Standard Subcommittee, curriculum evidence box)

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. The reported and observed average of 16-18 students in academic courses reflects that staffing at CEHS is adequate. Based on the self-study, interviews with teachers and classroom observations, spending on instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and library-media resources are adequate to support the curriculum. All students are provided

with an iPad; all classrooms have ceiling mounted digital projectors; a few classrooms have SMARTBoards; and Apple TVs have been installed in most classrooms within each department. Teachers reported they have sufficient instructional materials, mostly appropriate technology, and sufficient equipment and supplies to implement their curriculum. The library/media center staff reported having sufficient print and non-print resources to fully support the school's curriculum. In addition to the materials the library has on hand, it has access to inter-library loan for books through the University of Maine system, and access to multiple online databases, periodicals, and professional journals for students. The school does take advantage of the PATHS program, although the numbers are low, but should continue to grow with the internal recognition of the value of the PATHS program. The majority of co-curricular clubs are run without fees, but some clubs supplement funds for materials or travel through fundraising or fees. The perception of inadequate funding for co-curricular clubs is substantiated by a majority of parents reporting during interviews and the Endicott survey, that they feel the programs are insufficiently funded. The town has mandated CEHS collects athletic fees from all students participating in athletics (\$150 per student). Although there is a user's fee to participate in school athletics and waivers can be obtained with application, the fee has not been a barrier to student participation. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum and some other learning experiences and co-curricular activities which provide opportunities for some students to meet the learning expectations. The mandate for athletic fees and occasional need for fundraising or fees for co-curricular activities has not impacted the access for student participation. (teacher interviews, Endicott survey, self-study, parents, students)

While the self-study indicates that the district provides sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation and revision of the curriculum, there was evidence that the process while underway, is at risk of not being sustained and the use of assessment results and current research is informal and sporadic. Some staff reported in interviews that there is not enough time during the school day to complete all of the necessary work, and yet some realized that they have more time than other schools to do the work. Most departments have at least one period within each four-day rotation for the purpose of curriculum work by department. This year the schedule has allowed multiple departments to meet. Other resources include allocated time after school once a month for professional development purposes. Financial resources exist and are reported to be sufficient to support summer curriculum work and participation in off-site workshops and courses. Building administration reported that allocated funding is expended each year. Departments access the funds by making requests to the administration. District funds are in place to support specific initiatives. Building and district leadership work together to coordinate the expenditure of funds. Teachers reported on several competing initiatives and that some take district priority putting others on the back burner. For example, staff members who find the professional learning community (PLC) work valuable are worried that the time allocated will be used for some other purpose. The use of assessment results to make adjustments in curriculum decisions occurs through the PLC process, individual teacher reflection on their lessons/units, and feedback on larger core projects (i.e., iSearch, sophomore research project, etc.) Teachers use the results of their students' individual and group performance to make changes. The research cited in the self-study focuses on differentiation of instruction and tools for curriculum

frameworks. The *Understanding by Design (UbD)* is a well researched, best practice framework for curriculum documentation is being worked on, including during the summer, and the writing and updating of curriculum continues. However, the fact that there are two *UbD* templates in use, CEHS has not yet developed an easily accessible online repository of all of these documents. There are different interpretations of some of the elements of the completed templates (i.e., a worksheet is not an instructional strategy and an assessment is not a goal). By providing the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, financial resources for ongoing collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research, students receive a quality education through comprehensive curricula. (teachers, building administrators, evidence, self-study, Endicott survey)

#### Commendations:

1. the ongoing dedication to innovative projects that align with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, such as the TEDx Youth events, iSearch, sophomore research project, junior policy project, and the senior transition project
2. the high percentage of juniors and seniors choosing to challenge themselves in Advanced Placement courses
3. the availability of many types of technology in classrooms for faculty and students
4. the strong collegial support and collaboration within departments to make improvements in their curriculum areas
5. the school's numerous and diverse clubs and activities all of which enhance the core curriculum
6. the class size which create opportunities for teachers to more easily personalize instruction
7. the strong student/teacher relationships that promote opportunities for high levels of learning
8. the faculty who care about students and work hard to seek ways to ensure student success

#### Recommendations:

1. design curriculum to ensure all students have multiple and varied opportunities to practice and achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. assign and track which departments are responsible for each of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and report the results
3. develop and implement one curriculum template which includes all of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
4. develop quality, school-wide rubrics (exemplars for the written curriculum) so that all staff have a common understanding and are able to use them effectively
5. research, identify, and implement a common language for instructional best practices
6. create and implement opportunities for cross-disciplinary planning to ensure students are learning across the curriculum
7. develop strategies to encourage more students to explore and participate in authentic learning opportunities outside of the school

8. utilize technology and its applications (such as Atlas) to make the documentation, communication and coordination of the curriculum more useful and efficient
9. provide site-based leadership in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and current research practices in adult learning to support staff in their improvement efforts

# 3

## Instruction

*The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

## Conclusion

Cape Elizabeth High School's (CEHS) recent development of a set of core values and beliefs about learning, along with their identified 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations provide a solid foundation from which teachers have just begun to examine their instructional practices. Teachers are familiar with the CAPE acronym (Community, Academics, Passion, Ethics), and most teachers have the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations clearly posted in their rooms. Teachers in departments have begun to discuss how to implement the learning expectations into their instruction. The world languages department is one of the more advanced departments in this process. Most department representatives shared that they are at the beginning stages of developing instruction and tools of assessment that reflect the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations; this information is confirmed in the CEHS self-study. Teachers expressed some concern with beginning the implementation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations' school-wide rubrics. Many teachers struggle to see the connection between the traditional teaching methodology and how the students' level of understanding will be improved with the introduction of school-wide rubrics that reflect the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Parents and students are vaguely familiar with the acronym, and its meaning and role in the educational setting at CEHS. Certainly, the CAPE core values hold much more weight with the CEHS faculty and are integral in the day-to-day interactions among students and faculty members. There was a level of respect that encouraged openness and honesty with regard to delivering and receiving instruction. For example, during a classroom visit, a student admitted to not knowing an answer when asked a question on the spot; the teacher responded, "Thank you for your honesty." The positive rapport shows the value of community in the classroom that helps to facilitate instruction. When teachers consistently and deliberately examine instructional practices using all of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, the school will ensure consistency and alignment with these expectations. Through faculty collaboration during common planning times, teachers must develop ways in which to implement the formal, transparent inclusion of and connection between the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and their instructional practices as well as the CEHS core values and their instructional practices. (classroom observations, self-study, teachers)

Almost all of the instructional practices of Cape Elizabeth High School mirror a more conventional model of instruction and fully supporting the implementation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The CEHS staff has committed itself to the learning expectations of; reading, writing, presentation, research, and problem solving. In many instances at Cape Elizabeth High School, teacher instructional practices do support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Personalizing instruction, for example, according to teacher-provided evidence and interviews with students, supports that students occasionally have "voice and choice" when it comes to selecting independent reading novels, writing prompts, and I-Search research project topics in the English classrooms as well as other choice research project topic opportunities in social studies and science. However, students and teachers both verbalized that it is more of the norm in English courses for students to be reading a shared novel or play across grade level and/or academic level. Students did have a choice in the novel selection process for upcoming literary circles, but this opportunity was limited by the need to have equal group numbers for upcoming literature circles. The "achievement period" is the primary means of personalizing the instructional needs of students. Although this seems to be successful in terms of remediation, interviews

and classroom observations revealed that little is done to adjust instruction within the classroom to ensure student learning. In terms of cross-disciplinary learning, students stressed there was little emphasis placed upon and little opportunity for cross-disciplinary learning to occur. In other words, what happens in “one content area, stays with that content area.” Teachers, according to students, and noted during classroom observations, were concerned with what happens within their classroom walls with little opportunity for communication and collaboration between and among departments. Even more so, when instituted, professional learning community (PLC) time is predominantly devoted to departmental work. Furthermore, students elaborated on how, even though writing takes place in other content areas such as social studies, the focus is on the content and factual recall rather than having them incorporate writing skills such as claim development, counter-claim usage, in-text citations, etc., learned and practiced in English. According to several students in an observed class, they additionally stated how meaningful it would be if “teachers talked with one another” about assignments and allowed them to not only utilize skills from another course but to be held accountable and rewarded for such use. Several classes, including the world issues project and the policy paper required of all students do require collaboration and communication between departments. With that being said, despite some collaboration time between and among departments, teacher-provided classroom time indicates, at least on some levels, that cross-disciplinary connections are taking place.

Without a doubt, the students of CEHS are quite active in their education as confirmed by students, parents, and teachers. There is no denying the intrinsic motivation nearly each and every student has within the building of CEHS; in spite of this drive to succeed, much of the instruction remains teacher-centered and teacher-directed. For, as perceived by students and observed by several committee members during classroom observations, the emphasis is more placed on the grade they get, than the learning they receive; therefore, it appears that instruction is driven in such a way to ensure success on testing rather than learning. Teacher-centered instruction was observed during several classroom observations, in some cases, teachers, following the more conventional model, were in the front of the room lecturing during more than half of the class period, while students were compliant and vigorously taking notes in preparation for an upcoming quiz or test. Although this was apparent during the committee visit, many more teachers practice student-centered instruction. For example, as mentioned previously, students have some ownership when it comes to selecting texts and topics for research. More specifically, in an English classroom, a teacher modeled her own writing and thinking processes and encouraged her students to do the same. From their current draft of a literary analysis essay, students were directed to select a quote from *Othello* that really “spoke to them.” This quote would then become the foundation for the activity of “seen/unseen.” Students were then instructed, although minimally as they were given much creative freedom, to describe what happened in the passage but was “unseen” to the average eye. As more of a facilitator of learning, this teacher elicited a deep, creative, and insightful response from students with very little direct instruction. Nevertheless, despite these progressive inclusions of active student involvement in the classroom, the initiative to select and manage learning appears to be primarily teacher driven. Students of CEHS are clearly exposed to higher order thinking both in class through various mediums such as Socratic seminars and analytical essays and poems and videos; however, as shown in much of the provided student work, the hierarchy of Bloom’s Taxonomy was not commonly reflected. For example, in much of the provided social studies and science student

work samples, many of the question types called for “remembering” and “understanding.” While some questions reached “applying” and “analyzing” few examples of instruction stretched to the top levels of the hierarchy. It is also noted that a variety of assessments were repetitive in nature thus meaning the same types of questions were used over and over with little variety and, again, little push for higher level thinking. When it comes to inquiry, students, in comparison to higher level thinking, are encouraged more frequently to utilize these skills. Students are often asked to use an inquiry-based approach. This medium, although evident in other content areas, is predominantly used in the English classrooms through the means of Socratic seminar. This recurring method of promoting student inquiry is widely used by the English department as noted by both the building principal and English department chair. Problem solving, although overpoweringly and traditionally seen in the math and science classrooms, appears to be present in other content areas as well by means of research, specifically the I-Search project in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, world issues project in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and policy paper in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, upon observation, students in a physical education course were encouraged to independently and within groups discuss the appropriate means to solve problems they encountered during a rope climbing activity.

Much of the authentic learning of CEHS takes place in the world language classrooms through the means of writing letters, food preparation, and as observed on multiple occasions, conversations in the language. To add to this, the science department follows suit with its various, refreshing lab experiences and modeling practices thus extending beyond the conventional lecture and book-work model. Despite these few mentioned sightings of authentic learning from the provided evidence boxes, observations, and student interviews, authentic learning is also found in other areas previously mentioned. With that being said, some attempts are made to authenticate learning from other content areas; however, these attempts are limited in scope. In terms of self-assessment and reflection, CEHS students are frequently asked to evaluate their own work and reflect upon their summative assessments. Nearly all content areas submitted evidence of student work that speaks to the high level of importance that is placed upon the students’ abilities to complete their own self-assessments. Some students came to conclusions regarding their work through an activity or discussion whereas others were given more prescriptive questions to draw written conclusions. Regardless of the method, it is clear that student self-assessment is high on the priority list of most teachers.

As noted in the self-study and garnered through various conversations with faculty, all students have an iPad. It appears that the use of technology is inconsistent and dependent on the comfort level of the teacher. Although many students articulated that they use their iPads daily in their world language classes to utilize apps, in social studies classes to create PowerPoints, and in special education classes to enhance student learning, while others stress they go long periods of time without having any need for their school-issued technology. Many even included that their iPads “were dead and in their lockers and had been since the beginning of the school year.” Even so, some students and teachers expressed great enthusiasm about the endless technology possibilities in their classes. The use of Kahoot, ebackpack, turnitin.com, and Google Docs were referenced in conversations and were witnessed during classroom observations. One teacher, a member of the English department, indicated her classroom was completely paperless. This current use of technology reflects progression toward a broader spectrum of

integration. Furthermore, the library information technology specialists verbalized that there is currently “no burning platform to change.” In fact, according to observations and student discussions, much expected technology integration is met with great resistance. The strongest arguments being that students, if given the opportunity, will choose “paper over technology” (meaning school-issued technology). The technology staff emphasized that with the upcoming, more “tech savvy” 8<sup>th</sup> graders, teachers will have to change as there will be a “platform” to do so. To support the current state of technology within the school, various faculty and students stressed that technology is often used primarily to house assignments and calendars rather than used to formulate instruction. The science department laments that their instruction has suffered immensely due to the inclusion of iPads rather than laptops since they are not able to include graphs and charts and to utilize science equipment within the labs. However, the school has supported the science department having laptops and these are stored in the two physics classrooms, making it easier for students to access material needed. The CEHS faculty makes great effort and strives to instruct their students in such a way that they will be prepared for their futures. In order for all students to be successful in achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations; personalizing instruction, engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, and integrating technology on all levels, it is essential that professional development time as well as common planning time to be devoted to making the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, a more motivating factor when it comes to adjusting and growing instruction. (students, student work, self-study report, instruction evidence box, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

The adjustment of instructional practices is used by many teachers to meet the needs of students. In particular, at Cape Elizabeth High School, formative assessments seem to be used by many across content areas. Despite some evidence in each and every content area, many teachers note having only used formative assessment a “few times a quarter” or a “few times a month.” Students corroborate this evidence through their articulations of the common routine present in many of their classes. Traditionally and commonly, they are given materials; they study the materials; they are quizzed or tested on the materials. Although exit slips, “do-nows,” dip sticking, for example, are used by some on a “daily” or “weekly” basis, the frequency is inconsistent within departments and within individual classrooms. The concentration of instruction seems to be devoted to summative assessments along with many other formative check-ins along the way. A wide variety of common formative assessments were developed during the PLC’s. Students however, stressed that on many occasions that it is “about the test” in all levels from CP to honors to AP. In other words, the summative assessment is sometimes often the first time many students feel they are being asked to display an understanding of their knowledge. More importantly, in some classes, summative assessments are deemed the “end all, be all” by students. Summative assessments are revisited, but not by all teachers, and although in many cases, rewrites on essays are recommended, they are rarely required. Overall, there are many instances of formative assessments being used to their full capacity to specifically help individual students learn necessary concepts and skills. As an illustration, during a teacher interview with a member of the English department, a lesson was shared that focused on a formative assessment used to see where students were with their rhetorical analysis writing. Students were given a passage from a text and asked to write an essay analyzing the author’s purpose and how the purpose was achieved. The teacher used these results as a springboard into her instruction that followed. The teacher then addressed the areas

where students struggled in their writing and differentiated her lessons to both revisit and reinforce these writing skills in the classroom. This formative assessment not only provided an opportunity to elicit valuable information regarding student progress, but also encouraged the teacher to alter instructional practices to better prepare students for the end of the unit summative assessment. One English teacher articulated formative methods she uses within the classroom as a barometer of student understanding. For example, she circulates around the class briefly checking in with each student verbally as well as providing individual, more in-depth conferences in order to get a feel for the level of understanding. Other teachers in other departments also use this technique. Regardless of these strong examples of formative assessment use, many teachers often utilize the achievement period in order to provide students with additional support and opportunities.

Alternative strategies within the walls of some classrooms were observed. However, great measures are being taken to ensure purposeful use of group learning activities. In conversations with various faculty members, students, and as presented in the provided student work, it is clear that purposeful grouping is an honored and frequently practiced method of instruction. In particular, some science and math teachers vocalized the frequency of the use of this method as well as how it is an invaluable tool. A physics teacher specifically noted how he mixes up the groups. He does always put the same level of students together as he values the concept of “the student as the teacher.” Classroom observations illustrated the utilization of group learning activities. Although the groupings may be more based on proximity or student choice than on planned and intentional grouping, it is clear the value teachers find in having students work and learn together in various capacities. The faculty of CEHS truly believe they have their students’ best interests in mind when creating instruction. The desire and passion to lead their students down a path of success was observed through the countless observations and various interactions with faculty members. However, the scope of instructional strategies is, at times, limited. Certainly, attempts are made to diversify instruction and there is evidence of more progressive forms of instruction such as the appropriate and effective use of formative assessments to help motivate instruction. Thus, there needs to be more accountability through the means of supervision and evaluation as well as developed and implemented beneficial professional development to help encourage and maintain movement towards valuable change. (instruction evidence box, classroom observations, student shadowing, student work, teacher interviews)

Many teachers have utilized various opportunities that they feel are valuable to student instruction to further develop and improve upon their instructional practices. Many teachers reported gaining a great deal of professional growth during the professional learning community (PLC) time that allows teachers to work collaboratively with one another. Some teachers are also using their common planning time to meet at least once per week for professional discourse. They use this time to connect on assignments, discuss and analyze student achievement, and share teaching and assessment strategies that have worked or need improvement. Specifically, the science and math departments have utilized this time to reflect on common assessments and classes to assess the validity of questions and to discuss instructional practices to make content delivery more effective and more accessible to all students. Lately, a lot of time was used to discuss school and district initiatives (such as the Shackleford work and NEASC), and teachers are looking forward to returning to the original intent of the PLC - to discuss and seek

improvement in instruction in a structured but relaxed, informal manner which many teachers find more satisfying.

Teachers across all curriculum areas shared that they have sought professional development in a variety of ways. Some have attended state and national conferences to examine current research in respective disciplines. Some have served on professional boards and participate in listservs to gain insight into current practices within content areas. Others have continued their education resulting in advanced degrees. While all teachers respect and appreciate the opportunity the district gives to teachers to “improve instructional strategies,” a recent district initiative on differentiated learning was presented to faculty and was recently met with resistance because of teachers’ concerns with a loss of class time with their students and poor presentation of the material. Many see the value in differentiated instruction. Most but not all faculty members noted that by offering course level choices, CEHS does allow for differentiation. The achievement center also helps to provide differentiation. Some teachers said that the achievement period request is a “last resort” for teachers who have attempted to connect with students in class. Others, however, use the achievement period as their primary means of supplementing their instruction rather than adjusting their classroom teachings. The science department uses PLC time to discuss and improve upon the “modeling method” of teaching science that continues to evolve through self-study and collaboration among department members. In some cases, students report being asked by the teacher what works best for them in order to maximize learning. Students have remarked that teachers who have joined CEHS more recently are more open to student feedback of instruction. Some current students who have been surveyed on their learning preferences at the beginning of the a school year, commented that the information is either not revisited or if it is, teachers remark that the information will be used the following school year which is frustrating to students who would have appreciated their learning needs comments being addressed during that school year; however, most students feel that teachers at CEHS do a good job delivering instruction. During the parent meeting, most parents said they are only asked for feedback on their children’s learning needs if a problem arises and the teacher needs the information to better understand their children. However, all felt confident in the instruction at Cape Elizabeth High School because their children who are now in college remark how prepared they are to meet with success in their post-secondary schools. Many teachers reported that while a new evaluation system is forthcoming, formal evaluations have not been a part of improvement for teacher instruction for quite some time. The new Marshall method of evaluation should allow for some great discussion and opportunities for improvement in instruction. In classroom observations, formative assessments were sometimes evident: during informal questioning in class, the use of Kahoots, and review of student work among other methods. Some teachers use “exit slips” to get a pulse on the level of understanding of the instruction. Others use quizzes and monitor student understanding with quick snapshots of assessment. One of the most impressive programs to come from the reflection of instruction has been the Freshman Academy. The purpose and design of this program is to help at-risk students connect with other male faculty members and older students at CEHS to create conversations around success and build their motivation for it. There are plans to continue the Freshman Academy into next year. The program just happened to be filled with only boys this year. Because of that, teachers have felt that the boys were able to open up more and create trusted relationships with other males at CEHS--teachers and upperclassmen. Next year, teachers would like to see the Freshman

Academy continue for boys and institute one for girls which will be run by female teachers. The school seeks new and innovative ways to assist students in their educational endeavors by offering programs like Freshman Academy, the achievement center and the achievement period. Before implementing district-wide professional development initiatives, administrators should recognize and seek feedback from teachers who are certainly dedicated to seeking individual opportunities and collaborative opportunities to research improved and current instructional practices. When all teachers, individually and collaboratively, engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, examine student work, use feedback from a variety of sources, and examine current research, instructional practices will continue to improve and student achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations will be enhanced. (teachers, instruction evidence box, parents, student, classroom observations, Instruction Standard subcommittee)

Many teachers at Cape Elizabeth High School maintain and seek expertise in their content areas to improve upon instructional practices in the classroom. Teachers seek content-specific support via reading of online journals and listservs, attending conferences, and from course work. Some of the teachers in the English department recently attended a conference at Bard College and brought some Shakespeare-specific instructional strategies back to their students. In fact, within just two days of having attended the conference, a teacher was observed using an analysis strategy to help students gain understanding of the difficult text in *Othello*. Other teacher's value experiences as AP readers, attending AP conferences, attending the National Association of American Physics Teachers (NAAPT) science conference, and staying current and connecting to a broader professional peer group by reading and contributing to listservs. The library currently supports teachers in their improvement of instruction by supplying teachers with up-to-date resources in all areas across the curriculum; from writing and reading across the curriculum to helping teachers boost student interest, a wide variety of topics exist in the professional library. The library also has a current subscription to *English Journal*, *Educational Leadership*, and *Education Week* for teachers to access. The administration, school board, district curriculum coordinator, and department heads all support professional learning opportunities for teachers. However, it is important for teachers to have a balance among their quest for that expert knowledge, quality, and time away from students which is most important to teachers. Most all teachers very much value their time with their students and recognize their importance in covering the content to prepare students, for example for the AP exams. However, teachers do often seek professional development opportunities that apply directly to their content, their instruction and their goals to achieve high learning outcomes for their students. Some teachers do not only rely on the experts to drive their teaching, but on their students who have commented that they have received surveys and informal questionnaires about the delivery of the instruction in health and physical education, English, and biology. Students are asked to comment on what they find most helpful in helping them to achieve learning the content. However, this is not consistent in all classes among all teachers. Conversations around the use of Panorama as a method to elicit anonymous parent and student feedback to improve instruction is a valuable plan to incorporate reflection as a means of improvement. Continued involvement by teachers in pedagogical endeavors who are reflective practitioners and maintain expertise in their content area, tied to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations will assist teachers as they strive to meet the needs of all students at Cape Elizabeth High School. (teacher interviews, teachers,

classroom observations, panel presentation, self-study)

Commendations:

1. the variety of programs that have been designed and implemented to assist students who are struggling (i.e., the achievement center, the achievement period, and Freshman Academy)
2. the grouping of students to reach understanding through collaboration
3. the faculty's strong knowledge of and passion for content area subjects
4. the use of student "voice and choice" that is allowed in novel selection and research projects across subject areas and across grade levels
5. the research projects at all four grade levels that reflect the commitment to research, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
6. the evidence of higher level thinking through the use of Socratic seminars
7. the presence of authenticity of learning in the world languages, science, health, PE, art, technology and social studies departments as it reflects real life experiences and issues
8. the support of teachers in their desire to develop professionally and explore many various opportunities to grow
9. the dedicated teachers who seek feedback for individual and collaborative opportunities to improve instructional practices

Recommendations:

1. connect instruction more explicitly with the CEHS' 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. develop various instructional strategies and expand the use of student centered instruction to meet a variety of individual learning styles and individual needs of students
3. encourage more teachers to discuss formative assessments to inform meaningful change or to validate instruction
4. seek and use time to collaborate and create opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning
5. integrate technology more frequently to improve upon and adjust instruction and seek professional development toward this end
6. re-evaluate the use of iPads as the best means of technology for the school as well ensure that they are being used appropriately and effectively
7. develop and later implement instructional strategies to better personalize learning for all students within the learning community at CEHS through the use of professional development time
8. continue to find ways to share experiences with peers that are both innovative and effective in content areas

# 4

## Assessment of and for Student Learning

*Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
  - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students and their families
  - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

## Conclusion

Currently, the professional staff of Cape Elizabeth High School does not fully implement a formal, ongoing process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The vast majority of the professional staff at CEHS do not deliberately use 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to guide their instruction. Within departments, some common rubrics are used. English, social studies, and world languages have some variations of the 6+1 Trait Writing Model. However, this rubric has been adjusted in each of the respective departments to reflect student needs related to the subject matter. Also, many departments are entering a separate report card grade on a four-point scale based on work completion under "Civic and Social Standards." However, there are no school-wide rubrics that address the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations explicitly. There appears to be some indifference to accomplishing the initiative of establishing school-wide rubrics, as several staff members indicated that they questioned the value of such action. Full implementation of a formal process to employ school-wide rubrics at every level of instruction will ensure that all students are regularly assessed in their achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Once fully implemented, CEHS faculty and administration will have a reliable way to measure both individual as well as school-wide achievement of its expectations for all students. (teachers, school leadership, parents, students, self-study)

The school is in the beginning stages of communicating, in writing, individual student progress toward its 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students, families, and the school community. CEHS has an identified benchmark date, (to take place during the 2016-17 school year) at which time it will share these 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations with all stakeholders. Currently, CEHS is piloting a separate "standards" section on report card grades on a one-to-four scale on "work completion" for all subjects. Communication, while limited for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, is easily accessible by the vast majority of the community via iPads or other devices both at home and also at the school. Currently, student progress in their courses, is communicated to students and families through the PowerSchool portal. The portal allows students and parents to instantly access grades for students' current classes. Although there is overwhelming accessibility to the portal, there is no formal report which is mailed to parents that indicates student performance which, in all likelihood according to parents and students, means a small number of students/parents are not reached. Also, there is no formal report which indicates student performance toward achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations as a whole. When the CEHS faculty develops and implements a formal process that utilizes school-wide rubrics to assess all students it can begin to communicate both individual and school-wide achievement to students, their families, and the school community. (teachers, school leadership, parents, students, self-study)

While some teachers and departments at CEHS collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement, currently there is not a formal school-wide process to engage in this work. Departments such as world languages, English, math, science, and social studies meet during their common planning time to analyze data and adjust formative as well as summative assessments based on student needs. Inequities are identified during this process. When inequities are apparent, faculty members reported that they adjust curriculum, assessment, and instruction based on

inequities in student achievement. Because there are no school-wide analytic rubrics, teachers are unable to consistently assess student work across various areas of study. Faculty and school leadership report that teachers have weekly professional learning community (PLC) and department meetings to review student work. Some departments do review summative assessment results, such as the world languages department, when they realized that their final oral assessment was too complex. Students talked for too long, so teachers went back and analyzed how to make the assessment more succinct, but still make sure all needed skills were addressed. With standardized testing, it is somewhat unclear how results are incorporated into curriculum. For instance, a math teacher indicated that his department examined the upcoming Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and noticed that there are more questions that are focused on statistics. Consequently, the department changed its curriculum to have more practice with statistics. With regard to an achievement gap, school leadership reported that, “we have a gap that we are looking at, and are considering shifting math and reading practices (as a result)...we have had more of a gap than we are comfortable with, considering the demographic....and still have 20 percent that are not where we want them to be.” Approximately every two weeks, the school counseling department sends out a list of students who are identified as operating below expectation and they are referred to the achievement center, which is a multi-disciplinary learning lab that is staffed by teachers and teacher assistant (TA) students during all periods of the school day. Students also receive extra support through the achievement period, which is a 30-minute small group or one-on-one tutoring time with a teacher to provide additional help. If a student is struggling in several classes, they can be referred to an academic skills coach. While CEHS is making commendable efforts to establish a comprehensive process for assessment, disaggregation, and analysis of data, the school will be more equipped to respond to inequities in student achievement when there are standard protocols and school-wide rubrics established. (teachers, school leadership, parents, students, self-study)

Although, the vast majority of teachers do not routinely communicate the school’s applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations prior to each unit of study, many teachers frequently communicate specific learning goals at the outset of new units. There was substantial evidence that teachers do articulate expectations for assignments in the English, social studies, and world languages departments, as each of these departments use some form of the 6+1 Trait Writing Model. Each of these areas of study have adjusted the specifics of the rubric to fit the needs of the learning communities within their departments. Teachers in these departments also address essential questions and skills that will be addressed during the next unit. For example, a world language teacher introduced a unit by showing the essential questions in the target language and stated what the final assessment would be and the skills to be addressed. Science uses purpose-driven, inquiry-based approaches to labs for freshman physics, which limits explicit unpacking of learning expectations. There is evidence that teachers explain to their students what will be assessed prior to each unit of study. For instance, multiple social studies teachers utilize essential questions to frame a unit. These are often written on boards and are evident in several pieces of student work. However, students commented that in many Advanced Placement (AP) level classes, it is not about the process, but about the final product. When asked if teachers explain why students need to know certain material, students are told, “because it’s on the test.” Prior to each unit of study, all teachers at CEHS should communicate specific learning goals to students as they relate to the school’s applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, CEHS must design and implement rubrics and

protocols for addressing these 21<sup>st</sup> century skills prior to each unit of study. (teachers, self-study, school administration, observation)

Most teachers at CEHS do provide students with scoring guides or corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments. According to the Endicott survey, nearly 80 percent of students agree that they see scoring guides or rubrics ahead of time and understand what work they need to accomplish to meet their teachers' expectations. However, many of these scoring guides are based on AP test grading scales, scoring in a range from one-to-four points per skill to be addressed. This is largely due to the fact that the school is caught between a more traditional educational style and the standards-based educational model. School leadership stated that community expectations have been keeping the education model "traditional," but that they are in the process of becoming standards-based in accordance with state law. There is a high percentage of summative assessments that are standard tests. However, there are examples of scoring guides and rubrics outlining expectations for when students have to produce essays and projects related to specific learning objectives. In the world languages department, teachers will pass out a scoring guide or rubric ahead of time and show an example of an "A" level piece of work and how it aligns with the rubric. A teacher did indicate that more work needs to be done by showing more student models (not just teacher made) and work of different levels of ability. When all teachers make available corresponding rubrics, not just scoring guides, for every student prior to summative assessments, students will have a clear understanding of course expectations. (Endicott survey, students, school administrators, teachers)

At CEHS, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. According to the Endicott survey, almost 97 percent of teachers stated that they use a variety and range of formative and summative assessment strategies. This was confirmed through classroom observations, teacher interviews, students, and student work. Teachers assess learning on a day-to-day basis through observations of students. For example, the world languages department uses online gaming programs like Kahoot and Quizlet Live to have students practice the information, but the teacher can also take note of where students are excelling or need extra help and to which students this pertains. Teachers in the social studies and math departments use quizzes to inform what they need to re-explain before the summative assessment. If a student is not doing well, teachers will book them for achievement period or send home an email with their concerns. Some teachers use exit slips to check student comprehension. Depending on the teacher, students are allowed to rework their assignments. Typically, in several departments, if a student has a failing grade, he or she can rework the assessment to earn up to a score of 80 points out of 100. Teachers in the world languages program provide teacher-made, A-level exemplars for assignments/projects. Other teachers, such as in the science and math departments, have student exemplars around the room from various projects. Teachers refer to them to remind students that they have touched upon similar material before or to show various ways an assignment can be completed. Many summative assessments still follow traditional structures, such as multiple choice tests, essays, and projects, even though the essay and project formats may vary. When a group of students were asked if they did performance assessments, they did not understand what that was. Students explained that they often worked on projects during freshman and sophomore year, but as juniors, multiple choice tests were more common in order to prepare them for AP testing. Student work

revealed that summative assessments follow more of a traditional route, and they are used appropriately to assess what students know, but not necessarily what they can do. Some departments are making strides toward assessments that measure application of knowledge, as stated in the school leadership team meeting. The English department is practicing Socratic seminars; a science teacher uses a motion project during which students have to describe a motion using correct terms and film it; and the world languages department uses movies, visuals, and audio sources for their assessments. Employing a range of formative and summative assessment strategies and using them appropriately will assist teachers as they monitor student progress and accountability. (Endicott survey, self-study, classroom observations, student work, teachers, students)

While the CEHS faculty is provided with opportunities to collaborate, the process is not formal or uniform across the school. Teachers reported that core departments have a common planning time and meet one to two times a week to create and review formative and summative assessments. It is up to the department chair to schedule department meetings to discuss these areas of concern. However, it appears there is continuity within several departments in the school when it comes to reviewing summative assessment data/results in order to modify instruction, curriculum, and assessments. Representatives from the social studies, physical education, English, science, math, and world languages departments have evidence of modified assessments as a result of analyzing effectiveness of instructional strategies. There is an ongoing effort to use common assessments across various subjects. A member of the math department reported that 80 percent of assessments are common for the specific level being taught. Social studies, science, English, physical education, health, and world languages are using common assessments. Furthermore, each department is making efforts to use common assessments as a standard practice. For instance, there is year-long current world issues research project that includes a historical component which is very much an authentic learning experience for students. Teachers do not regularly examine school-wide rubrics to ensure they are meeting student needs because they do not exist. According to teacher interviews, the last example of school-wide rubrics, such as a presentation rubric, was over eight years ago, and was discontinued for a variety of reasons, such as the State of Maine shifting to new learning standards. That said, within departments there appears to be consistent and regular revision of formative and summative assessments to improve instructional practice. A more formal implementation, including protocols, of the professional learning community model will provide additional time for collaboration on specific criteria such as the creation, analysis, and examination of formative and summative assessments to ensure that teachers are meeting all student needs. (parents, teachers, students, self-study)

Some teachers provide students with specific, timely, and corrective feedback and the opportunity to revise/resubmit their work before it is formally assessed. The majority of students that were interviewed reported that “it depends on the teacher” if they are allowed to revise work. Parents reported inconsistency as well, with regard to consistency and regularity of feedback. The most indicative testimony came from a parent that has two children in the school, who are assigned two different teachers. This parent reported that despite the quality of work being identical, one child consistently gets higher scores, but less feedback. Although, one of the children is scoring lower, they are more knowledgeable of the subject matter than the other. There is inconsistency in the way teachers provide

feedback that is useful for students in increasing their understanding of the subject matter. Multiple students reported that it is all about the score and not necessarily the content of a learning expectation. “Play the game” is a phrase that is commonly understood by students, and is used by some faculty to describe the purpose of an assessment being to score as many points as possible, rather than to adequately understand a learning target. Some teachers do not provide feedback from a summative assessment prior to a new unit of study. In fact, according to several students “it can take weeks” for some classes. Science was referenced directly by this student group, and some students reported that they made the same mistakes on an assessment because they had not received any feedback from the previous assessment. The world languages department utilizes retakes and offers opportunities to demonstrate mastery multiple times. Teachers have correction keys that they use to aid students in such remastery. Student learning will likely improve when all teachers consistently provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback.(parents, students, teachers, self-study, administrators)

Some teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. There is common language across the school with regard to formative assessments. The vast majority of interviewed teachers, administrators, support staff, and students understand the concept of formative assessments. All of these groups can cite and produce examples of formative assessments. Results of these formative assessments are reviewed in PLCs with a focus on adjusting instruction based on the data that is analyzed. Teachers in many departments use homework and quizzes to inform their instruction. For example, a teacher in the history department uses quizzes and tests as a way to keep track of student progress. If students do not understand a concept, then that information is revisited, retaught, and added into the next assessment as well. Teachers have recently attended a workshop on differentiated instruction and some teachers are working toward integrating this concept into their formative instruction. As teachers continue to employ a range of formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction within their own classroom and within their department, student learning will be more closely monitored, understood, and improved. (teachers, self-study, classroom observations, Assessment Standard subcommittee)

Teachers and administrators do not have a formal process to examine evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice; however, they do analyze student work, common course/ grade-level assessments, standardized assessments, and in some cases survey data from current students. Moreover, they do examine data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions. They do not analyze survey data from alumni or individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. There is evidence of common assessments, by department at various levels of study, which provide empirical data to be analyzed. There is no formal process to examine this data, and no school-wide rubrics to ensure consistency in grading practices. Several faculty members verified that there is no standing academic standards committee to revise curriculum, or to review instructional practice. However, every department in the school does, uniquely, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. The priority appears to be improving instruction in the short term over the more long-term impacts of curriculum changes. These examinations of student data are handled at the department level, and then within PLCs. School administrators reported that they are

in the process of piloting the Panorama survey program. The overarching objective is to revise instruction to best meet the needs of the students, and to improve achievement while simultaneously reducing the gap that exists. Seven teachers volunteered for Panorama, and after the initial survey was given at the end of the first semester (January 2016), five more teachers have joined the movement to incorporate surveys for feedback to prioritize, for example, the revision of instruction, relationship building, and classroom management. Despite evidence of collaboration between and among departments, when the school establishes a uniform policy for data collection, curricular and instructional revision practices will be more effective and consistent across the school. (self-study, school leadership, teachers, school counselors)

Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised within departments, but there is no evidence of school-wide consistency among all departments. The professional staff does not regularly review and discuss the school's grading practices in light of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. However, it does appear that the professional staff regularly reviews the school's grading practices to ensure they reflect the balanced use by all teachers of formative, summative, and common assessments. This is done by departments, not school-wide, so it is not consistent with all teachers. According to teachers and support staff, more could be done with grading related to the school's core values and beliefs about learning. For changes to the school's grading practices, CEHS is currently in a pilot year of grading work completion under civic and social competencies. Teachers appear to have mixed feelings on this. Some have stated that it helps make it more clear for parents to know how well their children are working in class, while others feel that students have stopped doing their homework because it "doesn't count" anymore. The world languages department is also piloting a proficiency-based grading system. Other departments such as English and social studies have started to adapt some of these practices as well. Overall, there is no current way that the professional staff ensures that grading practices are consistent across all subject areas and by all teachers. Within departments there is consistency, but there is not any dialogue to keep track of grading practices with all departments. Therefore, grading practices are not consistent across curricular areas. The regular review and revision of grading and reporting practices within departments will ensure alignment within those departments, however a formal process must be developed to align grading practices interdepartmentally. (teachers, classroom observations, Assessment Standard subcommittee, self-study)

#### Commendations:

1. the communication of specific learning goals and skills prior to each unit of study is consistent across all departments
2. the use of employing a range of formative and summative assessment strategies to monitor student progress and accountability
3. the improvement of student learning by employing a range of formative assessment to inform and adapt instruction within teachers' classrooms and within departments
4. the collaboration among departments with the 6+1 writing rubric
5. the regular review and revision of grading and reporting practices within departments that ensure alignment within those departments

Recommendations:

1. ensure that the school-wide rubrics are regularly used by all teachers with all students so that the school can assess individual student and school achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. develop and implement a process to educate all stakeholders on how to read and utilize school-wide rubrics
3. provide additional time for collaboration on specific criteria such as creation, analysis, and examination of formative and summative assessments to ensure that teachers are meeting all students' needs
4. develop and implement a uniform policy for data collection amongst faculty to aid the curricular and instructional revision practices across the school
5. develop and implement a formal process to align grading practices interdepartmentally to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning
6. provide professional development for all teachers in the writing and scoring of rubrics
7. create a system to report out successful completion of results of the learning expectations to the community
8. utilize data teams to analyze and communicate the data
9. ensure that all faculty members and all departments use the newly devised school-wide rubrics
10. ensure coordination with all departments and curriculum areas, with the middle school, and with input from the district's curriculum coordinator

# **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 and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

## Conclusion

The Cape Elizabeth High School community continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations. It is clear that Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS) is a safe, supportive, positive and respectful place and there is a great deal of pride in CEHS from staff and students. All school staff, from teachers to the cafeteria staff, know students well and have developed strong relationships with students. On the National Center for School Leadership and Engagement satisfaction survey, 81 percent of students have a favorable rating for the overall climate, and 91 percent reported feeling safe at school. Other indicators a safe, positive, and respectful culture include the following examples: student lockers are not locked, students are given the responsibility to take ownership of their behavior exemplified by a reduction in adult supervision during cafeteria time, junior and senior privileges, and the decision to do away with bells. CEHS offers 46 clubs and 26 athletic teams, in addition to strong music and theater programs. In a 2013 National Center for School Leadership Student Engagement and Satisfaction survey, results indicated that a majority of CEHS students participated in extracurricular activities. Many of these activities are student driven which highlights the school's investment in fostering student responsibility and shared ownership. It is important to note that in the Maine Integrated Youth Health survey, 18 percent of students reported that they had been bullied within the last year. CEHS investment in a positive school culture is evidenced in their response to these survey results. Following the results, CEHS responded by bringing in Steve Wessler, a human rights educator to meet with students and staff to gain a greater understanding of school culture. The school continued its efforts by bringing Steve Wessler back in 2015 to train staff members so that they would then be able to train students. The CEHS discipline policy is very clearly written and the high expectations of CEHS student conduct are evident. CEHS reported five out-of-school suspensions and five in-school suspensions in the 2014-2015 school year. The student handbook and program of studies reflect high academic expectations for students at CEHS. The program of studies describes levels of courses including college prep and honors/AP course offerings. The CEHS culture is one that places extremely high emphasis on academic achievement and a high level of competition among students is present. The emphasis on academic achievement, competitiveness, and community expectations result in a great deal of stress experienced by a large number of students at CEHS and also results in feelings of inadequacy among the college preparatory students. During conversations with students and parents, one student reported, "I feel like I am not smart" and one parent asked, "What is wrong with average?" CEHS is working toward the development of programming to improve the cultural norm through groups such as TEDx Youth club and Flash-chat, which is intended to motivate and inspire the student body and to place an emphasis on finding students' passions. There is a significant need for continued work in the area of cultivating a culture in which all successes by all students are the primary focus of celebration. This is necessary in order to reduce the level of stress of all students and in order for all students to feel successful regardless of the course level in which the students are enrolled at CEHS. The school community builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership and pride for all.(school support staff, self-study, principal, parents, students, school website)

The school provides access to challenging academic experiences for most students, however, the school

is limited in its ability to make certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The program of studies clearly indicates graduation requirements for all students who graduate from CEHS. The offerings consist of honors, AP, and college prep courses. Although more efforts have been made at having heterogeneous groupings through the ability of students and parents to self-select course levels, total heterogeneous grouping at the present time is limited to the English and world language departments. Students are recommended for honors or college prep courses based on teacher recommendations. If students and parents disagree with the recommendations, the student can appeal the decision to the department and then to the principal. It is reported that students are able to elect the level of English and French, however, the other core academic areas require students to complete an appeal process, which is usually approved. The Endicott survey results indicate that 77 percent of students feel they have the opportunity to take courses in which students of varying levels of ability are enrolled; 64 percent of teachers agree. In addition, an adequate level of challenge was not evident in some CP classroom observations, or when examining CP level work samples, however many other CP courses do contain a very challenging curriculum. CEHS needs to continue to evaluate and enhance curriculum to ensure access to challenging academic experiences for all students and that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (program of studies, self-study, teacher meetings, classroom observations, student work)

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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The development of the advisory program in 2014 provides all CEHS students with an adult in the building who knows them well in addition to the school counselor. The relationship between the student and advisor is strengthened by the fact that students are also assigned to the same advisor for the achievement period Monday through Thursday. The students are randomly assigned by grade level to advisories which provides students an opportunity to get to know other students they may not otherwise know and encourages an atmosphere of mutual respect. The program, which does not have a written curriculum, is scheduled to meet every Friday for 30 minutes. The advisory program is still in the early stages. The continued development of the advisory program will ensure that 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. More time and focus is needed in regards to advisor training and curriculum development in order to properly assist the students in achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, students, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators)

The principal and professional staff regularly engage in a variety of professional efforts designed to improve student learning. A climate of administrative support exists for individual teachers to seek out independent professional development opportunities. Teachers engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning. Cape Elizabeth High School does dedicate formal time to implement professional development and does apply the skills, practices, and ideas

gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Cape Elizabeth High School utilizes resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices. The district adequately and consistently funds individual professional development. In addition, Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation (CEEF) grants encourage innovative and creative ideas that enhance instruction, support collaboration and partnerships, explore new teaching practices, impact a significant number of students, and benefit future students by spreading to other classrooms and teachers. The school year begins with two dedicated professional days. In addition, professional development time is set aside monthly after school, during four early release days and two full days during the school year. Evidence gathered from teacher interviews indicate that while professional development time is scheduled, professional development is not always seen as organized, structured, and productive. In addition, input from staff has not always been considered in the professional development planning process. CEHS has invested a great deal into the professional learning communities (PLC) model as is indicated by the fact that many of the staff attended state and national conferences dedicated to this model. Common planning time was also initiated for core area teachers in order for PLC departmental work to take place. Science, math, English, world languages, and social studies share common planning time. Some PLC work that took place during the common planning time, resulted in many new initiatives demanding time of staff and of the inability for all teachers to have common planning time. The PLC model again has been refocused on such things as; curriculum writing, common assessment development and collaborative support of students. When the school provides prioritization for ongoing professional development and collaborative application of professional learning, staff, will be able to provide students with the highest quality educational experience possible and achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teachers, principal, self-study, classroom observations)

School leaders are in the process of piloting a research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focuses on improved student learning. In February 2014, a district-wide teacher and principal evaluation committee was formed. This was done as a result of the state's passage of LD 1858 "An Act to Ensure Effective Teaching and School Leadership." The committee researched a variety of programs and selected Kim Marshall's professional educator growth and evaluation system for both educator and principal. In February 2015, workshops, facilitated by Marshall, were offered to staff. Marshall returned in August 2015 for a day-long training for the entire district. Marshall is scheduled to return to complete mini-observations with evaluators. In the 2015 school year, the principal is piloting the evaluation program with teacher volunteers. The teachers who volunteered to take part in the pilot, developed SMART goals both personal and professional as part of the evaluation process. Those goals were discussed with the administration prior to the mini-observations. The principal is working toward completing six mini-observations per teacher which also include a brief conversation and a brief written summary. After the completion of the mini-observations, the principal and the staff member will meet to review mini-observation feedback and will reflect on the SMART goals. The principal is completing mini-observations with all teachers, not just those involved in the pilot program. In addition to teacher evaluations, the superintendent is evaluating the principal utilizing the same pilot program. The administration is also currently researching rubrics to be utilized in evaluating support staff. The committee plans to assess the program at the end of the school year. The development and full implementation of the new evaluation and supervision program will improve instruction and assist

teachers with meeting the needs of all CEHS students. (teachers, self-study, administrators, central office personnel)

The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of students. The 55-minute period which follows a four-day rotating schedule was reviewed several years ago. The school experimented with other scheduling options but after one year the school determined, based on community feedback, that the 55-minute period worked best for CEHS students in most areas with the exception of science. As a result, students were assigned to two science blocks for most science lab courses (physics and chemistry). In the spring of 2012, the schedule was modified again to pilot a 30-minute daily achievement period. As a result of the benefit of the program, the achievement period was made a part of the school schedule in the fall of 2012. The achievement period increases the number of opportunities for students and teachers to meet one-on-one for additional support. Teachers can request to see students from advisors during the achievement period. As the program developed, the number of students requested increased from 2,000 requests during quarter one of 2015 to 2,600 during quarter three of the same school year. There is still work to be done on the achievement period. The achievement period will need continued evaluation and refinement as there are still some students who do not access teacher support during this time but who could benefit from additional time and support. In addition, there are some students who are requested but do not show up to meet with the teacher, and at this time, there is not a formal system in place to insure follow-up with those students. In 2015-2016, the school schedule was built to incorporate cross-disciplinary meetings for social studies, English, and world languages as well as for math and science teachers. However, there are still many departments such as physical education, health, fine arts, technology, and special education who do not benefit from common planning periods. By creating a schedule that affords time that supports research-based instruction and professional collaboration among teachers, the school provides an opportunity to meet the needs of all students. (self-study, teachers, guidance counselors, principal)

Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Teachers reported that class sizes are typically no larger than 24 students. Teachers also reported a trend that due to scheduling, teachers often end up with one or two classes with lower numbers, between 12-14 students in a class. With enrollment at the high school declining, student load per teacher ranges from 60-100 students. The following is a breakdown of course offerings and class size from the 2015-2016 school year. English language arts (ELA) has 35 sections with class sizes range from 4-24. Cape Elizabeth High School's math department offers 35 sections with student enrolled from 9-29. The science department offers 50 sections with class size ranging from 5-24. The history department offers 39 sections with class sizes ranging from 9-23 students. The world languages department offers 25 sections with classes ranging from 9-22 students. The physical education department offers 16 PE and 10 health courses in addition to four elective courses ranging from 8-22 students. Some teachers however, have four different preparations of the five courses taught. Student load and moderate class sizes improve the ability of teachers to adjust their presentation in response to students and allow flexibility in offering challenging assignments. (master schedule 2015-16, teachers, guidance counselors, self-study)

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the

school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal meets at least once per month with department heads to discuss curriculum and instruction. The principal initiated the development of the achievement period which provides students the opportunity to receive one-on-one instruction with each of their teachers and gives teachers the ability to work with students who are in need of additional support. At this time, data supporting the efficacy of the achievement period has not been gathered, but will be required. The principal has supported the development of the achievement center which provides additional academic support and personalized instruction for all students. Staff at the achievement center includes a coordinator/teacher, teacher assistant, and peer tutors. The assistant principal works with guidance, generating bi-weekly reports from which students with a grade of 76 or below are offered additional support in the achievement center. Recognizing a gap between students currently receiving support services from special education or 504 plans and non-identified students, the principal has supported the creation of a freshman academy, an intervention class supporting those students transitioning into Cape Elizabeth High School from the middle school. Teachers and upperclassmen mentors offer academic and social support to these freshman students. The principal has also supported the development of student directed learning (SDL), an elective for juniors and seniors who apply and need to be accepted to the program. Students choose their own research topic and are given support to complete their project in this course. Due to the success of SDL, next year, the number of SDL students will double. The principal's support and guidance is evident in the high school's culture and core beliefs, promoting a strong sense of collaboration among the entire faculty. (principal, guidance counselors, teachers, students, self-study)

Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Cape Elizabeth High School does not use bells to signify schedule change through the day. Teachers and students move in a timely fashion through the day from class to class in their schedule. Senior class officers presented a proposal to the school board eighteen years ago to adopt a policy whereby senior privileges would allow them to leave the building during free periods and lunch. Two years ago the juniors did the same and it was also approved by the board except for leaving school during lunch. The school utilizes an app which students use to notify the school that they are out of the building in case of a fire alarm or other emergency situation. Adult supervision in the cafeteria has been reduced to one administrator, another example of student responsibility and ownership. Students and teachers report that no significant incidents have occurred as a result of this reduced supervision. Over half of the student population agrees they have input in decisions; for instance, two students serve as representatives on the school board. Community members and parents are active participants, often included in decision-making at the high school, such as being involved in administrator interview committees, and helping to draft the mission statement. Flash-chat was a parent initiative started in 2014. Community parents also support initiatives via the Cape Elizabeth High School Parents Association and the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation. Community support has assisted the high school in funding the achievement center, woodworking, robotics, advisory, and professional development for teachers. Parents and students are currently taking part in the superintendent search. Parents joined teachers and students, working together to fund and host Maine's first TEDx Youth event. The relationship between and among teachers, students, and parents produce a strong level of outside support that offers meaningful roles in the decision-making at Cape Elizabeth

High School. As a result of the willingness of the principal to work as a collaborative partner with teachers, students, and parents, all stakeholders have a meaningful and defined role in the decision-making process, which promotes responsibility and ownership of the school. (principal, parents, teachers, students, self-study)

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. Teachers reported that the high school principal routinely receives their creative ideas enthusiastically. Teachers support a wide variety of extracurricular clubs including but not limited to the BBQ Club; Gay, Straight, and Transgender Alliance; Cape Robotics; Theater; and Music Boosters. According to the self-study, 85 percent of students participate in a club activity. High school teachers are currently working to align curriculum with national and state standards. Teachers share common planning time within some departments to improve instruction and student learning. During the achievement period (Monday - Thursday), teachers request to meet with students in need of extra support. Once per week, students meet in their advisory program. Advisors are with their advisees throughout their high school experience, ensuring that the student has a relationship with at least one adult other than their guidance counselor. Some teachers have professional development time dedicated to instruction and curriculum three times per week. The teachers are expected to meet once as a department and twice in smaller groups. Department leaders meet with the building principal at least once each month to discuss instruction and curriculum. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership to increase students engagement in learning and are supported by their principal. (high school administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, students, facility tour)

The school board and superintendent ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead Cape Elizabeth High School and that the principal has their endorsement and support that ensures the school's progress in achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. As reported in the school's self-study, CEHS is working to implement the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations across all content areas but has not fully met this standard. During observations, most classrooms had posted the expectations on their classroom walls or bulletin boards. Student and teacher interviews did not produce evidence that the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations were being fully used or well-known within the school. Faculty reported that time constraints were the main reason that the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations had not been implemented, stating that too many initiatives were currently being addressed. According to the self-study, more professional development time and support are needed to implement the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. A more concerted effort with dedicated time and support is required to fully implement the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations that will enhance learning for all students attending Cape Elizabeth High School. (self-study, principal, teachers, students, parents, facility tour)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with decision-making authority to lead the school. According to the Endicott survey, 60 percent of school staff agrees that the school board and superintendent provide the principal with decision-making authority to lead the school. Cape Elizabeth High School faculty further reported that not only does the principal lead the school, but also does so enthusiastically. With the support of the school board and superintendent, the high school principal

implements numerous initiatives and strongly supports initiatives brought forth by teachers. The principal is leading the teacher evaluation pilot program, performing six observations per teacher in the pilot program this school year. The principal promotes a culture of openness and accessibility to both students and staff. This is evidenced in the school spirit and the number of students actively engaged in athletics and school clubs. There is a group of teachers, as evidenced by the visiting committee, who greet all students that arrive to school in the morning. Constantly calling them by name and asking questions about school. The principal is responsible for a faculty and staff who are continuing to work to improve instruction and curriculum. Managing a facility built in 1969, the principal ensures a safe and clean school environment. With the support of the school board and superintendent, the principal exercises leadership, respect, energy, and a great deal of enthusiasm. (district website, principal, teachers, school board)

#### Commendations:

1. the principal's promotion of openness and accessibility to both students and staff
2. the large majority of students who take part in school athletics and other extracurricular activities
3. the minimal student behavioral issues showing that students are responsible for their own actions
4. the high numbers of students accessing the honors and AP classes
5. the high number of students accessing upper levels of world languages
6. the creation and implementation of the advisory program
7. the creation and implementation of achievement period
8. the active commitment of the administration and staff to implement the new evaluation process
9. the principal's enthusiastic support of teacher-generated ideas to improve student learning
10. the teachers who greet students upon their arrival at school

#### Recommendations:

1. develop a plan to celebrate the successes of all students, including vocational and special education students
2. continue work towards creating a culture of belonging for all students
3. increase the level of active student learning for CP level courses
4. continue to evaluate and refine the advisory program
5. continue to evaluate and refine achievement period
6. implement a written curriculum for the advisory program
7. post 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations in every classroom and incorporate those learning expectations into curriculum
8. complete the implementation of the PLC model
9. institute common planning time for all teachers
10. develop at least one heterogeneous core class for all students
11. provide professional development for all staff on creating curriculum units which include depth of understanding and application of knowledge including, inquiry, cross-disciplinary and authentic application for all students across all courses

# 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

## Conclusion

The school has timely and directive intervention strategies for students, including identified and at-risk students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Support personnel are aware that a formal protocol to address the needs of all students is necessary. Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS) has a variety of interventions to support academic success including an achievement center, achievement period, advisory program, intervention team, academic skills class, and a newly created freshman academy. The achievement center is available during the school day providing all students access to get support from English and math teachers, student teaching assistants, and peer tutors. The achievement center is a valuable asset that enables students to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations; however, there is a recognized need to review the ability to have all academic areas represented by CEHS teaching faculty, especially as the school moves toward proficiency-based diplomas. There are budgetary, class size and staffing tradeoffs that need to be looked into, but peer tutors are available when possible. The achievement period meets 30 minutes, four times per week enabling all students and teachers access to each other so additional assistance or instruction may be provided. Students who receive a 76 percent or lower on any formative assessment are expected to meet with teachers at this time. The advisory program meets once a week for 30 minutes to provide all students with one adult in the building who will work with them over four years and from whom they may receive mentoring support. While a resource binder of suggested advisory activities is provided to each advisor, a comprehensive curriculum is not in place to enhance the goals of this program. CEHS uses an intervention team to identify at-risk students. This team meets bi-weekly to discuss the needs of individual students and creates intervention plans to support these students. Plans may include assigning a student to the school's academic skills class in place of a traditional study hall. In this class, students are supported by an academic skills coach who consults with teachers, guidance counselors, social worker, and administrators to determine and track progress toward student goals. The executive functioning skills taught in this class enable students to achieve success in their classes. The freshman academy was created during the 2014-2015 school year to provide support for incoming freshmen who exhibited behavioral issues during middle school. The middle school principal and assistant principal identified these students. Three high school staff members and four senior mentors work with these students for one period. As mandated by special education law, CEHS has a system in place to manage the educational needs of identified students through the yearly review of IEP and 504 plans. CEHS offers many types of interventions to support all students. As a result of the coordinated and direct intervention strategies, the students and staff of CEHS have created a culture in which students are respected, supported, and provided opportunities to help them meet the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teachers, support staff, self-study)

The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. Information on support resources is provided through the school's website which includes links to the program of studies, student and family handbook, PowerSchool portal, achievement center information, athletics and athletics booster information, and to the health services, school counseling, and library websites. Each one of these websites provides detailed information about how families may access these services for their students. Parent-teacher conferences are held early in the

school year and the school counseling department also conducts annual grade-level meetings where the student and family handbook is reviewed to inform parents of available support services. Electronic newsletters are also sent by support services personnel to disperse information to families in a timely manner. Mailings are also an option that are used when needed. According to the Endicott survey, some parents strongly agree or agree that CEHS provides adequate information. Since Cape Elizabeth High School provides families with a variety of methods to learn about available student support services, students have all of the necessary elements to achieve the school's learning expectations. (Endicott survey, self-study, guidance counselors, parents)

Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. The use of technology at Cape Elizabeth High School is evident in all areas of support services to communicate and share information. All students in grades 9-12 are provided with an iPad and all classrooms are "digital ready." The PowerSchool portal, email, and school and class websites assist administrators, staff, students, and parents in coordinating services for students. Technology in the achievement center includes Plato online learning software, access to the Accuplacer for online assessment in math and English, IXL for math, and other Internet-based resources. A Google spreadsheet maintained by the achievement center director is used to schedule and document one-on-one and group tutoring sessions. The achievement center includes 15 recently upgraded computers, and teachers may reserve the achievement center for large group work. The library is in the process of adopting a library and learning commons (LLC) model. It is staffed by library and instructional technology specialists (LITS) who combine the jobs of media specialist and technology integrator. The LLC website provides many portals to electronic resources available to students 24/7. The research guidelines handbook is in iBook format and offers students support with the research process. Several videos provide assistance with accessing materials from area academic and public libraries. The LITS provide technology support to students and staff and act as technology integrators. Currently, there is one full-time and one half-time LITS. There is a need to provide more staffing to support and provide instruction for faculty and students to integrate technology into the curriculum to make the one-to-one model more effective. The school nurse uses phone calls and emails as the primary means of communication with parents and staff. Health-related information for students and parents is provided via the health office website. PowerSchool is used to inform teachers of student health alerts. On-line IMPACT testing is used by the athletic trainer to record a baseline for all athletes and as part of the return-to-learn concussion protocol. The school nurse utilizes Google Docs to update teachers and support staff on the status of students affected by a head injury. The Naviance software program is the main technology used to deliver school counseling services. Naviance is introduced to students in the tenth grade through a career profile and interest inventory. Students also use Naviance in the junior year to complete college searches and to create an initial college application list. In the senior year, Naviance is used for student college application management including transcripts, testing information, and recommendations. Naviance accounts are also linked to student Common Application accounts. School counselors communicate with parents, students, and staff using email and phone calls. School counselors use the PowerSchool portal to monitor student grades and attendance and use Powerpoint for parent presentations and Google Docs for student surveys including the end-of-year senior survey. Special education teachers use a wide array of technology to support students. This includes email,

iPads, audio books, voice recognition software, and technology to assist visually impaired learners, SMARTBoards, IXL, STAR Reading-online, Accuplacer-online, and Plato software among others. Case managers manage Individualized Education Plans using the K-12 Spednet software. The use of technology by Cape Elizabeth High School support service personnel allows for effective delivery and range of support services for all students. (self-study, teacher, school counselors, parents, administration)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling to students through regular individual and group meetings; refer students to community mental health agencies and social service providers as appropriate; and use some assessment data to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. While a written, developmental school counseling curriculum is delivered to all students, this curriculum has not been updated since 2010 to reflect the current model of college counseling services. Two full-time school counselors each maintain caseloads of approximately 270 students in grades 9-12. Beginning in the spring of their junior year, an additional counselor provides specific college counseling and post-secondary support to juniors and seniors. According to the Endicott survey, the majority of parents and staff surveyed agree that the school counseling department is efficiently staffed. The school counseling services are enhanced by one full-time and two half-time social workers who provide support to students as needed. School counselors meet with students individually and in small groups to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling. This includes the creation of four-year plans in grade 9; counselor visits to classrooms in grade 10 to complete the Naviance career interest inventory; a college admissions panel as well as individual college counseling meetings in grade 11; and in-class college application lessons in grade 12. While counselors may refer students to school social workers for short-term counseling support, they also make referrals to community mental health agencies and social service providers as needed. The school counseling department conducts an end-of-year survey for seniors and elicits parent feedback from grade-level parent presentations; however, currently the department does not use ongoing, relevant assessment data from all students to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The personal, academic, career, and college counseling services provided by the CEHS school counseling department insure students have the opportunity to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and have specific post-secondary plans. (guidance counselors, students, Endicott survey, panel presentation, school support staff, K-12 guidance curriculum)

The school's health services have adequate, certified/licensed personnel 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The position of an administrative assistant was eliminated during the 2014-15 school year and because of this there may be no one in the health office to assist students when the nurse is occupied with other student/professional duties. The nurse provides direct intervention services to students with emergency needs and with ongoing preventative management. The nurse coordinates a return-to-learn concussion protocol to ensure students can return to a full academic schedule after recovering from a concussion. This is a program that highlights the efforts of CEHS to ensure the health

of all its student athletes. In addition, the nurse works closely with other community agencies and individuals to ensure students with injuries can return to school with support protocols in place. The nurse serves on many committees within the school and district and coordinates referrals as needed in response to interventions. The school nurse conducts ongoing screenings of students and uses PowerSchool to input data about student health. Last year the school nurse had over 4,500 visits from students. The Endicott survey revealed that 86 percent of students are comfortable going to the school nurse. The nurse uses assessment data to identify individual and group health, and provides input about the online parent health forms. At this time there is no formal community assessment about student health needs. The lack of adequate support staffing and substitutes for the nurse limits additional health program initiatives such as a wellness program to alleviate the stress and anxiety prevalent among students. The CEHS nurse provides effective and timely services to students, however the lack of an administrative assistant to supplement the nurse's responsibilities restricts additional program enhancements. (Endicott survey, self-study, nurse, steering committee members, high school office staff).

Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices, and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who are engaged in the curriculum and who provide a varied range of resources to support learning. The library and learning commons (LLC), guided by 21<sup>st</sup> century learning standards, is open before, during, and after school, and supports student and staff by responding to their needs and requests by examining relevant data from surveys and assessments. The Cape Elizabeth High School LLC is staffed by one and a half library integration technology specialists (LITS) who manage library resources, collaborate with teachers, and work as technology integrators. The full-time LITS serves on the leadership team and is actively involved in discussions about school issues. Both integrators regularly collaborate with staff to incorporate information literacy skills based on the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) into the curriculum, and offer assistance to teachers and students with various emerging technologies and iPad apps. The LLC staff provides a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in multiple formats which support research and individualized learning and interests. To assist students and staff with daily requests and to monitor and maintain the space, an educational technician II is available on a full-time basis. The facility is available and staffed for students and teachers Monday-Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 7:00 a.m. until 2:45 p.m. to ensure adequate access for all students. In order to support independent learning and varied learning styles, the LLC subscribes to a variety of resources. Included among these along with others are: OverDrive media, which provides eBooks and audiobooks; multiple research databases which are subject specific (including a digital video database); JSTOR, inter-library loan opportunities with the University of Maine system; the Maine electronic library called MARVEL; and a current collection of print resources. The staff uses Follett Titlewave software to assess the currency and breadth of its collection. A recent report indicated that the collection exceeded the recommended number of resources per student and that the age of the print collection was within the acceptable range. The library integration specialist has created a digital research iBook called *Research Guidelines* which assists students with the many aspects of the research process. Like the other online resources, this gives the students access to 24 hour support. There is a subscription to a service called NoodleTools which is a note-taking and citation service that further

supplements the tools provided, to help students achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The Endicott survey reveals that of teachers, 95.5 percent either agree or strongly agree that the LLC provides "a wide range of materials, technology, and other information services" that fully support the school's curriculum. Students responded that 79 percent felt they were provided with this wide-range of materials and 67 percent of students agreed the library "has the resources they need." In keeping with current trends in the learning common model, the LITS staff have met with district staff and CEHS students to solicit ideas about the design of the new space. This process of continual improvement is one of the many highlights of this vital department at CEHS. The library and learning commons is a vital component within the CEHS community because it supports the curriculum and instruction, while incorporating technology to provide resources for students to attain skills as 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. (Endicott survey, self-study, staff, teachers, classroom observation)

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 often collaborate with teachers and counselors to provide inclusive opportunities for all students. The staff uses ongoing assessment and data to improve services. The special education department includes four full-time special education teachers, including one reading teacher, one speech therapist, one full-time and two part-time social workers, (one of whom is a SPED staff member), one part-time occupational therapist, one part-time physical therapist, one full-time and one part-time school psychologist who are shared by all three schools, one part-time English language learner teacher, and one part-time interim director of special education. In addition, the special education department is supported by two part-time regular education academic skills coaches and four educational technicians who work with students in mainstream and specialized programs. The school adheres to the federal and state laws regarding the identification, monitoring, and referral of students for special education services. Special education teachers collaborate with all staff members to meet the students' goals. The intervention team meets bi-weekly and consists of two building administrators, one school department administrator, two special education teachers, one social worker, school psychologist, SPED department chair, and the school nurse. Special education teachers hold meetings throughout the year based on the individual needs of their students. Mainstream teachers regularly attend these meetings during which instructional practices and accommodations for the student are discussed and agreed to. At present the co-teaching model is evolving which provides inclusive opportunities for all students. Currently, most identified students have at least two classes where they are fully mainstreamed. The special education teachers often meet with regular education teachers and guidance, however the lack of a common planning time means finding this time can be challenging. This lack of common planning time sometimes means meeting during planning periods and before and after school and seeking each other out on an individual basis. Support service personnel provide ongoing assessment using relevant data including Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, standardized tests, and informal testing to develop intervention plans and to improve services. Special education teachers use achievement and psychological testing to develop individual education plans (IEPs) and to review at tri-annual reviews. They also use interest, career and learning style inventories as well as executive functioning skills checklists to create transition plans. Grades and behavioral information are used to inform instruction and assist each student. The support services personnel provide identified students with adequate service and support for inclusive learning

opportunities in helping identified students successfully complete the CEHS learning expectations. (self-study, steering committee members, school support staff, administration, classroom observation)

Commendations:

1. the development and successful implementation of the freshman academy
2. the wide range of services and varied resources in the library and learning commons
3. the development of the academic achievement center
4. the implementation of the achievement period
5. the continued use of the return-to-learn concussion protocol
6. the continued support of the academic skills coaching program
7. the caring support personnel professionals
8. the expertise of library and instructional technology specialists

Recommendations:

1. develop and implement a comprehensive advisory curriculum for grades 9 - 12
2. create and implement a systematic student intervention protocol
3. update the current guidance curriculum to reflect the new delivery model as a result of increased school counseling personnel and investment in the Naviance program
4. provide adequate administrative support personnel in the health office to provide coverage when the nurse is not in the office and to assist with administrative and clerical duties
5. increase staffing to include a technology integrator
6. maintain and evaluate the possibility of increased staffing in the achievement center to include all core academic subject areas



## Community Resources for Learning

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

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

## Conclusion

The achievement of Cape Elizabeth High School's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations requires that the community and district's governing body provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services. Through this adequate funding model sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revisions, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and adequate instructional materials are provided. For the past eight years the district budget has remained consistent, with slight increases in requested funds, which are presented to the district leadership team (DLT) in November. Over the last several years, budgetary increases for technology and professional development have been allocated. Cape Elizabeth High School has sufficient professional and support staff to effectively deliver programming across all disciplines. According to teachers, central office staff, and administration, course offerings have been maintained with a few areas of expansion and professional development is available anytime for staff to take advantage of. Administration and faculty did state that professional development opportunities, although available, are currently underutilized by the school community. Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS) does offer a range of technology tools to students and faculty but has limitations on its implementation within the classroom. Based on classroom observations and student interviews, many classroom teachers rely heavily on white boards and lecture style teaching formats without the use of SMARTBoards or other innovative types of technology. All students in grades 9-12 are supplied with an iPad device as part of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI). CEHS has an inadequate number of technology support specialists and integrationist to help the teaching faculty within the various curriculums. The entire school district has only five technology department workers to service the 2,000 plus student and staff devices. The technology director is also responsible for all of town's technology as well. This is an area that could use several more funded positions to help the growing demand, both at the support and integration levels. Wireless Internet access is available throughout the school in areas deemed to be learning environments. These include classrooms, cafeteria, gym, library, and any other areas students may frequent. Sufficient equipment, instructional materials, and supplies have been budgeted to support current programming needs. There is not sufficient storage space available for athletic equipment. The school has adequate instructional material and supplies to continue to support all areas at a high level. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for the schools programs, services and staff. This continued funding will allow the schools and district to support the successful implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teachers, central office personnel, building needs assessment, self-study)

The Cape Elizabeth School Department effectively and purposefully develops, plans, and funds programs that ensure that the maintenance and repair of all buildings and school plants are well taken care of. The school department replaces equipment when necessary and ensures that CEHS is cleaned and maintained on a daily basis. The school has written district facility maintenance plans on site which prioritize the maintenance and replacement of school equipment that involve larger purchases for the operation of the school facility. This is not necessarily the case for smaller equipment within the school or classrooms. No official inventory cataloging list was available for school equipment. Each school does maintain a furniture and equipment account in the regular budget and priorities in those areas are

determined during the budget process. There are preventive maintenance programs and annual certifications in place for the school's HVAC system, along with smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and elevators. This process is overseen by the director of facilities who is in continual contact with the building administrators and custodial staff. The building custodial staff at CEHS consists of 4.5 full-time employees. These workers are trained through Occupational Safety and Health Administration and other mandatory certifications to adequately address issues that may arise within the school setting. One custodian is on duty throughout the school day, working 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. At 2:30 p.m., a second shift of custodial staff consisting of 3.5 employees arrive to begin daily cleaning and sanitizing of the school. This process ensures the building is in great working order for the faculty and students to take full advantage of the school environment. The school is clean and well maintained to a level of staff and community satisfaction. The available funding is used satisfactorily to maintain and clean the facility. The current numbers of custodial workers appears to be adequate for the current workload and clear supervision of the buildings maintenance and upkeep is evident. (building administration, facility tour, Community Resources Standard Subcommittee, Endicott survey, self-study)

The Cape Elizabeth community adequately funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs along with technology, and capital improvements. The Cape Elizabeth School Department currently has a ten-year capital stewardship improvement plan in place consisting of \$11.8 million dollars over that time period for improvements to the district's physical plants. A five-year strategic plan was also put into place in 2013 with indicators of success added in 2014. Both of these plans adequately cover programs and services for the school. Enrollment changes and staffing needs are addressed yearly with faculty and staff input and administrative oversight. Enrollment numbers are constantly monitored and the incoming middle school students have an opportunity to attend a high school step-up day and sign up for their high school courses. Overall, the school population continues to slightly decline, indicating staffing needs have not been an issue in supporting the current curriculum and/or programs offered at CEHS. The school board is apprised of the average class sizes once a year to determine faculty needs for the following year. More technology integration specialists are needed for curriculum support and to make the best use of available technology as part of the five-year plan. Although all students have an iPad, both students and faculty also made it known that the iPads are not as useful as a laptop and a small, but increasing number of students opt for personal laptops in lieu of iPad use. There is an ongoing effort to change from the current iPad use for students to another form of technology. The community adequately funds all capital improvement needs at CEHS and from 2004-2006, the school, which was built in 1969, underwent a 7.9 million dollar renovation. Many improvements were made to the facility that are instrumental in helping students attain the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. However, there are still heating problems in certain parts of the building even though the boiler was replaced in 2011. In classrooms where issues surrounding proper heating and cooling exist, environments are not conducive to learning. The school is equipped with a security surveillance system with six outside cameras and more than twenty cameras inside the building. Athletic facilities are modern and up-to-date including a synthetic turf stadium field. The community continues to supply adequately funds, both in the short term and long term that support programs and services at CEHS. (school support staff, teachers, self-study, director of facilities)

At Cape Elizabeth High School the faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. The budgetary process usually begins in November for the next school year. Teachers, department chairs, program advisors, and the high school athletic director are required to submit budgetary items to the high school principal for review. The principal discusses requested items with department heads and makes necessary cuts, if needed. The requested budget is then submitted to the superintendent and business manager for review. The district leadership team (DLT) then reviews all budget requests from all three schools before turning them over to the school board. Budget workshops are planned for input and review by both community members and school board. The input is used to make changes or updates to the working document. If cuts to the budget are necessary, the process works back to the level of principal and occasionally the department heads. This part of the process, where teachers are not involved with cutting the budget, has been noted as an area of concern for teachers. The board then reviews and either approves or makes changes to the document before it goes before the town for a vote. After a budget passes individual teachers are responsible for completing individual purchase orders unless departmental orders are being made. Throughout the year the principal is given monthly reports on budget allocations to date. This process allows for students to have access to adequate and appropriate resources for their learning. Of note, it was reported in staff interviews that the budget has only been rejected by the community once in recent history. On that occasion the budget was rejected by the community for being too high and sent back to the board and school for decreases. After minor cuts were made, the budget passed, but a large number of voters reported that the budget was now too low. Throughout the planning and implementation of the budget, the faculty and building administrators are adequately involved in the process, however, when cuts are to be made, including the faculty in these discussions will lead to greater ownership of the process. (main office staff, self-study, administration, teachers, central office personnel)

Cape Elizabeth High School site and plant support the delivery of quality school programs and services. Science laboratories are sufficient in number and appropriately equipped to deliver quality educational programming and services, however not for biology labs. Parents indicated community support for scheduled use of the already available biology laboratories. Sufficient classroom space is available to meet this desire, however school-wide course offerings and juniors choosing electives, does not currently allow accommodation of the laboratory piece of biology within the current master schedule. The library/media center provides ample space to accommodate a variety of services, at times concurrently. Student dining services, food preparation areas, and cafeteria facilities provide generous accommodations to meet the needs of the student population. Beyond the school's core classroom environment, other school facilities including; performing arts, gymnasium, special education, industrial technology, athletic fields and auditorium are generously apportioned to support the high quality educational programs. The community pool, physically attached to the school, but overseen by community services presents additional opportunities for students. Administrative offices and support services (main office, conference rooms, guidance) are appropriately sized and in appropriate quantity to provide student support and confidentiality. The use of the pool and school theater were mentioned as an occasional problem, but the school's athletic director and community advisor always make sure that school swim meets have precedence. The pool which is in high demand and is heavily used by the community sometimes limits the amount of time physical education classes can use it. The use of the school physical

plant has undergone and continues to undergo capital improvement projects such as the installation of three oil-fired boiler units as a part of a ten-year capital improvement plan. As recently as 2006-2008, a 7 plus million dollar renovation of the building occurred. No building inadequacies were identified throughout the team visit. Parent, student, and faculty interviews confirmed global concerns for the state of the building envelope of Cape Elizabeth High School. Specifically concerns were raised about the roof structure and regular leaks that appear as evidenced by stained water marks in ceiling tiles throughout the building. Also evidenced was a large crack within the school which demonstrated continued settling of one wing of the building. Roof repairs although not completed as frequently needed have been an area of focus during the past two years. Staff and student interviews indicated that the ceiling tiles in this area of the school are frequently misaligned and require regular alignment. There is also an area of concern with the lack of storage space for athletic equipment, physical education equipment, and supplies for the industrial arts program. The school physical plant and site are well apportioned to provide high quality educational programs for the students at Cape Elizabeth High School but, roof repairs, window replacement, and heating and ventilation replacements should be continued and funded through the ten-year maintenance plan.(parents, faculty, students, capital improvement plan, site inspection documents, self-study)

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 but fails to implement standards with fidelity. The school department provides documentation that is in compliance with all appropriate regulations. However, a tour of the physical plant presented several inconsistencies to this compliance. Closer inspection revealed three different locations in which access to electrical panels were partially, and in two instances, completely blocked. Additionally, one electrical panel in a non-student area, the boiler room, was open with exposed fire wire, but not a safety problem. Also noted in non-student areas were a fully blocked eye/face wash station (custodial storage area) and a partially blocked fire extinguisher. The eye wash station is non-functioning and should be removed. The school lacks sufficient temperature consistency in some locations which was noted in student, parent, and faculty interviews. Teachers, for the first time this school year, have been able to report these temperature inconsistencies utilizing the online program known as the "School Dude". The heating/ventilation units which haven't been replaced, were to be replaced during the summer months. The school has made accommodations to meet ADA requirements and is fully accessible under these regulations. It was reported in a faculty interview that the front entrance ADA ramp no longer meets current code (slope and crown), but extensive work was completed at the facilities entrance to the building solving the problem and making the building completely ADA compliant. There is an elevator at the facilities entrance to alleviate any concerns. Faculty, staff, and student interviews indicated a sometimes slow response to maintenance repair requests within the school which can, and frequently does, exceed several weeks. This is obviously dependent on the type of maintenance repairs requested and if the requests can be completed without disruption to the regular school program. The school facilities staff has responsibility for all three schools, the town library, police and fire stations, the pool, the Spurwink Church, and all facilities at Fort Williams, including the lighthouse. The school maintains required documentation of regulation compliance and continues to maintain facilities to standard. Safety inspectors are brought in to do safety inspections. Several of these shortcomings, although minor in

nature, could have an effect on the quality of the education for Cape Elizabeth students and should be taken care of and addressed in a timely manner. (parents, teachers, students, site inspection documents, site supervisor training guide, self-study)

Professional staff effectively engages parents and families as partners in each student's education but struggle to reach out to those families who have been less connected to the school. The school staff reaches out to parents through a variety of methods to involve parents as active members of their children's education. These methods however, rely heavily on electronic modes to reach families. Faculty, staff, and student interviews indicated that this is systemic communication from the school system and that all faculty members make contact with parents in some capacity. The population demographics of Cape Elizabeth include a highly engaged parent community where outreach to "less connected" families is not a readily visible need. The school community engages parents in open houses, parent nights, and other parent-oriented events on a regular basis. This however is lacking in any effective data tracking that can identify trends in parent participation and potential student needs. This is further exemplified in faculty interviews where statements regarding participation in parent events is highly attended, but that identification of non-participating families has not been made. While the Cape Elizabeth High School faculty and staff is extremely effective in engaging parents who are active participants in their children's education, the school continues to seek effective methods of identifying and communicating with those families that routinely fail to engage with the school community. (parents, school support staff, teachers, students, district website, self-study, Endicott survey, Community Resources Standard subcommittee)

The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Through the senior transition project, Cape Elizabeth High School has established regular and highly beneficial relationships with area businesses and higher education institutions that provide job shadowing, mentoring, and internships among the many opportunities. The community at-large formed the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation (CEEF), which provides generous endowments and grants to the Cape Elizabeth school system. This foundation is a self-run and self-funded organization headed by community members who serve as its board of directors and includes parents, school board members, students and faculty members. It was noted through faculty and student interviews, that this foundation does provide generous grants to selected applications which the foundation deems of importance but might utilize more input from the wider school community. Some significant and well-appreciated grants include: \$9,000 to the Tedx Youth at CEHS; \$8,500 to the new high school advisory program; and \$45,000 to support the high school iPad initiative. A group of senior parents also organize the yearly Project Graduation program for graduating seniors. Early college study opportunities are presented through Maine College of Art, the University of Southern Maine, Southern Maine Community College, and the University of New England. Students may also pursue training and certification in the technical education through Portland Area Technical High School (PATHS). In a program instituted in 2000, senior students have had opportunity, in the past and presently, to shadow workers, do internships and volunteer at area businesses, job shadow at Maine Medical and Mercy Hospitals, conduct research at USM, and participate as actors or workers at the Portland Stage Company or Ram Island Stage Company. Seniors then return to the high school to make presentations about their

experiences and new-found knowledge. High School students also devote time to a mentoring program within Cape Elizabeth and in the greater Portland area. Cape Elizabeth High School has highly motivated and generous community support as evidenced through multiple organizations and partnerships that students are able to access and has the potential to generate tremendous insight and opportunities for students who participate. (parents, teachers, students, administration, district website, self-study, Endicott survey)

#### Commendations:

1. the cleanliness of the school
2. the transparent and inclusive budget process
3. the short- and long-term plans to meet future district and school needs
4. the well-designed capital improvement plan to maintain and improve the current site
5. the generously apportioned physical plant and site
6. the artificial turf athletic facilities combined with natural turf playing areas and the community pool
7. the multiple locations providing AED and First Aid Supplies located throughout building
8. the staff engagement with parents through electronic means on a regular and consistent basis as a school-wide norm
9. the school social workers who engage with at-risk students in an appropriate manner when indicated
10. the engagement of parents and the community through regular events and communication primarily through electronic means
11. the many opportunities of community support and partnerships, including the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation and HS Parents Association
12. the generosity of the CEEF grant donations

#### Recommendations:

1. support regular safety training for building faculty and staff
2. develop and implement a plan to create an additional maintenance position for the school department
3. review ADA requirements and ensure measures to maintain compliance are addressed in capital improvement plans
4. develop and implement an identification process to further seek out at-risk families who do not regularly engage in the educational process
5. develop and implement a formal identification process for at-risk students that is regularly communicated to all staff
6. include faculty and staff in the entire budget process, both in its development and if necessary, in the reduction of the budget
7. continue the implementation of the plan to solve the building's heating inconsistencies and roof leakage problems

8. create a plan to solve the building's lack of storage space for physical education, industrial arts, and athletic equipment
9. review and update the communication between the school and community as it relates to the community pool and school theater use

## FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Since it is in the best interest of the students that the citizens of the district become aware of the strengths and limitations of the school and suggested recommendations for improvement, the 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 Cape Elizabeth 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 69. 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.

Thank you to all administrators, faculty, staff members, and students who made themselves available or went out of their way to accommodate members of the visiting committee. The continued support of the superintendent, school board, and community will help to maintain the high level of success at Cape Elizabeth High School. A big thank you to the sixteen students who we shadowed during our time at Cape for their openness and honesty. A true pleasure working with you all.

**Cape Elizabeth High School  
NEASC Accreditation Visit  
March 13 - 16, 2016**

**Visiting Committee**

Peter J. Brown- Chair  
Retired High School Principal  
Jay, Maine 04239

Julie Hammer- Assistant Chair  
Ellsworth High School  
Ellsworth, ME 04605

Monique Culbertson  
Scarborough School Dept.  
Scarborough, ME 04074

Kristel Anuszewski  
Winthrop School  
Winthrop, ME 04364

Elizabeth Moon-Croston  
Noble High School  
North Berwick, ME 03906

Samuel Smithwick  
Noble High School  
North Berwick ME 03906

Ian Ryan  
Massabesic High School  
Waterboro, ME 04087

Karen VanDyke  
Oyster River High School  
Durham, NH 03824

JoAnn Wegman  
Merrimack High School  
Merrimack, NH 03054

James Black  
Spruce Mountain High School  
Jay, ME 04239

Elizabeth White  
Sanford High School  
Sanford, ME 04073

Amy Donovan  
Portsmouth High School  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Amy LaBelle  
Marshwood High School  
South Berwick, ME 03908

Peter Marsh  
Central High School  
Corinth, ME 04427

Sherrie Hersom  
Boothbay Reg. High School  
Boothbay Harbor, ME 04538

Mary Moore  
Freeport High School  
Freeport, ME 04032

**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

## Cape Elizabeth High School

### Commendations

#### Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

1. the use of common rubrics within certain departments
2. the development and implementation of the CAPE acronym
3. the creation of measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
4. the integration of the CAPE tenants into the school culture
5. the implementation of culminating projects at each grade level such as the senior transition project (STP) which reflect and embody the CAPE acronym
6. the high academic standards expected of all grade levels
7. the implementation of the achievement/advisory period which supports the social and civic competencies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

#### Curriculum

1. the ongoing dedication to innovative projects that align with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, such as the TEDx Youth events, iSearch, sophomore research project, junior policy project, and the senior transition project
2. the high percentage of juniors and seniors choosing to challenge themselves in Advanced Placement courses
3. the availability of many types of technology in classrooms for faculty and students
4. the strong collegial support and collaboration within departments to make improvements in their curriculum areas
5. the school's numerous and diverse clubs and activities all of which enhance the core curriculum
6. the class size which create opportunities for teachers to more easily personalize instruction
7. the strong student/teacher relationships that promote opportunities for high levels of learning
8. the faculty who care about students and work hard to seek ways to ensure student success

#### Instruction

1. the variety of programs that have been designed and implemented to assist students who are struggling (i.e., the achievement center, the achievement period, and Freshman Academy)
2. the grouping of students to reach understanding through collaboration
3. the faculty's strong knowledge of and passion for content area subjects
4. the use of student "voice and choice" that is allowed in novel selection and research projects across subject areas and across grade levels
5. the research projects at all four grade levels that reflect the commitment to research, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
6. the evidence of higher level thinking through the use of Socratic seminars

7. the presence of authenticity of learning in the world languages, science, health, PE, art, technology and social studies departments as it reflects real life experiences and issues
8. the support of teachers in their desire to develop professionally and explore many various opportunities to grow
9. the dedicated teachers who seek feedback for individual and collaborative opportunities to improve instructional practices

#### Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. the communication of specific learning goals and skills prior to each unit of study is consistent across all departments
2. the use of employing a range of formative and summative assessment strategies to monitor student progress and accountability
3. the improvement of student learning by employing a range of formative assessment to inform and adapt instruction within teachers' classrooms and within departments
4. the collaboration among departments with the 6+1 writing rubric
5. the regular review and revision of grading and reporting practices within departments that ensure alignment within those departments

#### School Culture and Leadership

1. the principal's promotion of openness and accessibility to both students and staff
2. the large majority of students who take part in school athletics and other extracurricular activities
3. the minimal student behavioral issues showing that students are responsible for their own actions
4. the high numbers of students accessing the honors and AP classes
5. the high number of students accessing upper levels of world languages
6. the creation and implementation of the advisory program
7. the creation and implementation of achievement period
8. the active commitment of the administration and staff to implement the new evaluation process
9. the principal's enthusiastic support of teacher-generated ideas to improve student learning
10. the teachers who greet students upon their arrival at school

#### School Resources for Learning

1. the development and successful implementation of the freshman academy
2. the wide range of services and varied resources in the library and learning commons
3. the development of the academic achievement center
4. the implementation of the achievement period
5. the continued use of the return-to-learn concussion protocol
6. the continued support of the academic skills coaching program
7. the caring support personnel professionals
8. the expertise of library and instructional technology specialists

## Community Resources for Learning

1. the cleanliness of the school
2. the transparent and inclusive budget process
3. the short- and long-term plans to meet future district and school needs
4. the well-designed capital improvement plan to maintain and improve the current site
5. the generously apportioned physical plant and site
6. the artificial turf athletic facilities combined with natural turf playing areas and the community pool
7. the multiple locations providing AED and First Aid Supplies located throughout building
8. the staff engagement with parents through electronic means on a regular and consistent basis as a school-wide norm
9. the school social workers who engage with at-risk students in an appropriate manner when indicated
10. the engagement of parents and the community through regular events and communication primarily through electronic means
11. the many opportunities of community support and partnerships, including the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation and HS Parents Association
12. the generosity of the CEEF grant donations

## Recommendations

### Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

1. provide allocations for professional development training in writing and developing school-wide rubrics
2. involve all stakeholders in the development of the school-wide rubrics
3. complete the development of and implementation of school-wide rubrics to measure the effectiveness of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century academic, civic, and social expectations
4. design and use a system to educate students and parents about the use and meaning of the school-wide rubrics for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
5. create a plan or timeline for regular review or revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations which involves input from all stakeholders
6. ensure that the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations drive curriculum, instruction, assessment, policy development, and decision-making

### Curriculum

1. design curriculum to ensure all students have multiple and varied opportunities to practice and achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. assign and track which departments are responsible for each of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and report the results
3. develop and implement one curriculum template which includes all of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
4. develop quality, school-wide rubrics (exemplars for the written curriculum) so that all staff have a common understanding and are able to use them effectively
5. research, identify, and implement a common language for instructional best practices
6. create and implement opportunities for cross-disciplinary planning to ensure students are learning across the curriculum
7. develop strategies to encourage more students to explore and participate in authentic learning opportunities outside of the school
8. utilize technology and its applications (such as Atlas) to make the documentation, communication and coordination of the curriculum more useful and efficient
9. provide site-based leadership in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and current research practices in adult learning to support staff in their improvement efforts

### Instruction

1. connect instruction more explicitly with the CEHS' 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. develop various instructional strategies and expand the use of student centered instruction to meet a variety of individual learning styles and individual needs of students
3. encourage more teachers to discuss formative assessments to inform meaningful change or to validate instruction

4. seek and use time to collaborate and create opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning
5. integrate technology more frequently to improve upon and adjust instruction and seek professional development toward this end
6. re-evaluate the use of iPads as the best means of technology for the school as well ensure that they are being used appropriately and effectively
7. develop and later implement instructional strategies to better personalize learning for all students within the learning community at CEHS through the use of professional development time
8. continue to find ways to share experiences with peers that are both innovative and effective in content areas

### Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. ensure that the school-wide rubrics are regularly used by all teachers with all students so that the school can assess individual student and school achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. develop and implement a process to educate all stakeholders on how to read and utilize school-wide rubrics
3. provide additional time for collaboration on specific criteria such as creation, analysis, and examination of formative and summative assessments to ensure that teachers are meeting all students' needs
4. develop and implement a uniform policy for data collection amongst faculty to aid the curricular and instructional revision practices across the school
5. develop and implement a formal process to align grading practices interdepartmentally to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning
6. provide professional development for all teachers in the writing and scoring of rubrics
7. create a system to report out successful completion of results of the learning expectations to the community
8. utilize data teams to analyze and communicate the data
9. ensure that all faculty members and all departments use the newly devised school-wide rubrics
10. ensure coordination with all departments and curriculum areas, with the middle school, and with input from the district's curriculum coordinator

### School Culture and Leadership

1. develop a plan to celebrate the successes of all students, including vocational and special education students
2. continue work towards creating a culture of belonging for all students
3. increase the level of active student learning for CP level courses
4. continue to evaluate and refine the advisory program
5. continue to evaluate and refine achievement period
6. implement a written curriculum for the advisory program
7. post 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations in every classroom and incorporate those learning

expectations into curriculum

- 8 complete the implementation of the PLC model
- 9 institute common planning time for all teachers
- 10 develop at least one heterogeneous core class for all students
- 11 provide professional development for all staff on creating curriculum units which include depth of understanding and application of knowledge including, inquiry, cross-disciplinary and authentic application for all students across all courses

#### School Resources for Learning

1. develop and implement a comprehensive advisory curriculum for grades 9 - 12
2. create and implement a systematic student intervention protocol
3. update the current guidance curriculum to reflect the new delivery model as a result of increased school counseling personnel and investment in the Naviance program
4. provide adequate administrative support personnel in the health office to provide coverage when the nurse is not in the office and to assist with administrative and clerical duties
5. increase staffing to include a technology integrator
6. maintain and evaluate the possibility of increased staffing in the achievement center to include all core academic subject areas

#### Community Resources for Learning

1. support regular safety training for building faculty and staff
2. develop and implement a plan to create an additional maintenance position for the school department
3. review ADA requirements and ensure measures to maintain compliance are addressed in capital improvement plans
4. develop and implement an identification process to further seek out at-risk families who do not regularly engage in the educational process
5. develop and implement a formal identification process for at-risk students that is regularly communicated to all staff
6. include faculty and staff in the entire budget process, both in its development and if necessary, in the reduction of the budget
7. continue the implementation of the plan to solve the building's heating inconsistencies and roof leakage problems
8. create a plan to solve the building's lack of storage space for physical education, industrial arts, and athletic equipment
9. review and update the communication between the school and community as it relates to the community pool and school theater use