

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for Gloucester High School

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

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

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

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

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

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit – The School Self-study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Gloucester High School, a committee of eight faculty 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.

The self-study of Gloucester High School extended over a period of over 18 school months from October, 2007 to April, 2009. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, parents and community members, school board members, and central office administration staff members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 14 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Gloucester High School. The Committee members spent four days in Gloucester Massachusetts, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented a variety of public schools in two different states, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Gloucester High School.

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

- ❖ a review of the school's self-study materials
- ❖ 40 hours shadowing 15 students for a half day
- ❖ a total of 15 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- ❖ numerous informal observations in and around the school
- ❖ tours of the facility
- ❖ individual meetings with 30 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- ❖ group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- ❖ the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on the report was agreed to by team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards

sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the team's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Commission Standards.

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

Overview of Findings

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

Teaching and Learning at Gloucester High School

Teaching and learning is the focus of everyone at Gloucester High School. The school provides a wide variety of clubs, extracurricular and interscholastic activities for students to achieve its civic and social expectations. The learner expectations are well organized and contain high expectations. The school climate is positive and conducive to students to achieve and implement the mission and expectations. However, at this point, a process has yet to be implemented that allows administrators, teachers, parents, and students to determine how well students are meeting the expectations for student learning. Furthermore, the school needs to develop and implement a formal protocol that includes all stakeholders and a regular timeline for review of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

Gloucester High School offers a variety of course offerings outside the traditional academic disciplines. There are numerous opportunities for students to extend their learning beyond the classroom. The school needs to provide more opportunities for inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking to engage all students at all levels. A leadership structure should be established that commits sufficient personnel to curriculum development and revision.

There are very positive interpersonal relationships between the faculty and students that encourage students to strive for academic excellence. Faculty members take pride in their disciplines, and their students' work and their willingness to share knowledge collegially. More professional development that is specific to the high school must be provided so that all teachers will increase instructional strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and higher order thinking skills. The school should provide increased formal opportunities for faculty members to observe and discuss instructional strategies across disciplines.

Faculty members work informally, individually and in small groups to discuss how assessment can improve. They express an interest in sharing assessment results with their colleagues and students' parents. Professional development should be provided that will incorporate higher order thinking skills in a variety of assessments. The faculty members

should further develop and use rubrics throughout the school. Collaborative planning time should be developed and used for the discussion of student assessment results.

Support of Teaching and Learning

There are very strong interpersonal relationships among students, faculty members, and administrators which contribute to a safe and personalized environment. Parents, students, and faculty members report that the “open door” policy of the administrators accords them meaningful roles in the decision-making process of the school. Students receive some personalization through the classroom teachers and extracurricular advisors. However, there needs to be an ongoing formal program that ensures that each student has one adult who can personalize his/her education. There needs to be additional administrative support to ensure that the administrators have the necessary resources to implement the mission and expectations, to provide curricular leadership and to supervise the instructional program.

The school and community have partnered to offer a multitude of support services for the school. Student health services are provided by the nurse and a separate full-service health center. The library is a large physical, inviting space, but it is not being utilized fully by the different academic departments in the school. The librarian has not been included in the planning and development of curriculum by the individual academic areas. The school needs to collect and evaluate data of programs that are supporting the students. This data should include attendance, drop-out rate, academic performance, and the use of the different services. All student support programs should undergo annual formal evaluations.

The Gloucester faculty members continue to seek alternative ways to augment a lack of funding for supplies, cleaning services, and ways to increase student enrichment. There is not a consistent routine for managing and cleaning the building. The school needs to develop and implement a plan for maintenance and repair of the building. Currently, the demands for repairs, maintenance, equipment replacement, and work orders are outstripping the responses due to funding and inadequate staffing. Sufficient resources must be provided to fully support students’ educational needs.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

The coastal city of Gloucester, Massachusetts is located on Cape Ann, a natural peninsula forty miles northeast of Boston in Essex County. Flanked by the towns of Rockport, Essex, and Manchester, Gloucester acts as the hub of Cape Ann. The Mass. Dept. of Revenue (2007) reports Gloucester's population at 30,308. Gloucester is in the process of broadening its industrial base from a primarily waterfront-oriented economy to include light manufacturing, commerce, and tourism. Several expanding commercial and industrial districts are helping to stabilize the city.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics reports that the median household income is \$47,722. Per capita income at or below the poverty level is 8.8%; 7.1% of families are living below poverty level. Gloucester's unemployment rate in 2009 according to the Mass. Dept. of Revenue was 10.8%. The percentage of local general revenue allocated to schools in FY 2008 was 44.0% - in FY 2009 the percentage of the general budget spent on education was 46.6%.

In 2008-2009 Gloucester served 3,398 students in one pre-kindergarten, five elementary schools, one middle school and one comprehensive secondary (high) school. Other educational opportunities for residents within the district include St. Ann's (preK-8), Eastern Point Day School (preK -3), Faith Christian Academy (preK-8) and home-schooling consortia. Private secondary schools in Essex County are St. John's Prep, Pingree School, Waring School, Governor's Academy, and Bishop Fenwick High School. The North Shore Consortium and Landmark School are nearby alternatives for students identified with special needs. Students may also attend North Shore Technical High School. In the 2007-08 school year, district-wide, 46.8 students came into Gloucester schools through the School Choice Program, 35 attending GHS, while 216 exited Gloucester to attend other public schools. Fifty-eight of exiting students attended North Shore Regional Vocational Technical School. Thirty-nine high school age students from Gloucester attended non-public secondary schools. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) 2008 data, the district spent \$12,044 per pupil. The Massachusetts state average was \$12,496.

Student population at GHS in 2008-2009 was 1107. Grade configuration was 290 (9) 299 (10) 260 (11) 258 (12). As of 2007-2008 the racial and cultural composition of the student body was 95.4% White, 1.4% African-American, 0.8% Asian, 2.1% Hispanic, 0% Native American, 0.1% Native Hawaiian, and 0.2% Multi-race non-Hispanic. There are currently no significant changes to the ethnic/racial composition. Based on enrollment figures for grades K -8, GHS can expect a slight decline in enrollment. Total number of teachers at GHS in 2008-2009 was 85. Teacher attendance rate was 95.2%. Average student-to-teacher ratio was 14.7:1 and average student load for teachers was 73.5 students per full-time teacher. Average class size was 17.3 students.

GHS follows a rotating, seven-day schedule, with one daily long block. Students may choose from courses whose challenge levels include multi-level, college preparatory, honors, and advanced placement. Smaller learning communities include Freshman and

Sophomore Transition (FAST) for freshmen and sophomores and SUMMIT for juniors and seniors who need small therapeutic learning environments.

While every teacher has one preparatory block per day, there is no common planning time for teachers during the school day. Departmental and cross-curricular meetings are scheduled after school on a monthly basis. Two professional days and three half-days are scheduled throughout the year.

O'Maley Middle School is the primary feeder school for GHS. Three small, private K-8 schools in Gloucester also send students. Thirty-five GHS students are not residents of Gloucester. There are several alternative opportunities for 9-12 education in Essex County. These include private, parochial and technical or trade schools. The average student attendance rate (2008-09) was 89.3 percent. The dropout rate was 2.3 percent, and graduation rate was 86.4 percent in 2007-08, 90% in 2008-09.

Several academic awards ceremonies are held each school year. Awards include annual departmental performance awards; quarterly honor roll; National Honor Society, Sherman B. Ruth Chapter; merit-based scholarships for seniors; Boston Globe Key Awards for Art and Photography; Sawyer Medal; the Harvard Book Award, Dartmouth Book Awards; Smith Book Awards; Saint Michael's Book Award; Wellesley Book Award; Daughters of the American Revolution; Sons of the American Revolution; Boys and Girls State; Bell & Howell Prize, Bausch & Lomb prize,; Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Tuition Waiver (MCAS); Abigail and John Adams Scholarship(MCAS); and the School Committee Book Awards (top 5%). Non-academic awards include: athletic, MCROTC, and community service awards. Additionally, 365 local scholarships totaling \$217,275 are awarded to graduating seniors.

Seventy-three percent of Gloucester High School students scored in the combined advanced and proficient levels on the English Language Arts test of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Seventy-one percent of GHS students scored in the advanced/proficient levels on the Mathematics test. Eighty-seven percent of the GHS students passed the Science and Technology test.

For the 179 GHS students who took the 2008 SAT test; the average scores are as follows: Critical Reading = 501 (514 state/502 national), Math = 488 (525 state/515 national) and Writing = 487 (513 state/494 national). Fifty-five percent of GHS students who took AP tests in 2008 scored 3 or above; 102 GHS students took 179 AP exams with scores averaging above the national average in five of the nine tests administered.

Student grade reports and midyear and end-of-year reports of student performance on school wide standards are significant indicators beyond performance on standardized tests. Passing the MCAS ELA and mathematics assessments are the only requirements for graduation beyond Carnegie units and required courses. In 2008-9, 3% of GHS students received ELL/ESL/bilingual services and 19.1% received special education services. In mathematics courses school-wide, numbers of students enrolled at each level were 39 students in AP, 149 in Honors, 565 in College Prep 1 (CP1), 149 in College Prep 2 (CP2) and 76 in Multi-level Special Needs courses. In Science 52 students enrolled in AP courses, 164 in Honors, 487 in CP1, 88 in CP 2, 233 in Multi-level courses and 46 in Multi-level Special Needs courses. In English 32 students enrolled in AP, 380 in Honors, 376 in CP1, 195 in CP2 and 68 in Multi-level Special Needs courses. In Social Studies

18 students enrolled in AP, 238 in Honors, 544 in CP1, 199 in CP2 and 114 in Multi-level courses and 52 in Multi-level Special Needs courses.

In 2008, 47% of graduates attended four-year colleges or universities, 30% attended two-year institutions or technical schools, 21% entered the workforce, and 2% joined the armed forces. Nearby educational opportunities available to students and the community include: Essex Agricultural and Technical School, North Shore Community College, Salem State College, Endicott College, and Gordon College. Boston and Lowell's universities, colleges, and technical schools are within commuting distance.

GHS has initiated several innovative on-campus programs. Starting in 2005, five student supervisors replaced teachers in hallway, bathroom, and cafeteria supervision giving those teachers time during the school day to develop curriculum, instruction, assessments, participate in professional development, and provide academic tutoring through the Student Teacher Academic Resource Rooms (STARR) program. In response to data on the freshmen course failure rate, SBAC, Student Council, and administration developed a peer mentoring program in which juniors and seniors act as mentors to incoming freshmen to promote academic and social protocols. The program attempts to foster a feeling of belonging and community among the entering students.

Through the Special Education Department, freshmen and sophomores identified as having social/emotional issues can be referred to the Freshman and Sophomore Transition (FAST) program. Here, students are provided with the support necessary to be successful in their high school academic and social lives. The Summit Program is an adventure-based, hands-on program for upperclassmen identified as at risk. In collaboration with HES, an on-site LICSW oversees the Student Assistance program for GHS students with substance abuse and relationship problems. The Young Families Initiative, a day care service/parenting program, is provided through a partnership with Pathways for Children.

GHS is involved with a number of outreach programs throughout the community. Some of the institutions that GHS works with are Cape Ann Savings Bank, The Business Education Collaborative of the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, Cape Ann Historical Association, Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center, Northeast Healthcare Systems, and North Shore Community College. The Italian and German consulates, Salem State College, Gloucester School Connection, Gloucester Education Foundation, and Gloucester Fishermen Athletic Association contribute funding for specific programs/initiatives.

Off-campus programs supplement the traditional high school academic environment. Compass Youth program collaborates with GHS to provide an alternative for students at risk for dropping out, and offers students core curriculum, life skills, and counseling for juniors and seniors. Compass also offers a GED program and a night school for students who otherwise meet graduation credit requirements. Additionally, the Gloucester Alternative Program serves students in grades 10 through 12.

Over thirty GHS clubs and activities, open to all students, are available throughout the academic year. Students and staff are encouraged to form additional clubs, organizations, and tournaments where there is interest or a need. School-wide events such as the student-faculty basketball game and the spring volleyball and ping-pong tournaments

offer opportunities for students and staff to compete together. Additionally, leadership-through-service organizations such as the MCJROTC, National Honor Society, Student Council, and Interact Club focus on promoting school and neighborhood outreach. Involvement in these extracurricular activities provides avenues for students to connect school to civic responsibility and foster a sense of volunteerism and altruism. There are no service-learning requirements although multiple opportunities for service exist.

A five-year school improvement plan is revised annually by GHS administrators. The Site-Based Advisory Council consisting of teachers, administrators, students, parents and community members review and revise the plan. Three major goals identified for 2009-2013 are: 1) 90% of students will meet or exceed reading competence at grade level by 2013. 2) 90% of students will be proficient in the use of problem-solving strategies and critical thinking skills by 2013. 3) Increase parental and community involvement in the school community. The school improvement plan lists several strategies to help GHS move toward these goals and measurement criteria to show levels of attainment.

Strengths

1. The teachers who are highly qualified, certified and expert in their content areas
2. A dedicated faculty that develops, presents and reviews curriculum and student work to facilitate achievement of school-wide expectations
3. Numerous opportunities for students to extend learning beyond the classroom through courses, clubs, organizations, and internships
4. Use of a wide variety of assessments
5. Leadership of teachers contributing to the positive culture of the school
6. Alignment of curriculum to state standards and content area benchmarks
7. "Open door" policy of the administrators enabling staff members to discuss school issues
8. The variety of courses and programs offered to students
9. Strong collaborations and partnerships with community and higher education institutions

Critical Needs

1. Provide an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain resources for teaching
2. Implement the recommendations of the 2008 Air Quality Report
3. Address all fire and safety concerns
4. Provide professional development time and resources geared toward high school content areas to improve instructional practices and to look collaboratively at student work to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. Increase funding for books, course materials, and equipment in all curricular areas
6. Address all capital improvement needs (i.e. gymnasium floor, roof)
7. Provide additional funds to improve classroom technology resources
8. Increase custodial staff with attention to training, accountability, and supervision

Gloucester High School Mission Statement and Student Expectations

The mission of Gloucester High School is to produce graduates with integrity, knowledge and skills necessary for productive citizenship. To achieve these results, instruction is purposeful, engaging, relevant and rigorous. A culture of positive relationship building and personalization with the school and the community encourages and supports self-reliance and problem-solving for success.

Academic Standards

1. Uses reading comprehension strategies for understanding
2. Utilizes problem-solving strategies and thinking skills
3. Applies writing, listening, visual and speaking skills to communicate ideas
4. Exhibits understanding and application of various technologies

Social Standards

5. Works effectively as a member of a team
6. Demonstrates personal responsibility and integrity

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

TEACHING and LEARNING STANDARDS

MISSION and EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENT LEARNING

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

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

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that:
 - are measurable.
 - reflect the school's mission.
4. For each academic expectation in the mission, the school shall have a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric.
5. The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations.
6. The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.
7. The school shall review regularly the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Beginning in the fall of 2007, the mission and expectations for student learning committee revised the mission and expectations of Gloucester High School that had originally been passed in 2004. During this process, the mission statement and expectations were reviewed and revised by students, parents, staff members, administrators, and school committee members. The mission and expectations for student learning were approved in a May 2008 faculty meeting; not all stakeholders were provided the opportunity to formally approve the statement. This process involved an extensive review and discussion on what each word meant and implied. After several iterations, the faculty came to consensus. Following the development of the mission statement, a series of academic and social expectations for students, as well as a school-wide rubric, was developed and approved in 2006. Academic expectations address four areas while the social expectations address two: academic expectations require competency in reading comprehension, problem solving and thinking, communicating, and technology skills, while social expectations address teamwork, personal responsibility, and integrity. While the mission statement is currently supported by the administration, it is infrequently recognized and implemented by the greater school community. Although most stakeholders were involved in the revision and adoption of the mission statement, its depth and breadth are not consistently reflected in the decision-making and/or support of the school. As a result, most of the school community does not understand and is not invested in the mission and expectations for student learning. (*self-study, teachers, support staff, students, parents, school committee*)

Among the core values and beliefs about student learning emphasized in the Gloucester High School mission statement are a learning environment characterized by purposeful instruction, positive relationship building, personalization within the school, encouragement of self-reliance, and problem-solving. These values and beliefs are reflected in the school's program of studies and in the fact that the school houses both an academic and vocational center that offer a comprehensive set of opportunities for students. It utilized after school meetings, surveys, news releases and school committee meetings in an effort to involve all constituencies. The development of the academic and social expectations were further debated and publicized through newsletters and finally determined in 2008. Even though a comprehensive process was utilized, not all the constituencies were involved in the finalization of the documents. As a result, faculty and students do not demonstrate ownership of the mission to ensure that it will both challenge and inform future teaching and learning. (*program of studies, students, teachers, parents*)

The school has defined school-wide academic and social expectations. There are four academic expectations that involve reading, problem-solving, thinking, speaking and the application of technologies. There are two social expectations that involve working as a team, personal responsibility and integrity. However, the expectations were developed, written, disseminated, and utilized inconsistently throughout the school. As a consequence, students, parents, and support staff members do not have a clear understanding of the expectations or how students will demonstrate their mastery. Additionally, data resulting from the expectations is not used to inform decisions about curriculum or instruction nor are individual and school progress in meeting the mission reported to students or the community. *(students, parents, teachers, support staff, student work)*

The school has established academic expectations in the mission and has articulated four targeted levels of achievement within the rubrics for each expectation. Although the indicators are descriptive and describe higher standards, they are not consistently or clearly communicated, understood, or implemented by in the school. Additionally, some faculty members have said that they feel that the formatting of the rubrics must be revised to facilitate teachers' understanding and application. Academic expectations are not posted or referenced consistently in all classrooms. Thus, the academic expectations are inconsistently and incorrectly applied and the intent of promoting high expectations is compromised. *(teachers, students, self-study, student work)*

The school has identified two social expectations and developed rubrics to assess the achievement of these social expectations by each student. The school must communicate these to all students and give students examples of best achievement in specific classes or descriptions of the projects or behaviors in assignments or the handbook, so that students know what can be achieved and who will document it. The school provides many opportunities for civic and social experiences for all students through a variety of clubs, extracurricular and interscholastic activities. Additionally, the school may include separate expectations, so that the school can determine whether the students are meeting the civic and social expectations of the mission. *(students, self-study, parents, student work)*

Since the mission statement and school-wide expectations have only recently been developed, these documents do not yet guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and are not consistently evident in the school culture. As a result of three different versions of the statement distributed throughout the school, the school community is confused about its vision and purpose. Thus, a single universal form of both mission and expectations must be chosen and endorsed by all stakeholders so that governing bodies, faculty members, families, and students can understand the goals and work toward achieving them. Thus, students can work on their own personal achievement, knowing what is expected, and the school can do everything in its powers to make this possible and to acknowledge success and facilitate all

students' achievement of the expectations. (*teachers, students, classroom observations*)

The mission statement and expectations for student learning of Gloucester High School have been informally reviewed by the school and community, using some data to guide revision. A regular formal schedule of review must be established with participants and timeline described, to begin immediately to create and disseminate a mission and expectations that will be universally known and used in all classes. Thus, all stakeholders within the school community will have a familiar mission and expectations to inform everyone of goals and principles to guide decision-making, curriculum, instruction, and assessment of students and the school system. (*teachers, self-study, support staff*)

Commendations

1. Opportunity for civic and social involvement of students through a variety of clubs, extracurricular and interscholastic activities
2. The learner expectations are well organized and rigorous
3. The positive school climate that will enable stakeholders to implement the mission

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a formal protocol, which includes representatives of all community stakeholders, and a regular timeline for the review of the school's mission and expectations for student learning
2. Establish and implement clear criteria and delegate responsibility for measuring progress in meeting the social and academic expectations for student learning
3. Develop a process for all decision-making about policy and procedures that ensures alignment with the core values and beliefs in the mission statement

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Curriculum

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the professional staff's commitment to and involvement in a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

1. Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.
2. The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations.
3. The written curriculum shall:
 - prescribe content;
 - integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations;
 - identify course-specific learning goals;
 - suggest instructional strategies;
 - suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.
4. The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall:
 - be appropriately integrated.
 - emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.

7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

CURRICULUM

Conclusions

Each academic area is responsible for specifically teaching and assessing one of the academic expectations. For example, the mathematics and science departments are responsible for problem-solving, the history and foreign language departments for communication, the business department for technology, and the English department for reading. All teachers must be constantly aware of their primary responsibility for assessing the academic learning expectations in order to evaluate their given standard on report cards. Additionally, though curriculum guides frequently list several academic expectations within each unit, they must consistently accent the expectation that is considered the primary responsibility for the subject. As these academic expectations are more frequently and explicitly detailed within the written curriculum, and explained in the classrooms, teachers will better understand their importance and be able to communicate them clearly to students. (*curriculum guides, teacher interviews, meetings with teachers, parents, students, student work*)

Each unit includes essential questions, content, skills, assessments, essential understandings and the school-wide expectations. The specific expectations appear in a list format for each unit, but must be explicitly linked to the individual lessons and assessments by the teacher. Consequently, without teachers' efforts, the expectations are not an essential part of the daily learning experiences of most students. Although, there are many support services available to help students succeed, such as the Gloucester Alternative Program(GAP), the Student Teacher Academic Resource Rooms (STARR), Freshman and Sophomore Transition (FAST) programs and Compass program, but, although these programs attempt to identify students in need of support, there has been no formal evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs to ensure that all students who need assistance are served. In some classes, as well, teachers who assume their students cannot meet expectations have modified the expectations and lowered them rather than enriching the students' opportunities to learn by presenting varied personalized learning strategies so that students have sufficient opportunity to practice them. Thus, the school has work, possibly including professional development in curriculum creation and delivery as well as evaluation of some programs to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to practice and achieve expectations. (*curriculum guides, classroom observations, students*)

Written curriculum guides prescribe content and indicate learning goals for individual courses. However, guides do not suggest instructional strategies, nor do they adequately integrate school-wide learning expectations. While learning expectations are listed within each unit, they are not clearly aligned with assessments. Curriculum guides do list suggested assessments, but these suggestions are often general (i.e. “chapter tests”, “laboratory reports”) and do not identify assessments specific to each unit of study. Teachers report that the program used to create the curriculum guides (TechPaths) is cumbersome and does not allow them to attach important files such as assessments. Teachers informally use Cosmo (a file sharing system) or binders to share lessons, files, worksheets, and assessments within departments. While the majority of courses has completed curriculum guides employing the TechPaths program, there is no common format for more detailed unit design that would indicate instructional strategies or suggestions of ways to engage students in higher-order thinking. The school-wide rubric for academic expectations is rarely used by teachers to assess student learning, and some question the need for such an assessment. Finally, there is no defined, formative benchmark testing that assesses student progress periodically throughout the year. Since significant attention is not given to the improvement of the written curriculum, at this point, the school’s mission and expectations are not supporting student learning and achievement. Thus, curriculum revision that includes suggestions of instructional strategies and assessments including school-wide rubrics should be done, possibly including professional development in the use of rubrics and methods of assessing learning over time. (*curriculum guides, school leadership committee, teachers*)

Some but not all, students have opportunities to practice higher order thinking skills. Students in honors and advanced placement classes report being challenged in this way. However, neither curriculum documents nor classroom observations indicate that all level classes are consistently rigorous. The level of high expectations appears to be subjective to the quality of instruction provided by individual teachers. There is little common understanding of high expectations, referred to as “rigor” among teachers. Individual teachers cite examples of projects they use that demand higher-order thinking such as a Pearl Harbor debate in history that utilizes primary source documents and a geometry project that uses shadows as an indirect means of measuring various objects, but it is not clear how widespread these types of learning opportunities are as they are not documented in the curriculum. Observations of student work confirm that there are few opportunities for students to apply higher order thinking skills so that it appears curriculum often emphasizes form over quality. Additionally, the application of inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills is not included in the written curricula. A review of student work also reveals an overall lack of higher order skill development. A variety of programs offers opportunities for authentic application of knowledge and skills, such as business courses, fine arts, career and technical education (CTE), music, MCROTC, child study, and culinary arts. English electives also offer opportunities to write for the school newspaper and literary magazine, and science students have participated in robotics competitions. However, the majority of opportunities for authentic application of knowledge are taking place in classes outside of the core academic areas. While the self-study reports that the long block within the school’s daily schedule facilitates lessons that engage students in higher order thinking, observations of classes show that instruction during the long block does not differ from instruction in the shorter periods. Because the curriculum does not ensure core curriculum authentic application nor provide many opportunities for inquiry, problem-solving, and higher

order thinking, not all students are engaged as active learners. (*shadowing of students, classroom observations, students, curriculum guides, student work*)

The curriculum is integrated within each department with the goal of allowing students to connect basic concepts and reinforce essential understandings as they progress through the sequence of courses. Individual teachers have used their planning time to develop interdisciplinary units. Specifically, the humanities course integrates literature, art, and history, and the biology and technology course allows students to learn and practice biology concepts through the use of Internet research and computer presentations. Teachers report that all departments informally integrate cross-curricular skills, and the self-study indicated that 64.6% of students stated that teachers include topics from other subject areas in their lessons. In a collaboration between science and business departments, all students who enroll in freshman biology must also take a technology class that integrates material between the two subjects. Students who take Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), a course in the business department, collaborate with students in the Skills and Training to Engage Productivity (STEP) program to run the school store. However, while faculty members express an interest in more collaboration among departments, they cite lack of common planning time as an obstacle, and are not effectively utilizing the professional development block for common planning time. The curriculum on TechPaths lists essential questions for individual subjects that theoretically guide the instruction in each unit to encourage depth of understanding, but the majority of the essential questions within the curriculum guides do not indicate an understanding of how to frame an essential question correctly. In many cases, these questions focus on basic rote knowledge rather than a question that challenges students to think critically. Some of the school's course offerings, including advanced placement and honors classes, electives in each department, and dual enrollment with the community college do clearly emphasize depth of understanding. Instruction in college prep and multi-level classes, however, does not show clear evidence of the importance of depth over breadth. Student work demonstrates basic skills and literal comprehension rather than the stated academic expectation of applying writing to communicate ideas. Because coverage of material is being emphasized over depth of understanding in many classes, not all students have opportunities to acquire concepts that will lead to enduring understanding of content. (*students, curriculum guides, self-study*)

The school provides ample opportunities for some students to extend learning beyond normal course offerings and the school campus. Students participate in music performances, art exhibitions, experiential learning in banking through the Cape Ann Bank school site, marketing in the Lucky Lobster Company, competitions for Robotics, MCROTC drills, and internships with local day cares. Also, CTE students provide carpentry, electrical, and automotive services to the community. In addition to these authentic learning experiences, students may enroll in courses at local colleges such as Salem State College, North Shore Community College, and Northern Essex Community College. Distance learning is also available through the North Dakota Center for Distance Learning and the North Shore On-Line Program. Although the faculty and administration support these opportunities, not all students are aware of them. In order to take advantage of opportunities such as off-campus internships and dual-enrollment programs, students have to initiate the process of enrollment themselves. Students also are active in extracurricular organizations and clubs that meet their diverse interests, learning styles, and needs. Faculty members, administrators, and the school committee encourage and support the creation of new clubs. Although students have many opportunities to

participate in community service, their work is not documented nor is it a requirement for graduation. Since many students are not aware of extended learning opportunities and are not required to participate in community service, not all students extend their learning opportunities beyond normal course offerings and the school campus. Thus, more information and assignment of responsibility for documenting extra student efforts will benefit all students in their current learning experiences and engagement. *(self-study, panel presentation, parents, students)*

There is some curricular coordination and articulation between departments in the school. For example, the history and English departments have worked together on common rubrics. A district initiative has allowed for more curricular coordination and articulation between middle and high school teachers. This has resulted in better placement of students as well as the development of new course offerings that would aid in the transitioning of 8th graders into the high school. For example, an Introduction to Spanish class was developed in response to the elimination of the language program in the middle school. In addition, the science department expanded its offerings to freshmen by giving students a choice of four different science courses. Additionally, English portfolios of eighth grade students are passed on to their ninth grade teachers, and there is a program to further help students who are experiencing problems with the eighth-ninth grade transition called FAST. Even with all these efforts to aid students in transitioning to the high school, students are still experiencing difficulty. As a result, there is a demonstrated need for more curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with the middle school. *(self-study, school leadership team, students)*

Implementation of the curriculum is hindered by insufficient instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies. Only 31% of staff members reports having adequate resources overall. Science, social studies, and child study departments report that textbooks are outdated, making it difficult to maintain currency within the curriculum. Students taking advanced placement science classes are encouraged to buy their own books. In other courses, textbooks have been purchased with grant money. The math department has an insufficient number of calculators, protractors, and rulers to fully implement curriculum. The science department is relying upon outdated equipment. A funding reduction has resulted in reliance upon equipment that is twenty-five to thirty years old, as well as insufficient funding for chemical supplies and physics equipment. The fine arts program has inadequate supplies and relies heavily on donations of money and materials from outside sources. Staffing levels are adequate, but there are still a few courses which are not offered each year. Some teachers have purchased projectors at their own expense. Printing capacity within classrooms is limited. Not all science teachers have laboratory space available to them. Library resources are sufficient to implement the school's curriculum but are underutilized by students and teachers. Thus because of the lack of basic instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and facility space, teachers are not able to effectively implement the curriculum. *(self-study, parents, teachers)*

Currently, the professional staff is not actively involved in ongoing development, evaluation and revision of curriculum, and there is no systematic process in place for guiding such a process. A plan to review the existing curriculum is mentioned in the school improvement plan, but, a formal process for doing so is not outlined. The administration and teaching staff need to implement a comprehensive plan for the

evaluation, development and revision of curriculum. Furthermore, development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum are not based on assessments of student performance in achieving academic expectations and course-specific goals as a formal procedure and accounting of such an assessment are absent. Since there is no formal process in place for school-wide curriculum development, evaluation and revision have not been accomplished. It may be necessary to provide professional development for documenting assessment, collecting data, and using this to create curricula and inform changes in instruction. (*curriculum guides, school improvement plan, teachers*)

The school has committed sufficient time and financial resources to curriculum development but has not provided sufficient personnel. While the self-study indicates that curriculum reviews have been in process for the past three years, the curriculum guides do not reflect comprehensive curriculum that aligns with the academic expectations showing that teachers are only in the beginning stages of curriculum development. Program leaders are charged with the responsibility of being curriculum leaders for each department, but they also teach four classes. The dean of academic affairs is in charge of organizing curriculum review efforts but also teaches two classes and serves as a program leader. The principal and assistant principal have been unable to provide leadership in curriculum development because of the other demands of their positions. The extra duties assumed by people in leadership positions throughout the school prevents them from being fully effective in the role of curriculum leaders. There is a curriculum director for the school district, but someone must have this primary responsibility at the school. Thus, for real productive curriculum work, the school must designate time and provide administrative oversight. If necessary it must also provide professional development in all areas of curriculum assessment and design. (*self-study, curriculum guides, teachers*)

Professional development opportunities supporting development and implementation of the curriculum have been ongoing over the past two years. However, teachers report that there are few classes offered in their content areas and that presentations and workshops on curriculum related topics are not useful in assisting them to develop a coherent curriculum with a uniform format. Of the professional development offered by the district over the past two summers, only one of the offerings in 2009 and three in 2008 were courses targeted to secondary teachers. Reading across the curriculum is one of the few seminars that staff members report as being relevant and useful. Although the staff has described a need for professional development applicable to high school content, seminars on differentiated instruction and professional learning communities have been offered and could assist the staff in curriculum work. The teachers do not appear to be using the offered training in differentiation and the format of professional learning communities in the development of curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to take courses for college credit outside of the district, but reimbursement for such classes is available only to a limited number of teachers. Additionally, department and faculty meeting time has been reduced by half by changes in the teacher contract. Because the breadth of professional development is limited, it does not support the full development and implementation of curriculum. (*teachers, self-study, central office personnel*)

Commendations

1. A variety of course offerings outside the traditional academic disciplines
2. The initiation of curriculum development utilizing the TechPaths program

3. Numerous opportunities for students to extend their learning beyond the classroom

Recommendations

1. Align curriculum with academic and social expectations
2. Ensure that all students have equal curricular opportunity to practice and achieve high expectations
3. Develop curricular essential questions that engage students in critical thinking and if necessary, provide professional development in essential questions
4. Include specific suggested assessments within each curriculum guide that are linked to academic expectations and include rubrics assessment
5. Provide more opportunities for inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking to engage more students at all levels
6. Ensure greater depth of understanding in all curricula at all levels
7. Ensure that there are resources, technology and facilities to fully implement the curriculum
8. Establish a leadership structure that commits sufficient personnel to curriculum development and revision
9. Develop a formal process including a timeline for the revision of curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Instruction

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
 - personalize instruction;
 - make connections across disciplines;
 - engage students as active learners;
 - engage students as self-directed learners;
 - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
 - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
 - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection.
3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own

- practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
 6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
 7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
 8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

INSTRUCTION

Conclusions

Instructional strategies at Gloucester High School are inconsistently aligned with the school's mission and expectations. Most classrooms have copies of the mission, and the accompanying achievement statement and the six standards are posted visibly in the classrooms. In addition, some teachers report that they understand the mission and that they include its instructions in class preparation. Specific departments take on the responsibility for the standards and for creating widespread awareness of each area of expectation. What is not addressed is how these standards are measured by faculty members. There is an extensive rubric with performance indicators of success and failure on a variety of levels. A few teachers address the performance indicators but not in a systematic manner. For instance, one department claims responsibility for communications. However, department members state that the first two years of that discipline cover grammar and other foundations but are not based on the indicators of the expectations themselves. Some teachers are trying to implement a PERR document, an instrument that defines instruction as *purposeful, engaging, relevant and rigorous*, but they do not agree on how to measure these descriptors. Teachers, school committee members, parents, students, and administrators concede that high expectations are often not defined. In spite of this, projects and classroom experiences do provide opportunities for student growth and are a source of pride for the students. Parents reflect that they do not see the mission statement and expectations as having a role in instruction. The teachers are attempting to develop a sense of commonality in using the mission and expectations to drive instruction, but inconsistencies hamper understanding and implementation. Thus faculty members and students alike would benefit from a clearer explanation of the function of the mission and expectations and from a school-wide movement to embed mission principles into all classroom activities as well as a school-wide incorporation of these (or simplified) rubrics into everyday experience. It may be necessary to provide professional development as guided by teacher expressed needs to succeed with this. (*classroom observations, teachers, parents, school board*)

Teachers employ creative instructional strategies and varied practices but inconsistently. There are, however, some compelling examples of creative student projects and activities. Writing assignments in English (eleventh grade essays), for example, allow for a variety of learning styles and opportunities in the attainment of a final product. Frequent check-ins with teachers demonstrate the personalization prescribed in the instruction standard. Students in Algebra II are offered examples that reflect current student interests and make a connection to the student on a personal level. However, there is a strong emphasis on “traditional” teacher-directed lessons in classrooms where worksheets are the focus, even during long blocks. Passive unengaged learners were observed in several classes, not consistent with the mission and expectations and indicating that not all students are being challenged. The repeated use of worksheets, gaps in instructional time, and lack of planning reflect that students are not always held to high standards. Some students enjoy individual interaction with their teachers but others in the class are not actively engaged. On occasion, large groups of students were left unattended while the teacher worked with individuals in other locations. Group work and interactive learning take place in some classes, but this is not common in every classroom or course. For example, students were actively engaged in group and individual projects in the robotics classroom. Students utilize “forecast sheets” which create predictable and accessible assignment descriptions, outcomes, and expectations. There are several examples of the forecast sheet but the lack of consistency in its format and use creates a variety of student interpretation of its meaning. The Compass, a daily planner, allows the student to be active and self-directed, but teachers do not consistently apply across disciplines. High expectations can be questioned also, as few students appear to be stretching to learn. Students reflect that the levels of classes, College Preparation I, College Preparation II, and Honors differ in “just doing more work.” Many times assignments are finite and offer very little enrichment or demand for higher level thinking. In some cases, teachers provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skill; students are offered computer use in library workstations, and this student work demonstrates a variety of learning applications, and many students show great pride in their efforts. Students are provided with departmental rubrics that can be used for self-assessment, but these are not used consistently if at all. There are assignment-specific rubrics, but the skills are not universally applied across disciplines. Some teachers have the students use self-reflection and skills to enhance instruction. For example, many students use checklists on projects to examine their role in the process. As a result of the limited range of instructional practices students do not have a broad spectrum of opportunities to learn. (*self-study, classroom observations, student shadowing, student work, teachers, parents*)

To improve instruction teachers use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, and supervisors. That process takes place informally. Teachers reflect that peers are generally supportive and sharing. Administrators and supervisors “drop-in” to visit classes and leave suggestions for instructional strategies. The self-study states, however, that only 44.9% of the staff uses input from supervisor evaluations to improve instruction. Some teachers employ student surveys or informal course evaluations to gather feedback. It is not clear whether or not these reflections provide improvement in instruction. Although they are encouraged to participate, parents tend to involve themselves primarily in their own child’s situation. Other than a formal contract-driven observation, the teachers report that feedback is informal and does not direct instructional improvement. (*parents, teachers, self-study*)

By some measures, teachers are experts in their content areas. The self-study indicates that 21% of teachers holds bachelor's degrees, 73% of teachers holds master's degrees, and 6% holds other advanced degrees. Teachers consistently speak of a high level of informal collaboration during which educators shared relevant information, discuss pedagogy, and share curriculum. While the school does provide one full day and four half days of professional development time, many teachers acknowledge that there are insufficient formal opportunities for professional development. The library carries several periodicals relevant to teacher practice, and teachers frequently seek out their own sources of information. However, few teachers utilize opportunities for a range of activities during long blocks or within assignments, a proven better use of time. In most cases, no distinction seems to exist between the instructional use of a long block (64 minutes) and regular class time (45 minutes). Lack of access to formal and relevant professional development limits teacher expertise, compromises self-reflection, and interferes with instructional quality. Thus, better use of both teacher collaboration time and long block instructional time could be made if teachers received relevant professional development and follow up. *(teachers, self-study, tours of facility)*

Formal discussion of instructional strategies is not integral to the professional culture of Gloucester High School. However, informally, teachers readily confer on lessons and assessments during preparation time. The focus of those discussions is not centered on curriculum and rubric-designed outcomes rather they serve to address immediate problems rather than long-term issues. Teachers do have one time per day, a "professional duty period" during which they meet across or within disciplines to share best practices. Although many teachers view this time as formal professional development, there are few products or notes to qualify how the time is used. Teachers express interest in additional conversation and regret the few prospects for formalizing it. Middle school administrators report an increase in joint eighth and ninth-grade faculty meetings. In part, these are used to discuss student transitions between disparate teaching styles and priorities. However, both administrators and teachers feel that student adjustment from middle school to high school instruction is still very difficult. Teachers actively consult one another on matters of instruction, but the paucity of formal discussion limits professional development to learn new and effective strategies to provide instructional differentiation. *(self-study, administrators,, school improvement plan, teachers)*

Teachers, students, and parents clearly recognize the utility and advantages of using technology in instruction, but its use is inconsistent. In some courses, technology is critical to student learning. For example, in sophomore Technology in Biology, computer programs such as Excel are central to the curriculum, and students learn how to apply charts and graphs to their biology lab reports. Students in the auto-mechanics program express satisfaction with the level and use of technology in their coursework. Math teachers make regular use of graphing calculators and Geometer's Sketch Pad. However, while educators recognize the value of using technology in their classes, they report that facilities and use are limited. For example, math teachers (and others) feel that Smart Boards and other current technologies would improve student learning. In addition, students, parents, and teachers recognize the technological opportunities in the school library but cite little time in the day's schedule as a reason not to utilize the resources there. For some courses such as World Regions and Cultures, Internet use is a regular feature of instruction, but other departments articulate concerns. Guidance counselors report that students may find online college applications difficult and need additional

skills to complete them. Though programs make use of software such as Kurzweil to aid special education students, only a very small number of students has access to such programs. While available in the library, classrooms, and other departments, technology is often outdated or not used, and this does not improve the quality of instruction but impedes integration of technology. (*student work, teachers, shadowing, administrators, self-study*)

Professional development is guided inconsistently by instructional needs. Only 31% of the Gloucester High School staff believes that professional development supports the instructional needs of the school. Although the Gloucester High School Improvement Plan cites six separate “ongoing” professional development initiatives in “Instruction”, there is little specific evidence to indicate their value or how they are working. Moreover, these descriptions of initiatives are not consistent with teacher accounts of how professional time for instruction is used. While many teachers are satisfied with informal opportunities to discuss pedagogy and best practices, they repeatedly state that high school-appropriate professional development opportunities would improve instruction. Deficiencies in professional development limit instructional currency, creativity, and strategy, compromising teaching and learning. (*teachers, self-study, school improvement plan*)

The teacher contract offers general formal parameters for evaluation of instruction and the self-study describes specific cycles of evaluation for non-professional status and professional status faculty. However, teacher and administrative interviews describe very different processes. Teachers and department leaders discuss informal evaluations where a principal or program leader might step into a classroom for a few minutes and leave a note with suggestions. Insufficient administrative coverage makes teacher evaluation extremely difficult, and administrators readily admit that they are unable to get into classrooms as much as they wish. However, some students report that administrators are often present in classrooms if only for a short time. The principal and vice-principal maintain lists of staff members, documenting the teachers they have “dropped in on” throughout the semester. Both administrators check to see that students are engaged, that teachers are using a “forecast”, and that students have their books. Teachers seem aware that these criteria are important for administrative visits, but there are no formal parameters for these brief visits. Moreover, no formal instruments for evaluation and no paperwork exists other than a written evaluation as defined in the teachers’ contract. Although the self-study says that all program leaders attend mandatory training courses on observation and evaluation, such attendance is not documented or severely outdated. Reduced number of administrators and informal evaluative tools lead to insufficient teacher evaluation, interfering with instructional growth and diversity of teaching strategies. (*students, administrators, self-study, documentation of participation in evaluation workshops, contract*)

Commendations

1. The faculty’s request for additional and diverse professional development to aid high school-appropriate instruction
2. Faculty members pride in their disciplines, and their students’ work and their willingness to share knowledge collegially

3. The positive interpersonal relationships between faculty and students that encourage students to strive for academic excellence

Recommendations

1. Examine the mission for beliefs about learning and align all instructional practices with these belief
2. Formalize processes to utilize feedback from parents, students, and evaluators
3. Provide professional development to all teachers that will increase the instructional strategies teachers use to improve student achievement and increase higher order thinking skills
4. Implement varied instructional practices consistent with research and best practices to maximize teaching and learning
5. Provide professional development in the use of technology for all students in all areas
6. Provide formal opportunities for faculty members to observe and discuss instructional strategies across disciplines

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning and course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction.

1. The school shall have a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics.
2. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations.
3. For each learning activity, teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed.
4. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.
5. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
6. Teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies.
7. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of assessment strategies.
8. The school's professional staff shall communicate:
 - individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families;
 - the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Each department has agreed to be responsible for one academic expectation and to assess students twice a year using the rubric, starting in the 2008-2009 school year. In addition, teachers agreed to develop individual and departmental rubrics to assess project-based work. A review of student work in all disciplines shows that, while some teachers are using rubrics to assess student work, there is no common understanding of what a rubric is, and, in fact, a scoring guide is often substituted for a rubric, often labeled as a rubric. The school has not developed a uniform process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations using the mission-based, school-wide, departmental, and individual teacher-developed rubrics. Teachers are in the early stages of developing and utilizing rubrics, sharing them with students, and using them to set out clear expectations for the assessment of student progress. Assessment of school-wide or departmental academic expectations are not being addressed by a consistent standard of assessment, i.e. the rubric. Thus, students have no clear and consistent indication of the level of achievement they must attain in order to meet academic expectations. (*student work, teacher interviews, classroom observations, parents*)

The school's professional staff does not collect data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations, nor are those expectations reported to the public. The school offers a rich variety of extra-curricular and athletic programs in which a large number of students participate. Student council, National Honor Society, and ROTC are particularly visible in the school. Community service hours encompass an emerging practice that could be documented to measure civic responsibility. Students have school spirit, and a primary form of entertainment in off-school hours is supporting the school's sports teams. However, faculty members reported in the self-study that they do not have a formal system in place to collect data and to report student progress on civic and social expectations. As a consequence, students have no clear indication of what they must do or the level of achievement that they must attain in order to meet the civic and social expectations that were developed by stakeholders. (*self-study, panel presentation, students*)

Teachers do not clarify to students consistently the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed. Classroom observations demonstrated that learning standards in student friendly language are not required to be posted in classrooms nor were the standards referred to, during classroom activities. With no clear focus for student learning, worksheets or textbook activities often lead to little discussion that encourage critical thinking. Some teachers say that they cannot promote higher order thinking skills since their discipline or the ability level of the students they teach does not support this kind of thinking. Worksheets employing the lower order thinking skills of memorization and comprehension can be found in numerous classes. In addition, course-specific learning goals are not clearly linked to the relevant school-wide academic expectations, particularly the expectation for rigor. Some teachers do not have a working knowledge of how to engage students through the use of higher order thinking skills. Absent a clear and consistent definition of and understanding of rigor and a process for aligning course-specific learning goals with relevant school-wide expectations, Gloucester High School will have difficulty in

measuring the impact of any changes made to curriculum, instruction or assessment practices. All teachers must begin by clarifying the school-wide academic expectations for each learning activity and the course-specific learning goals that will be assessed. *(Classroom observation, teacher interview, student work)*

Classroom observations, teacher meetings, and examples of student work reveal that the classroom assessment of student learning is not uniformly accomplished through the use of course-specific rubrics. In some classes student learning is based on critical thinking and the development of conceptual problem-solving. In these instances, there is clear alignment of school-wide and course-specific rubrics with assessment of student learning. A review of student work from all disciplines reveals that there is no uniform understanding of what a rubric is and how a well-developed rubric can lead to greater student understanding. Some teachers use a rubric, some use a scoring guide, and for other assignments the method of grading is not clear. Some teachers have clear methods of grading that they share with the student or note in writing. Some teachers report a more subjective grading policy. Gloucester High School does not utilize a uniform process of classroom assessment of student learning based on school-wide and course-specific rubrics. Absent a uniform approach to measuring student achievement across departments and throughout the school, students will have difficulty understanding how they are assessed or the meaning of those assessments whereas consistent use of school-wide rubrics will give students a tool for self-assessment and a better understanding of how to improve their work. *(classroom observation, teachers, student work)*

Teachers have not had the recent opportunity to engage in relevant professional development on building a variety of effective assessment strategies. Some teachers assess student knowledge, skills, and competencies in various ways, including written assignments, oral presentations, and projects that are focused on the solution to a specific problem. This variety of assessment strategies helps those teachers to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time. Some examples of varied assessment strategies that were observed include a foreign language program PowerPoint presentation that students who were going on a language exchange program were required to produce on either side of the trip; a “The Pit and the Pendulum Project” in math; the IMP (Integrated Math Project) used in some classes; the math “indirect measurement with shadows” project; history using primary sources analysis for such projects as the Pearl Harbor debate; and the foreign language alphabet book that is done each year and serves as a portfolio of vocabulary and grammar development. Some teachers have taken courses with professional organizations and/or local colleges to build their competency in their subject area and in pedagogy. The school must provide all teachers professional development in a variety of assessment strategies to serve the needs of students with all learning styles and in methods of assessing and recording student growth over time. *(classroom observation, teachers, student work, self-study)*

Teachers have a professional duty period one period a day for half the year, but because of scheduling issues, they do not have the formal opportunity to meet collaboratively by department to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies. Teachers comment that they meet informally over lunch or with the few teachers in their department who may have the same professional duty period. They report that these are rich discussions that push their thinking and allow them to better address the needs of individual students. In addition, there are teachers who are collaboratively planning

instruction, the technology and biology teachers work jointly with their students to research a topic and, using technology, present their project in several ways: brochure, essay, and PowerPoint presentation. Both teachers report that they develop different rubrics for scoring, addressing the components that are required by their own disciplines. As with most collaboration at Gloucester High School, this is done on the teachers' own time with no formalization in time or process. Teachers have little to no training in discussion protocols to facilitate the presentation and discussion of student work. Teachers and administrators have recently been trained in Research for Better Teaching which is giving them the tools to use data to inform student achievement results. When this knowledge is shared with the whole faculty and dedicated time is provided for effective meetings, everyone can be engaged in the process of collecting and aggregating data to drive the development of curriculum and the improvement of instructional strategies. Teachers should be discussing deficiencies in student work and trends seen by department members. Program leaders can share those trends with other program leaders to jointly identify areas of needed professional development. Teachers will be able to drive the improvement of student achievement by sharing trends identified in students' work and the resulting assessment of student learning. Thus, with training in discussion protocols and time for discussion, Gloucester High School can become more effective as in responding to its mission statement calling for instruction that is purposeful, engaging, relevant, and rigorous. (*teacher interviews, meetings with teachers, school leadership team, self-study*)

The professional development program is viewed by many teachers as assigned without input or ownership by the faculty. While some faculty members find this acceptable, others believe that the school's professional development program does not provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. Teachers raise many questions in their self-study. They also recognize that time for formal collaboration would provide them with a multi-classroom view of the needs of students. In its present structure, Gloucester High School remains a collection of many isolated classrooms where a culture of purposeful professional talk has not been universally promoted. Teachers have very limited opportunities to collaborate on student assessment strategies. Such opportunities must occur on an ad hoc basis during professional duty, planning periods, or lunch. Even in these instances, there is no process in place to collect and share their understanding, formally about teaching, learning, and assessment across departments or across the school. Until a professional development program is in place that allows teachers to collaborate about student needs, plan for those needs, identify professional development needed to meet those needs, and then to engage in follow-up activities that assist teachers in implementing their newly found knowledge, there will not be a direct impact on student learning. (*self-study, teacher interviews, meetings with groups of teachers*)

During the school year the professional staff at Gloucester High School informs students and families of student progress through varied communication devices. Progress reports and report cards are sent home at mid-quarter and at end-of-quarter, respectively. An automated phone system is utilized to inform parents that progress reports and report cards are on their way. A small group of parents reports being able to check on the progress of their child by accessing the teacher's on-line electronic grade book, by using the IPASS system, or requesting weekly progress reports for their student. Some staff members use email to communicate with parents. By law, annual meetings between parents, teachers, and appropriate support staff are held for students with Individual

Education Plans or 504 plans. Some parents report that, in conjunction with the school, they are trying to prepare their student to be more independent, and they have asked teachers to communicate directly with the student on all but the most serious issues. Others parents say that teachers really care about students and talk with parents about student progress. MCAS results are sent to parents annually. Currently, with the exception of aggregate MCAS information that gets reported in the newspaper, the school does not have a process in place to report its progress in achieving school-wide expectations to the community. Gloucester High School is viewed by parents as having a strong system of communication with parents. As a result of informed community support, the school would benefit from additional information distributed to the community on its progress in achieving school-wide expectations. *(parent group, report cards, students, self-study)*

Commendations

1. Teachers work informally, individually, and in small groups to discuss how assessment can improve
2. Teachers want to discuss assessment results with colleagues
3. Communication with parents regarding student assessment

Recommendations

1. Provide collaborative planning time to discuss student assessment results
2. Provide training in professional discussion protocols
3. Provide professional development in incorporating higher order thinking skills in a variety of assessments
4. Ensure that all students have regular opportunities to be assessed with the school-wide rubrics in all subject areas
5. Provide training and coaching to teachers and administrators on using data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations
6. Put in place a plan to develop a culture of purposeful professional dialogue among faculty members
7. Provide professional development and coaching for all teachers on rubric development and use
8. Write and communicate in clear and consistent learning goals in each course and unit
9. Develop and implement a process to assess individual progress in achieving the academic expectations, based on the use of the school-wide rubrics

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD

Leadership and Organization

The way in which a school organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices, which supports student learning and well-being.

1. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
3. Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school.
4. The organization of the school and its educational programs shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
7. Meaningful roles in the decision-making process shall be accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.

11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Conclusions

The principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school but needs additional support from the central office and school committee in order to ensure that the school achieves the mission and expectations for student learning. The principal feels he has necessary autonomy to implement the school mission and expectations, and both the school board and central administrators report they provide sufficient autonomy to the principal. Specifically, the school committee cites that while it sets policy for the district, all managerial and educational decisions remain in the purview of the building principal. The principal develops an annual school improvement plan and budget request which is subsequently presented directly to the school committee and subject to appropriation. An example of an initiative of particular import to the principal which was supported by the school board was the preservation of “professional duty” time for teachers as part of the master schedule. This time is used for informal collaboration among teachers, co-observation of classes, and the provision of academic assistance to some students. While the board is supportive of the principal’s autonomy, the principal’s decisions are limited by insufficient resources for him to implement full administration. The lack of sufficient administrators in the building is a hindrance to the educational objectives of the school. In addition, the principal has not had significant input into district professional development plans, so that he has lacked support for the development of human resources supportive of the mission and expectations. An example of needed support from the central office would be to work directly with building administrators in planning professional development offerings which are targeted to the specific needs of the high school to support the school’s mission and expectations for student learning. The principal has implemented necessary reforms relative to the creation of a safe and respectful environment, but without needed resources for administration and support for independent selection of professional development in instruction and assessment for his teachers, the principal will not be able to impact teaching and learning to the extent necessary to fulfill the school’s mission and to improve teaching and learning. (*building leadership team, central office staff, school committee, teachers, self-study*)

The principal was permanently appointed in March 2009. His immediate goals provided by the superintendent were to “right the ship,” and prepare for NEASC. Since his appointment, he has provided leadership in beginning to create a shared vision but has not yet provided direction and focus for student learning. The self-study report indicates that the principal provides the “tools, time, and environment... for reaching the school-wide mission and expectations for student learning.” In addition, meetings with teachers, building leadership team members, central office personnel, and the school board indicate that the principal has provided the leadership necessary to achieve the vision. Contrary to these reports, however, classroom observations and individual teacher interviews reveal little evidence that the mission and expectations currently impact students at the classroom level. Most teachers have not consistently implemented the school-wide rubrics, and students are not aware of how these rubrics are used. Because constituent groups disagree upon the degree to

which the school's mission is reflective of the entire school community, the school does not have a clear direction for how to become mission driven. As a result, the principal and faculty members must unify their efforts to use school-wide expectations and their rubrics a living part of the learning experience and consciously try to make this a mission-driven school. (*classroom observations, teachers,, building leadership team, self-study*)

The school has implemented a "distributive leadership" model which includes administrators other than the principal as well as teacher leaders from various program areas. In addition to the school's one assistant principal, other members of the leadership team include a dean of academic affairs who also has teaching responsibilities and teachers from across the school's program areas. Meetings of this group take place bi-weekly. Responsibilities of the team members include budget preparation, instructional leadership, and supervision/ evaluation of staff members. The principal and assistant principal have not assumed primary responsibility for educational leadership within the school, but rather, this leadership has been delegated to program leaders within the building. The observation/ evaluation tool has not been fully utilized, and classrooms and student work reveal teacher's infrequent adherence to consistent instructional expectations, leading to the conclusion that the current organization or function of the faculty and administration has not positively impacted student learning sufficiently across all program areas and classrooms to endorse the mission process. During the 2009-10 school year, departmental and school-wide meeting time was cut in half, diminishing the opportunity for faculty members to engage in meaningful discussion about teaching and learning. As a result of the inconsistent leadership afforded by the organization structure, isolated pockets of outstanding teaching and learning exist within the school but are not pervasive on a school-wide basis. Thus the leadership structure and function does not ensure that all students are afforded the opportunity to achieve proficiency on the school-wide expectations. (*classroom observation, student work, school leadership team, self-study*)

The overall organization of school programs provides support for a diverse student population to achieve the school's mission and expectations, but the organization of educational programs within the school does not assure that all students will achieve the school's expectations for student learning. The educational programs within the school include academic and vocational/ technical programs that provide students with necessary skills for a variety of post-secondary choices. In addition, the school hosts several smaller learning communities such as the FAST, Summit, Gloucester Alternative Program (GAP), and Compass programs. Classroom observations, inspection of student work, and interviews with staff members reveal that the students in special education, multi-level, and college-preparatory II courses are not experiencing consistently high expectations and best practices in teaching, and some of these students are not accountable for meeting the same set of school-wide expectation as students in the honors and advanced placement programs. Teachers of these courses report that they modify expectations and lower standards so that these students meet success. These teachers should receive professional development in differentiating teaching strategies appropriately and in teaching higher level thinking to students of all intellectual levels. The school has hired an adjustment counselor to provide additional clinical support for students along with the school's psychologist and student assistant program. Instruction at the school is organized around a seven

block, rotating schedule, that includes one long instructional block per day. This block is not utilized appropriately by many teachers in the school as few teachers have implemented varied instructional strategies consistent with current research and better practice thereby diminishing student opportunity to learn and to show what they have learned. Thus, while the school has a broad spectrum of programs available to students, inequity of the expectations and the opportunities among levels of instruction do not support all students' mastery of the expectations, and the current organizational structure and teaching practices of the school do not meet students' needs and support the mission and expectations of the school. (*student work, classroom observations, teachers, self-study*)

Grouping patterns in the school do not communicate high expectations to all students. Students in some areas meet the school's expectations for student learning, but the same data also indicates that students, particularly in special education, college-preparatory II, and multi-level courses are not held accountable to the same standards and expectations as students in other program areas creating a perceivable value differential. Teachers in these areas report the modification of school-wide rubrics and lowering standards to ensure that students are able to meet proficiency in the school expectations. As a result, many students in the school are not afforded equitable opportunities to practice and achieve the school's mission and expectations. (*student work, classroom observations, teachers, self-study*)

While the schedule supports learning in some program areas, other program areas report the schedule does not fully support curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Fifty-five percent of faculty members report that the schedule does not adequately support the implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Specifically, science teachers do not feel that that the schedule provides adequate time for laboratory activities. Other program areas also say that the schedule does not support their programs. Teachers report that the high degree of dissatisfaction with the schedule is largely the result of the faculty not being engaged sufficiently in the development of the schedule, and that many faculty have not been trained in instructional methods needed for teaching in a longer block. Instructional strategies observed during the long block were not varied or particularly engaging to students and did not meet the needs of all students. Consequently, the schedule, as implemented, does not meet the needs of students at the school in fulfilling the mission and expectations of the school. (*self-study survey, self-study, teachers, organization committee*)

Students, parents and faculty members are afforded frequent informal and occasional formal opportunities to provide meaningful input into the decision-making process. These groups report that procedures enacted by the current administration have significantly improved the scope of opportunities to provide feedback. Constituent groups widely indicate that the administrator of the building has an open-door policy and is available and open to feedback. In addition, the school affords opportunity for meaningful input into the decision-making process to each group through the site based advisory council. Members of this group report that they are able to review the budget and provide feedback regarding "wish-list" items for the school. There is an active student council, and the principal reports meeting regularly both formally and informally with members of this group who bring issues forward to the administration. Outside of these opportunities, the school does not have a formal plan

to provide a broad cross-section of parents and students input into the decision-making process. As a result of the open door policy of the administration, however, the school community reports improved climate in the school. In addition, these groups also report that the current administrator has been responsive to the needs of each group. As a result of the current administrator's responsiveness to feedback, constituent groups have had increased informal opportunities to provide meaningful feedback. (*self-study, teachers, organization committee meeting, parents, students*)

Class sizes in most program areas ensure that teachers have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of students. Class sizes of most academic classes range between 17 and 25; however, isolated sections in these areas reach 27-28 students. Elective class sizes are higher and reach 30 students per class. While 46% of faculty members reports that they have time to address individual student needs in all classes, the majority does not agree, however, it is not clear that there is a connection between faculty reports regarding an ability to personalize education and a direct correlation with class size. Contrary to the self-study report, it is not conclusive that class size and overall teacher load is an impediment to personalizing the education of students. Thus, most teachers are able to meet the individual learning needs of students based upon these criteria. (*classroom observations, class size documentation, self-study, teachers*)

The high quality of personal relationships among students, faculty members, and administrators, allow many students to make meaningful connections to an adult in the school community, although, there is no formal program to ensure that all students have a personalized education experience and receive necessary assistance in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning. The self-study report indicates that many students find personalization through interactions with teachers and activity advisors. Classroom observations reveal that the powerful personal relationships among students and faculty members are the strength of the school. Teachers and students both report that these personal relationships are modeled by the administrators. While there is no formal program in this area to provide connections with faculty members, the school has implemented a freshman advisory program where ninth grade students meet with upperclassmen who serve as mentors throughout the first half of freshman year. Teachers iterated the need to implement a formal advisory program, however, there is a concern for students who do not receive sufficient support from the school in order to meet success and the attendance rate (89.1%) is cited as an indicator of need for the development of a program. The initiative has met with mixed support from faculty members at the school. There is a high degree of personalization within the Gloucester High School for students, resulting in strong interpersonal relationships within the school community. However, the absence of a formal and ongoing program for connecting students with adults means that not every student is guaranteed adequate support. (*organization committee, classroom observations, self-study*)

There is no formal, documented collaboration among faculty members although there is frequent informal collaboration within and across departments. This collaboration does not clearly directly impact student learning. Existing avenues for collaboration within the high school include department meetings and daily scheduled "professional duty" time. During the 2009-10 school year, meeting time was reduced by approximately 50% as a result of contract negotiations. While professional duty time

can be used by faculty members for collaboration, there is no common planning time for teachers who teach similar courses. The school requires teachers to declare how the professional duty time will be used, and examples of how the faculty members use time include co-observation and curriculum planning. However, there is no formal system of accountability for how faculty members utilize this time. Classroom observations do not provide evidence of focused, purposeful use of this time, leading to the conclusion that the time, while potentially beneficial, has not provided student results that can be measured. (*leadership team, classroom observations, teachers, school committee, self-study*)

The school staff is involved in promoting the well-being and learning of all students. Positive relationships among students, staff members and administrators are pervasive throughout the school, and the faculty demonstrates a commitment to the needs of individual students. In an effort to maintain a high quality of education for all students with insufficient resources, many of the faculty members have adopted numerous roles. For example, the dean of academic affairs also serves as the English program leader and teaches two classes. Other program leaders, in addition to being responsible for educational leadership and the supervision and evaluation of staff, are also responsible for teaching four classes. The dedication of the administrators, faculty members and support staff members at the school leads directly to their involvement in promoting the well being of all students. (*self-study, teachers, students, classroom observations*)

As a result of the strong personal relationships between students and professional staff members which are fostered by the principal and assistant principal, the school climate is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, evidenced by students' and faculty's explicit sense of pride and ownership. Classroom observations reveal a safe, structured learning environment for students. In addition, observations show highly developed personal relationships among the students, teachers, and administrators. Throughout the school, students act and are treated with a high degree of respect by all staff members. In meetings and interviews, students, parents, and all members of the school staff exhibit an "esprit de corps" which pervades the culture of the school. As a result of strong personal relationships, the climate of the school is safe, positive, and supportive. (*self-study, classroom observations, students, teachers*)

The school committee has supported the school's improvement efforts by affording the principal sufficient autonomy to make educational decisions for the school. However, the school's mission and expectations for student learning have not been fully embedded into the school committee's decision-making process. Consequently, educational decisions of the committee are at times in conflict with the needs of the school as identified by the administration. In addition, during the meeting with the school committee, members indicated strong support for the principal and a belief that he will provide educational leadership within the school. The school improvement (2009-13) plan which was tied to the school's mission, was submitted and approved by the school committee. The executive summary of the plan explicitly indicates several areas of need that are a priority for the school. Requests included improvements and maintenance of both interior and exterior of the building, increasing custodial staff to ensure a clean, healthy, and safe environment, and additional administrative support. The superintendent further emphasized the urgent need for an additional administrator at the high school. Members of the school

committee indicated that they felt the current administrative structure works for the high school and do not see the need to add additional administrative support, despite clear communication of the priorities of the building administration to the school committee and the recommendation of the superintendent, thus, the school committee has not adequately supported Gloucester High School's mission and expectations for student learning. In addition, protocols for communication of concern from parents to the school are not clear, as parents often contact school committee members with concerns rather than addressing those concerns to the school. Consequently, without the school committee's support, the school will be unable to fully implement the mission and expectations. *(school committee, central administrators, school administrators, parents, self-study)*

Commendations

1. Strong interpersonal relationships among students, faculty members, and administrators support a safe and personalized environment
2. The "Open Door" policy of the school administrators enabling students, parents, and faculty members to have meaningful roles in the decision-making process
3. The opportunities for administrators and teachers to provide leadership within the school
4. The student mentoring program that pairs upperclassmen with freshman

Recommendations

1. Provide additional administrative support to ensure that the principal has the necessary resources to implement the mission and expectations, to provide curricular leadership, and to supervise the instructional program
2. Develop additional means of communicating the mission/ expectations and needs to the school committee to ensure adequate support for the school
3. Assess the extent to which the building leadership team affects change that impacts student learning
4. Develop a formal program for the use of "professional duty" time which provides a system of accountability and is linked to student achievement
5. Develop and implement an ongoing formal program that ensures each student has one adult in addition to the guidance counselor who can personalize his education
6. Ensure that the organization and grouping patterns of the school offer equitable opportunity for all students to achieve the mission and expectations for student learning
7. Plan and implement all necessary professional development opportunities to support the mission and expectations for student learning and instructional goals

SUPPORT STANDARD

School Resources for Learning

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

All Student Support Services

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve stated civic and social expectations.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.
6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.
7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

Guidance Services

8. The school shall provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:
 - individual and group meetings with counseling personnel;
 - personal, career, and college counseling;
 - student course selection assistance;

- collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social services providers;
- appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

Health Services

9. The school's health services shall provide:
 - preventive health services and direct intervention services;
 - appropriate referrals;
 - mandated services;
 - emergency response mechanisms;
 - ongoing student health assessments.

Library Information Services

10. The library/information services program and materials shall be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program.
11. Library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation.
12. A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population shall be available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during and after the school day.
14. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.
15. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

Special Education Services

16. The school shall provide special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with the local, state, and federal laws.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Gloucester High School student support services play a role in supporting the students' ability to meet the schools mission and expectations for student learning. The Guidance Department, Special Education Department, Library Media Center and Health Services provide a variety of resources and services. These services have promoted respect and tolerance and have encouraged students to achieve academically and to contribute to society. The majority of parents and students feel the services are available at the school. However, student and parent interviews indicate that the services need to be more fully utilized. Only 43.2% of parents reported that their children frequently utilized the library. Furthermore, 58.6% of parents with special education students reported that they were satisfied with special education services. The role and implementation of student services should be increased so that all students and parents feel that their purpose is being accomplished. *(self-study, student work, students, teachers, parents)*

Although there are careful allocations of resources, programs, and services all students do not have an opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. Support services provide a comprehensive guidance department, an adjustment counselor, community health services, community mental health services, academic programs through Compass, Gloucester Alternative Program (GAP), Freshman and Sophomore Transition (FAST), Summit, and Skills and Training to Engage Productivity (STEP) as well as grouped and individual academic support and counseling. In addition to academic supports, internships, dual enrollment, work/study, and career and technical education (CTE) are available. Students have access to advanced studies, honors, college preparatory I and II levels, and remedial academic classes in the core areas, but at-risk students needs exceed the capacity of the programs, and English language learners (ELL) do not have sufficient access to materials, dictionaries, or curriculum. Quantitative data is not incorporated in evaluating student progress or program effectiveness at this time. The school must assess students sufficiently to produce data to evaluate its needs using quantitative data, or some student access to learning will continue to be limited and result in inequities for opportunities to achieve the expectations for student learning. *(self-study, student work, observation, student shadowing, teachers, parents, support staff, curricular binders, school improvement plan)*

Student support personnel interact and work cooperatively with professional and other staff members by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. Gloucester has developed a wide range of community support to address their needs. Guidance counselors can refer students to the student assistance program (SAP) to develop a plan to address students' needs. Support programs that include Help for Abused Women and Children (HAWC), the Young Family Initiative, the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative, and the Gloucester Health Department and Education Services (HES) support school wide preventive and awareness programs. Although there is continued involvement from the community at large, the school needs to provide adequate space for private personal counseling and evaluation. *(self-study, support staff, parents, students, teachers)*

Student support services and programs are not regularly evaluated. There is no formal process to address evaluation of services, program design, or effectiveness. Special

education uses state and federal guidelines to review students' individual education plans (IEP), but the programs themselves do not receive ongoing and systematic review. The student assistance program (SAP) and the adjustment counselor use data to design, implement, and review the services provided to at-risk students. There is little formal evaluation of support personnel and programs however. Data has not been fully utilized to determine effectiveness and accountability of program design. Hampering and limiting program development and staff effectiveness and the evaluation of professional practices and revision of programs relating to direct service implementation and accountability. Without regular evaluation to ensure student learning and access to appropriate services more inequities will occur. *(sub-committee, support personnel, self-study, adjustment counselor survey)*

Student support services use ongoing communication systems with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel that keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs. The use of all-call, e-mail, telephone, newspaper, and the school website are effective in meeting most families' needs. Parents report they feel informed and are able to interact with support staff members to address individual needs, but ELL students/families do not receive information in their native language. When the effective communication systems are in place, students and parents have better access to successful support service programs. *(self-evaluation, teachers, parents/community members)*

Support services maintain student records, including health and immunization records, consistent with federal and state law. Student records are located in the principal's office, special education office, and guidance department. Health and immunization records are maintained in the nurse's office and adjustment counselor's office. Although vital records are maintained, there are concerns about proper storage to prevent damage. Without proper storage protocols the GHS community is vulnerable to breach of student confidentiality, lost vital records, incomplete maintenance records, and violation of state and federal law. *(facility tour, school support staff, self-study)*

Sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff are present to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services. In reference to state regulations, guidance, health, and special education are in compliance with the student-to-professional ratio. According to school records, 100% of the guidance department is certified, 89% of special education, 100% of health services, 100% of library personnel are certified, and 100% of ELL service providers are certified. Although support personnel and staff members are certified, lack of professional development and existing academic inequity hamper the effectiveness of available services. The guidance and special education departments are required to investigate their own professional development. Support staff members expressed the need for school-wide professional development opportunities in the area of special education diagnoses and how they impact students' learning needs. Lack of professional development for support staff members negatively impacts the learning environment for all identified students. *(self-study, school leadership, teachers)*

The guidance department provides a full range of guidance services to the student and parent population of Gloucester High School. The guidance counselors provide individual and group meeting time, career counseling, and course selection assistance. In

addition, they have access to programs such as the student assistance program (SAP) to develop a plan to address students' needs. Other support programs include Help for Abused Women and Child (HAWC), the Young Family Initiative, the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative and the Gloucester Health Department and Education Services (HES) that support school-wide preventive and awareness programs. The guidance department lack of autonomy in student scheduling and negatively impacts the support and delivery of special education services. Because schedule changes must be processed through the IT manager, delivery of special education services is delayed. Students and parents report that schedule changes are limited to the first 10 days of the term. There are discrepancies and a lack of policy that causes misunderstanding among staff, students, and parents. Although GHS provides comprehensive services, the overlap of support services and lack of evaluation process of these programs negatively impact the overall delivery of guidance services. *(self-study, survey, support staff, parents, students,)*

Preventive health and direct intervention services are provided for the student population. In addition to the 2.5 school nurses, students may access health services that provide opportunities for visitation with a nurse practitioner through two types of referral levels, self and adult. The nurse's office conducts yearly screenings in compliance with state and federal regulations according to the self-study report and the data collected by the school adjustment counselor. The district lacks a Wellness Policy. These policies encompass food services, snacks, and beverages. The food service program sells snack food, fried foods, large portions, and sugar beverages in conflict with recognized principles of overall student wellness. GHS sells snack foods in and outside the dining areas violating federal guidelines. As a result, students are not properly served through preventive health initiatives. *(self-study, facility tour, school support staff)*

Library/information materials are not integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. Library statistics indicate that the library facilitates computer lab access for social studies, language arts, and science. Rarely is the library visited by classes in other academic areas, however, and beyond utilizing the computer lab, library/information materials are rarely used to facilitate instruction across the curriculum. According to the self-study survey, only 33% of students state that they use the library often during classes. Teachers frequently indicate that they would purchase their own information materials to use in their classrooms before using those provided in the library. The library's audiovisual resources are not incorporated into instruction. Further, the library's annual action plan is not aligned with the school's mission. Without integration of library programs/materials into the school's curriculum, opportunities for students to enrich their learning and develop independent inquiry skills are very limited. *(teachers, students, student shadowing, self-study, observations, facility tour, library personnel, student work)*

The library personnel have limited knowledge about the curriculum and how to support its implementation. Although library personnel are familiar with the Techpaths curriculum planning tool, they do not play an active role in the support of curricular instruction. Furthermore, library/media personnel rarely serve as instructors. There are no library-related courses offered for students, and library instruction is limited to a general library orientation session incorporated into freshman English classes. The library media personnel function primarily as facilitators; they assist students in locating materials in the library, but they do not evaluate curriculum or assist with curriculum revision.

Without an active role in curriculum implementation, services provided by the library personnel are not fully utilized to enhance curriculum instruction. (*teachers, self-study, library personnel, students, facility tour*)

While the library media center offers a wide range of resources, these resources are insufficient to improve faculty instruction and student learning needs. Currently, the collection does not meet state standards regarding the recommended number of books per student. The school improvement plans indicate that deficiencies in library resources need to be addressed. Furthermore, the library media center does not currently participate in any interlibrary loan programs. The library does offer special collections in the areas of Gloucester history and children's books to support the child study program although library documents do not support correlation with instruction or represent the diversity of the student population. While the self-study survey stated that 62.4% of students said the library has the materials they need, staff members indicated through interviews that the resources are not adequate. Furthermore, technology resources in the library are aging and do not reflect the advanced technology proficiencies ascribed to in the student learning expectations. A lack of adequate resources impedes students' ability to successfully problem-solve and build skills necessary for self-reliant learning. (*teachers, student shadowing, self-study, facility tour, students, parents*)

Library staff members pride themselves on providing open access to facilities before, during, and after the school day although student access opportunities during the day are limited by a scheduling change that eliminated all free study periods. During the school day, students are able to visit the library with written teacher permission or during lunch, but this precludes the use of the library as integral to the educational experience. While teachers are able to reserve computer labs for classroom activities, only two teachers bring classes to the library on a regular basis. Utilization of the library facility is limited other than for use of the computer lab. There is a consensus among stakeholders that the library is underutilized by the school community. Without allotted time or significantly increased integration of the library by classroom teachers into their lessons during the school day, the library will remain underutilized. (*library circulation records, self-study, teachers, students, school leadership*)

Library service programs are not serving to adequately foster effective independent inquiry for all students. Although information literacy skills are listed within the school-wide rubric, examination of student work samples labeled as being created with library resources demonstrate minimal knowledge of school and/or community information resources. Among the work samples provided, students do not demonstrate an understanding of the ethical use of technologies. Library personnel state that insufficient staffing results in the inability to establish, teach, and assess an independent information literacy curriculum which would include ethical use and integrity. Although the statement is made, there is no data supplied to support that this insufficiency is staffing-related. Without direct instruction in information literacy skills, students' ability to appropriately or ethically access and evaluate information resources will compromise student integrity, and students may fail to meet the benchmarks of self-reliance and problem-solving for success as stated in the mission statement. (*self-study, support staff, student work, school improvement plan, facility tour*)

While there are policies for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the internet, these policies are unused and have not been revised

since 2000. The self-study states that selection of library materials is dependent on the library personnel's knowledge of lessons taught using library resources. Library personnel often utilize vendor-provided collection analysis to make selections. No evidence was found that materials are selected objectively based on curriculum or on student needs. Because of the absence of policy enforcement and evaluation, there is no clear correlation between collection maintenance and school need. As a result, material acquisition may not meet student or curricular needs. (*self-study, library personnel, facility tour*)

A variety of special education services is provided for students, including identification, monitoring, and referral of students. For students on campus, there are several points of referral, such as the student study team (SST), SAP, referral for testing, and direct referral to special education. As reported by special education personnel, Programs such as GAP and Compass do not follow formal protocols for referrals, monitoring, and testing of students. Inequities among special education service programs result in inconsistencies among special education support services. (*self-evaluation, teachers, school support staff, parents, Endicott survey*)

Commendations

1. A wide variety of programs for a broad spectrum of student activities
2. Coordination of services and collaboration among support personnel
3. Access to a multitude of support services provided by community outreach programs
4. Communication via the school website that links home and school
5. Student health services are provided by a Nurse's Office and a Health Center that are separate facilities within the school

Recommendations

1. Provide professional development for teachers on how information literacy skills relate to their content areas and proactively market library resources
2. Ensure that the librarian will attend sessions of all departments with curriculum development and planning

3. Increase the library's holdings to meet state books/student standards, in alignment with the students' learning needs
4. Collect and evaluate data of programs to measure improvement trends resulting from support programs (attendance, drop-out rate, academic performance, use of services)
5. Improve food delivery services for more healthy meals
6. Study and correct inequities in delivery of services and opportunities for all students to learn and achieve
7. Regularly evaluate all support service programs formally
8. Provide sufficient native language information to ELL students' families
9. Provide mandated storage facilities for all student records
10. Provide safety regulations for student use of the internet
11. Provide professional development for support staff members and comply with certification needs.
12. Provide sufficient resources to serve the needs of at-risk students and English language learners

SUPPORT STANDARD

Community Resources for Learning

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

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

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

The school encourages parents and families to be partners in each student's education and to be active participants in school programs and parent support groups. They utilize resources such as an automated phone calling system to contact each family weekly about pertinent information at the high school, an up-to-date web page and the site-based advisory council that is a active participant in planning for student's education. Parents are encouraged to communicate with their student's teachers, guidance counselor, and support personnel via e-mail or phone. Some parents are able to access their student's progress, grades, and attendance using the iPass system. Booster clubs such as the Gloucester Fisherman Athletic Association, Docksider's band, and the Gloucester Educational Foundation allow parents to be involved in the success of activities. Because of the encouragement and opportunities provided, many parents participate in school programs and parent support groups. (*self-study, administrators, parents, students, teachers*).

The school fosters productive business and community partnerships that support student learning. Involvement with the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, the Business Education Collaborative, local artists, and the Cape Ann Historical Museum have led to direct involvement by adding guest lecturers and varied professionals across the curriculum to work with students on writing, business, art, science, vocational, and mathematic skills. The career technical education department gives students project-based learning in a variety of vocational programs including carpentry, automotive, electrical, and culinary arts. These departments construct houses, install electrical equipment, and repair senior citizens' automobiles. Financial support for academic and extra-curricular programs is made available through the efforts of the Gloucester Educational Foundation and the Business Education Collaborative. Administrators have recently allowed students to begin dual enrollment at North Shore Community College. Through the partnerships with local organizations, students are being exposed to real life experiences and are able to begin their college careers while in high school. (*student work, panel presentation, administrators, student support members, students, parents, teachers*)

The current school site and plant do not adequately support or enhance aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. While the building was renovated in 1995, there are continual environmental and structural problems. The science labs need to have more physical space and updated equipment. The air quality survey that was performed on May 30, 2007 to address concerns regarding health and safety issues concluded that the general building conditions, maintenance, work, hygiene practices, and the condition of the HVAC equipment degrade indoor air quality. This has resulted in leaky roofs, rust, health concerns, and odors. There continues to be a variety of noticeable odors throughout the first floor. The athletic facilities are in need of repair, in that, the outdoor and indoor track are unusable and the rubberized gymnasium floor in the field house is hazardous, containing holes in the floor and patches of plywood covering depressed areas. Only 37.9% of the faculty surveyed reported that the physical plant was conducive to education while 63.1% of the students answered that their classrooms are appropriate for their classes. The long-term delay of upkeep limits both

the educational program and support services for student learning. (*self-study, facilities tour, administrators, teachers, students, and parents*)

The physical plant and facilities are not in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. For example, one elevator is broken, and the other two, while working, do not have current inspection certifications posted or located in the building. While the facility has an occupancy permit, there are major outstanding items that are unresolved. The fire detection system is running in a “system-trouble” mode continually alerting the maintenance staff to on-going, undetected issues. There is no certification confirming that the building is in compliance with the fire codes. A September 11, 2009, fire alarm system inspection and test report from Signet Integration Solutions provides a detailed list of heat detectors, strobes, pull stations, and smoke detectors that have failed or have control panel issues. There is a lack of security surveillance equipment, leading to vandalism in the third floor bathrooms. The school recently re-keyed all access points to increase security. There is a lack of door signs delineating rooms and the function of rooms. There is a lack of posted emergency evacuation instructions throughout the entire building. There are two storage containers in the gym area that are missing fire extinguishers. Some hallways and stairwells are being used for storage of items causing safety issues. Recommendations from the Air Quality report that was published August 4, 2008 have not been completely implemented. Without proper certifications and postings, the building continues to be out of compliance and to be a safety risk to students and staff. (*self-study, facilities tour, teachers*).

Equipment is not fully maintained, cataloged, or replaced when needed. There is no formal plan in place to monitor and catalog equipment. Chemicals in the building are not inventoried, and storage safety is not verified. There were no Material Safety Data System postings throughout the building. The school has private contracts with various agencies in the areas of telephone, pest control, food service, elevators, boiler cleaning, and fire extinguishers and alarms. There is one elevator that does not work, and the two other elevator certifications expired on March 13, 2009. There is one technical educational support individual who maintains and catalogs computer equipment and has a formal plan. Without a plan for cataloging and maintaining equipment, the school continues to be a health and safety risk. (*self-study, facilities tour, teacher meetings, teacher interviews, maintenance staff*).

An inadequate plan and under-funded program of building and site management contribute to the lack of maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school. The facilities management is overseen by both the building principal and the acting facilities manager. The acting facilities manager is also the assistant superintendent responsible for planning and budgeting for the entire district and building maintenance throughout the entire school system. The custodial staff is responsible for reporting to the building principal. The head custodian and six other custodians plus two maintenance staff members have a staggered work schedule throughout the day. There is no formal training program, a lack of clear administrative direction for the custodial staff, and no formal action or reporting system of daily maintenance. The school comprises 247,000 square feet and has seven custodians while the state standard calls for fourteen. Only 9.2% of the staff, 23.4% of the students, and 54.8% of the parents surveyed have reported that the school is maintained and cleaned adequately. Two of the custodial staff work at night through a contract company, and the district does not provide substitutes for permanent custodial staff who are absent, even if on extended leave. Based on the August, 2008,

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Health Report on Air Quality, the general building conditions and maintenance degrade indoor air quality. Because there is a lack of direction and accountability there is no appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant.. (*self-study, facilities tour, parents, teachers, students, administrator panels*).

There is planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, and technology. The 2008-2010 Technology Plan's mission is to "enhance curriculum, improve instruction and increase student achievement" yet there is limited technology in many classrooms. The consensus from parents interviewed is that there is an overall decay of the building. In the 2007-2008, two hundred and sixteen students went to other high schools through school choice, and only thirty-five students entered. Many requests and proposals for future programs, maintenance, staffing, capital improvements, and repairs are not implemented. Without a formal facility maintenance plan and capital improvement plan, the facilities will continue to deteriorate and negatively impact the educational programs. (*self-study, facilities tour, parents, teachers, students, administrator panels*)

The community and the district's governing body are not providing an adequate and a dependable source of revenue to maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, facilities, technological support, materials, and supplies. Only 6.9% of staff members report the budget meets professional and instructional needs, and 6.6% of parents is satisfied with the school's funding. The school is dependent on community resources, donations, athletic fees, and fundraising efforts to supplement the budget. Teachers are purchasing their own materials such as clay and paint for art classes, projectors, and DVD players. Parents supply paint to the art classes and are also paying for AP science books. Without job descriptions and professional training, the four student supervisors who work in conjunction with the principal and assistant principal do not allow the administration to practice educational leadership. It is unanimous that there is a strong need for another assistant principal to help with leadership and educational duties. Without support from the general budget, booster clubs like the Gloucester Educational Foundation are providing basic educational materials instead of enrichment programs for the students. The lack of dependable funding severely hinders the educational achievement of the school. (*administrators, self-study, teachers, students, parents*)

Faculty leaders and building administrators have an active involvement in the budgetary process. However, the budget requests are not supported by the district's governing body. The budget is developed with input from school and district administration, school committee, city officials, and the site based advisory council. After the city budget is approved, the school budget is amended. Only 32.2% of the staff reports they have input regarding the school expenditures. With a reduced budget, there has also been a reduction of administrative support. Even though the administration is involved in the initial budget process, they are not responsible for the final budget decisions. This process makes it difficult to implement the budget. (*school improvement plan, teachers, administrators, parents, self-study*).

Commendations

1. The faculty continues to seek alternative ways to augment a lack of funding for supplies, cleaning services, and ways to increase student enrichment

2. The effort to utilize resources to keep parents, families, and community members abreast of ongoing activities at the high school
3. The personal connection made between staff members, community members, and students.

Recommendations

1. Implement recommendations from the Air Quality Report
2. Immediately address all safety violations listed in the Signet report
3. Develop and implement a plan for maintenance and repair of the building
4. Implement a plan for technology repair and replacement
5. Develop a consistent routine for managing and cleaning the building
6. Develop and implement a plan to address custodial and maintenance needs
7. Provide adequate supplies and equipment for the facility
8. Develop a building-wide inventory plan for all equipment and supplies
9. Provide sufficient resources to support student's educational needs
10. Ensure adequate and dependable funding for the physical and educational needs of the school.

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

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

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

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

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

requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by Commission staff following the on-site visit.

In closing, the visiting committee wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the hospitality, warmth, and courtesy extended so graciously by the students, parents, teachers, and administrators associated with Gloucester High School. The committee also thanks the faculty for the quality of the Gloucester self-study and the extensive preparation that went into the collection of student work, both of which contributed significantly to the value of this report. The visiting committee wishes Gloucester High School success in all its future endeavors.

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Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding
- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- 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
- 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 with limited English proficiency
- identification by the state as an underperforming school
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees