

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS



REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Poland Regional High School

Poland, Maine

November 3 - November 6, 2013

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

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

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Poland Regional High School, a committee of six members, including the principal and assistant 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 Poland Regional High School extended over a period of twenty-two school months from September 2011 to October 2013.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

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

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 48 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 2 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 in the report was agreed to by visiting committee consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the visiting committee's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Committee Standards.

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

School and Community Summary

September 2013

Poland Regional High School, located in Poland, Maine, serves the communities of Mechanic Falls, Minot, and Poland, plus a small number of Raymond families. Part of Androscoggin County and located close to Lewiston/Auburn, the towns are traditionally agriculture and small business-based.

With a combined population of about 11,078, the communities are, for the most part, economically, racially, culturally, and ethnically similar. No identifiable minority group comprises more than 3.1% of the population, and English is the primary language. Poland has a population of approximately 5,549, with Mechanic Falls (3,138) and Minot (2,391) being somewhat smaller. Mechanic Falls has a median family income of \$46,532, Minot \$59,615, and Poland \$60,913.

Mechanic Falls, Minot, and Poland are bedroom communities of Lewiston/Auburn. Many people commute to Lewiston/Auburn or to Portland for employment. In 2012, the unemployment rate was 6.8%. In 2011, 14.9% lived below the poverty line. Poland Spring Bottling and Poland Spring Inn are two fixtures of the community. They are both employers of many people in the three towns.

In addition to Poland Regional High School with its population of 504 students, Whittier Middle School has 262 students, Elm Street School has 272 students, Minot Consolidated School has 239 students, and Poland Community School has a student population of 463 students, for a total of 1,740 students in Regional School Unit (RSU) 16.

The per pupil cost at Poland Regional High School is \$10,889.52, compared to the state average of \$11,078.16 for the 2010-2011 school year. Local property taxes account for 49.5% of the public school district's budget, while Federal, State, and other sources account for the remaining 50.5%.

Eight students paid nonresident tuition fees to attend Poland Regional High School in 2013-2014.

Poland Regional High School includes students in grades 9-12, with a total enrollment of 504 representing 239 boys and 265 girls. The school population has remained relatively stable with a decline of about thirty students since the last accreditation. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition has remained constant with 1% African American/Black, 1% Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 0.6% Asian during the 2012-2013 school year. The average dropout rate for 2011-2012 was 2.75%. The average daily attendance for students is 92.48%, while the average teacher attendance is 96.9%.

There are forty-seven teachers at Poland Regional High School which yields a student-to-teacher ratio of 11:1. Individual teachers carry an average student load size of one hundred, with an average class size of 16 students. The class size for those classes required for graduation is 20.1 students. Students attend school for 176 days a year.

Students are required to complete twenty-four credits for graduation: four credits each in English, mathematics, and science; three and one-half credits in social studies, two credits in world languages

(Spanish is the only current offering), two credits in visual and performing arts, one and one-half wellness credits, and one technology credit. In addition to these credits, students must pass all four years of Roundtable (the PRHS student advisory program), as well as participate in four co-curricular activities.

All students are placed in heterogeneously grouped courses with opportunities to individually differentiate learning through Honors Challenges and modifications. Freshmen and sophomores take Humanities (English language arts and social studies), math, and science on collaborative teams. Juniors and seniors may select from a variety of electives, including opportunities at the Lewiston Regional Technical Center. Students may enroll in college courses for credit, each at little or no cost. Twenty percent of students take Advanced Placement courses. Eighteen percent of students receive special education services.

Poland Regional High School has instituted Junior Community Service Day. Community Service Day allows students to partner with local businesses. Students also work with local businesses that conduct mock interviews and provide opportunities for job shadow experiences and internships. As part of the PRHS Roundtable curriculum, all seniors must complete at least one college application. Over the past few years, student interns from the University of Southern Maine, University of Maine Farmington, and Bates College have been teaching at the high school.

Eighty-seven percent of the class of 2013 declared an intention to go onto post-secondary education, with 37% attending four-year colleges and 15% attending two-year colleges, another 40% entering the workforce, and 3.5% joining the military. Graduates take advantage of many colleges and universities in the area, including University of Southern Maine, University of Maine, Bates, University of Maine Farmington, and Central Maine Community College. Prior to the class of 2010, the post-secondary enrollment for our students in the graduating classes of 2005-2009 increased from 52% to 72%.

Student Recognition Night honors students in grades 9-11 in all core and elective classes. Sports Awards Nights recognize athletes, while Senior Banquet and Senior Assembly recognize senior academic achievements. An honor roll is published each semester, and juniors and seniors can be nominated for National Honor Society. Local newspapers, such as *Sun Journal*, *Advertiser Democrat*, *The Country Connection*, and *Independent Publishing*, each recognize student accomplishments.

School and Community Summary provided by Poland Regional High School

Poland Regional High School

Core Values & Beliefs Mission Statement 21st Century Learning Expectations

Core Values & Beliefs

Poland Regional High School's core values guide our decisions and anchor our actions and in the pursuit of learning. We are committed to fostering:

Character

integrity
perseverance
respect
courage

Citizenship

leadership
service
responsibility
ethical problem-solving

Community

tolerance
teamwork
a safe environment
pride

Mission Statement

To teach all students to use their minds well and to cultivate their particular talents

To establish a culture of respect, responsibility, service and courage

To demand excellence and to foster lifelong learning in a safe, welcoming environment

Learning Expectations

Social

- The PRHS student demonstrates self-awareness through the pursuit of personal wellness and appropriate social and personal interactions.
- The PRHS student takes responsibility for academic and future goals and decision making.
- The PRHS student demonstrates effective habits of work and ethical and tolerant behavior.
- The PRHS student uses technology in a socially responsible manner.

Civic

- The PRHS student participates as an active citizen in the school and broader community and contributes positively to both.

Academic

- The PRHS student speaks and presents effectively.
- The PRHS student effectively uses the arts for informative purposes and expression.
- The PRHS student reads, understands and interprets a variety of texts.
- The PRHS student uses complex and creative reasoning strategies to generate appropriate solutions to a variety of problems.
- The PRHS student writes in a clear and engaging manner.
- The PRHS student utilizes technology for a variety of academic purposes.
- The PRHS student accesses, evaluates, and uses information efficiently, effectively, and critically.

**COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS**

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

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

**ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT
LEARNING**

1

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

Conclusions

Through a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process, and using research related to 21st century learning expectations, Poland Regional High School (PRHS) identified and committed to its core values and beliefs about learning. The mission statement and beliefs about learning have been alive at PRHS since its inception in 1999, and after re-examining its mission statement in light of the research on 21st century learning skills including the writing of Dr. Robert Marzano, the Common Core State Standards, the International Society for the Technology in Education, and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the school community realized that the mission statement still very much applied to the school's culture and was not changed. The core values were formally identified, defined, and adopted by the school community in the fall of 2012. Multiple stakeholders were involved in creating the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The Vision Keepers (VK) (the school's leadership team comprised of teachers, two students, one community member and administrators) recognized the need to formalize the core values that already existed at PRHS. They examined multiple documents coinciding with their values, beliefs, and their understanding of 21st century learning expectations. Through this process, the three C's (Character, Citizenship, and Community) were identified and accepted by faculty, staff, students, and community members. During the State of the School Day in 2011, students brainstormed lists of words that conceptualized the three C's. Staff and students eventually condensed these words to four behaviors that exemplify each core value. These core values and terms were then voted upon by the staff and faculty, students, parents, Vision Keepers, and the school board. Though crafted within the last two years, the commitment to the core values and learning expectations is clearly and visibly evident at PRHS. Many of the co-curricular activities are centered on the ideas of service, pride, tolerance, leadership, and teamwork; examples such as the sports teams, the Peer Mentoring group, Peer Mediation/Civil Rights, the Gay/Straight Alliance, Judiciary Board (J-Board), and Go Green/Science Club show commitment to these ideals. Co-curricular activities are designed to increase student involvement with their school community and students are required to earn four co-curricular credits for graduation. Many students go well above and beyond this requirement in their involvement in their school. The Vision Keepers are a prime example of PRHS commitment to the core values. This group serves as the leadership and policy-making team for the school, with its primary responsibility to maintain the core values, mission, and vision of PRHS and to give the school community a voice in school governance. The Vision Keepers consciously and deliberately refer to the school's mission and core values when discussing proposals and making recommendations or decisions. Student-led conferences highlight the core values and learning expectations, requiring students to gather multiple pieces of evidence for each conference exemplifying the core values and learning expectations and how they are meeting them. All students prepare a presentation for their parents/guardians and Roundtable advisor in which they discuss their co-curricular activities, goals, and progress toward graduation requirements twice a year (in the fall and spring semesters). Ninth and tenth grade students use a digital portfolio to store

and present their evidence at the conference. The inclusion of many members of the school community in the creation of and commitment to the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations embeds these beliefs in the culture of PRHS and shows the extent to which the school community embodies them. (self-study, teacher interviews, student shadowing, panel presentation, 2013 PRHS Excalibur Yearbook, classroom observations)

PRHS has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify how students can achieve or exceed the expectations. The school has identified twelve learning expectations. These learning expectations are challenging, are reflective of the research undertaken by the staff to define skills required to prepare students for the 21st century, and are consistent with the school's core values and beliefs. The Endicott survey indicated that 54 percent of students, 78.9 percent of parents, and 69.8 percent of staff report that the expectations are challenging. The staff was instrumental in creating not only the expectations, but also the analytical rubrics that are used to assess each expectation. The Vision Keepers identified the academic expectations (Writing, Reading, Speaking and Presenting, Problem-Solving, Arts, Academic Use of Technology, and Information Literacy), social expectations (Habits of Work, Wellness, Goal-Setting and Decision-Making, and Ethical Use of Technology), and civic expectations (Citizenship), and solicited feedback from the faculty regarding the language of the criteria that would show competency in each expectation. The rubrics were developed by learning areas, the VK, and ultimately approved by the school board. The learning expectations and rubrics are available to all teachers, students, parents, and community members on the school's website. Analytic rubrics exist for each learning expectation and provide clear, specific criteria listed for meeting or exceeding each expectation. Many teachers use language from these rubrics frequently in summative common assessments, while other teachers sometimes use the rubrics to assess learning expectations not commonly found in their disciplines. One such example was in music class where the teacher used the school-wide writing rubric to ensure that writing assignments are consistent with the expectations of the school. Each rubric describes what meeting the expectation or exceeding the expectation looks like in a final product; there is no description of partially meeting or not meeting the expectation on the rubrics. Almost all of the school-wide rubrics are formatted in the same manner and use the same language for levels of achievement. The exception is the "Ethical Use of Technology" rubric, which is a checklist of requirements at each grade level, but does not define levels of competency. Academic rubrics are frequently used in the learning areas where they most clearly align with the curriculum; social and civic rubrics are occasionally used by classroom teachers, but are more commonly used in Roundtables, student-led conferences, and the Sophomore Exhibition and Senior Celebration. The creation of challenging learning expectations that align with the core values about teaching and the implementation of school-wide rubrics consistently across the school will hold all students to high standards of achievement. (teacher interviews, student work, classroom observations, website, self-study, school-wide rubrics)

PRHS's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, help drive learning areas' curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and are reflected upon and considered when decisions are made regarding policies, procedures, and resource allocations. Given that the student body played a key role in the creation of the core values of citizenship, character, and community, these values are undeniably visible throughout the school: on ceiling tiles, above the library's entrance, on teachers' t-shirts, and on hallway and classroom posters. Through the efforts of the PRHS staff and students, many school activities and programs ensure that the core values are embedded in the school culture. The Roundtable, State of the School Day, Student Representative Body (SRB), J-Board, Vision Keepers, and student-led conferences are just some of the ways the core values are manifested throughout PRHS. Additionally, the core values and mission statement are listed on the school's website and are explicit in the program of studies. Many students can easily articulate the core values. Lastly, the Endicott survey reports that 81.1 percent of staff believes core values and beliefs are reflected in school culture. The core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are guiding the school's culture, policies, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. PRHS culture embraces democratic leadership, including a student voice in many school-wide decisions. The SRB has the ability to exercise leadership, as seen in its recent decision to allocate funding to some non-athletic co-curricular activities. Student and staff proposals are evaluated by the Vision Keepers, such as the proposal (and its acceptance) to change the requirements for identification of class valedictorian and salutatorian. The Endicott survey reported that 71.1 percent of the staff considers the core values and beliefs when making teaching decisions. Heterogeneous classes, honors challenge options, and interdisciplinary classes/assignments speak to core values driving curriculum decisions. Likewise, the pervasive use of technology, differentiation, and personalized education plans speak to the core values driving instructional decisions. When it was determined that freshmen students were struggling in Spanish I, a decision was made to split a class block between Spanish and academic support, essentially differentiating the schedule based on student need. Lastly, assessment follows the core values and beliefs of the school community by utilizing assessment practices such as common assessments, especially those related to common school-wide rubrics and content standards; some performance assessments that go beyond the traditional "paper/pencil" format and require students to show that they have met the standards in more authentic ways; and the implementation of school-wide rubrics that assess students on the identified civil and social expectations. As noted in the self-study, coordinating instructional and assessment practices with the core values and learning expectations is an ongoing process. It is clear that resources are allocated in a manner that supports the core values and learning expectations. Although relatively new, the core values, mission statement, and learning expectations are reflected in the PRHS culture and school community; they strongly drive the policies, procedures, and decisions of the school, and are beginning to drive learning areas' curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (Endicott survey,

self-study, teacher interviews, student shadowing, students, student work, facility tour, classroom observations)

Since the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations have only been formally adopted within the last two years, PRHS has not yet developed or implemented a formal process and timeline for review and revision of its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, nor have there been periodic forums to share information regarding these with the community, beyond their development. The Vision Keepers are cognizant of this fact and are in the process of developing these practices and procedures. Formally and informally, teachers and school leaders regularly examine data regarding individual student achievement on the school-wide learning expectations, standardized testing, and student work. This data was used to develop and implement the school-wide learning expectations and should continue the review and revision of these expectations and the targeted school-wide learning priorities and interventions. Student achievement data and data from other sources are already used by teachers, counselors, special educators, and the Response to Intervention (RTI) team to make targeted interventions and educational plans for individual students. As cited in the self-study, school leaders and faculty referenced the latest research when developing the school-wide expectations. Teachers meet regularly during their prep time as academic teams and with learning areas and book groups during professional development time; the full faculty meets during faculty meetings to discuss relevant research on learning and to consider the implications of this research and the expectations on their teaching and on the school beliefs about learning. The faculty incorporates discussion of district and community priorities into its discussion of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. PRHS's learning expectations align with the district's learning goals. Deliberate, regular review and revision of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations will help validate them and will ensure they continue to meet the needs of the school community. (self-study, teacher interviews, school leadership committee, school board)

Commendations

1. The thorough and inclusive process used to develop the mission statement, core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. The core values that are posted and embraced throughout the school
3. The continued inclusion of all members of the school community in the commitment to the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
4. The requirement that students are active participants in their school community outside of the classroom through participation in co-curricular activities
5. The many student programs and procedures that embed the core values in daily school experiences, such as student-led conferences, the State of the School Day, and Roundtable

6. The process the Vision Keepers engage in to make decisions for the school, which includes extensive feedback from the school community
7. The commitment to review and revise curriculum, instructional practices and assessment, using best practices and relevant research

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a process to regularly and deliberately review and revise the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations that includes all members of the school community
2. Use student achievement data on the school-wide learning expectations to inform the review and revision of the core values, beliefs, mission statement, and learning expectations
3. Ensure that the learning expectations continue to drive assessment, instruction, and resource allocation
4. Ensure that the Ethical Use of Technology rubric provides guidance to support the digital citizenship curriculum

2

Curriculum

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

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
 - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
 - the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - instructional strategies
 - assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
 - inquiry and problem-solving
 - higher order thinking
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
 - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

Conclusions

The curriculum at Poland Regional High School is purposeful in its design to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations (CLEs), despite reductions in course offerings. All of the school's 21st century learning expectations have corresponding school-wide rubrics, which are utilized or adapted by teachers to create their own course-specific or department-wide rubrics. As evidenced by teacher interviews and samples of curriculum planning guides, specific standards taken from a variety of sources, including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Maine Learning Results, are grouped together and assessed by teachers in each of the courses at PRHS. Teachers build skills in the same group of standards if they teach the same course, and many utilize common assessments to measure student progress through the curriculum. Many of the 21st century learning expectations are practiced and then assessed via a variety of means, including the creation of a digital portfolio, the hosting of a student-led conference, the presentation of a Sophomore Exhibition, or the production of a Senior Celebration. Students gather evidence that they have met each of the school's expectations throughout their high school experience, especially in an advisory program called "Roundtable." Some course offerings in a variety of areas have been eliminated due to staff reductions. Opportunities in the curriculum such as multiple world languages offerings, multimedia art classes, and technology education are not available to many students, thereby limiting students' exposure to a variety of the engaging aspects of 21st century life. In ensuring students' practice and achieve the 21st century learning expectations through the current course offerings and Roundtable program, students at PRHS are prepared for life in their post-secondary lives, whether they transition to college or the modern workplace. (self-study, students, teacher interviews, teachers, panel presentation, parents, school support staff)

The curriculum at PRHS is consistently written using a common format that includes units of study, 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies including essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, and assessment practices. The "Curriculum Documentation" is available via Google Docs which allows teachers to share the curriculum with one another as well as to revise as necessary. Units of study within the document include essential questions and communicate what students should know and be able to do by the end of their learning experiences. The planning document also provides the teacher with the opportunity to link the curriculum to both the 21st century learning expectations and course-specific standards, including those articulated in the CCSS and the Maine Learning Results. Teachers also organize the common assessments and the additional assessment types utilized throughout the various units associated with the course. A "Suggested Activities" section lists a variety of effective instructional strategies associated with the learning in each unit of study. The assessments articulated in each unit of study also have rubrics that have been developed based on the influence of the school-wide rubrics, which describe the qualities of achievement more broadly associated with the 21st century learning expectations. The self-study indicates that teachers throughout all academic areas have not fully integrated the more recently

developed 21st century learning expectations into the format of the Curriculum Documentation guide. The consistent use of the Curriculum Documentation guide affords teachers a formal process for organizing their curriculum and delivering quality instruction and assessment. (self-study, teacher interviews, school leadership committee, standard subcommittee)

The curriculum at PRHS generally emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology. Many aspects of the school's emphasis on deep understanding and the dynamic application of knowledge are described and elucidated via the rubrics associated with the school's 21st century learning expectations. Several disciplines, but particularly mathematics and science courses, utilize a four-step problem-solving technique in order to formalize students' approach to inquiry. Additionally, many assessments and assignments clearly encourage students to participate in higher order thinking. Although there were occasional examples in the review of student work that did not clearly demonstrate this type of investigation, they were offset by a predominance of activities that delve deeply into complex ideas and knowledge. Opportunities in many disciplines to take Advanced Placement (AP) classes encourage students to engage in higher order thinking on a regular basis. Moreover, the Honors Challenge will occasionally allow for students to extend their exploration of complex ideas, but it does not do so consistently or with a common level of challenge across disciplines. The PRHS approach to teaching English language arts and social studies in a combined class called "Humanities" is perhaps the best example of cross-disciplinary learning, but other examples exist as well. Warm-up activities often involve skills or knowledge in other disciplines, and students frequently apply mathematical formulae to problems that may arise in non-math courses. There are few actual examples of teachers intentionally building learning experiences that connect specific curriculum or standards in one discipline to another, outside of the example of the Humanities class. An increase in these formal opportunities will encourage depth of understanding in new and important ways.

The cross-curricular approach of the Humanities class frequently affords the students at PRHS with authentic learning experiences. They can explore real-world social issues while building the communication skills emphasized in the CCSS. The consistent use of essential questions also assists in students' understanding of the connection between course-specific skills and their own lives. Students may also experience authenticity outside of school in the Lewiston Regional Technology Center (LRTC), where students may develop skills in career and technological fields they may otherwise find difficult to develop. Additionally, students have the opportunity to participate in internships, job shadowing experiences, and the Androscoggin Career Fair, which provide them with important authentic learning opportunities. Increasingly, the school is also gaining capacity in developing online components of courses, including "iTunes U," but this process is in its early stages and is ongoing. Beyond these offerings, PRHS affords students at the school a significant number of

co-curricular activities that are formally integrated into the graduation requirements, representing four co-curricular credits in addition to the twenty-four academic credits required for graduation. These activities include sports, organizations, clubs, and service opportunities, from football to fishing club. While a formal curriculum focused on the informed and ethical use of technology is being piloted this school year, students are frequently encouraged to use the technology appropriately. Proper research strategies are encouraged by the library staff and taught in the classrooms. Students also know to keep their iPads put away until they are invited to take them out, despite the reality that this principle is occasionally violated. The school's consistent commitment to the emphasis of deep understanding and the authentic application of knowledge has created learning experiences that are challenging and engaging. (self-study, students, teacher interviews, teachers, panel presentation, school leadership committee, standard subcommittee)

There is consistency between the written and taught curriculum. As evident in classroom observations, the expectations of the 21st century learning expectations were hanging on the walls and were practiced by all members of each class. The curriculum taught at PRHS is created and is constantly evaluated by each member of the staff. Through the use of their common planning block and early release schedule, teachers examine student work, evaluate student formal responses, discuss next steps in teaching curricula, and discuss best practices based upon the written curriculum. The use of detailed progress reports that indicate student performance on specific standards is evidence that what is written in the curriculum documents is also taught. Additionally, 81 percent of the staff agrees that what they are teaching is aligned to the written curriculum. Consistency between the learning experiences in the classroom and the written curriculum is apparent and encourages engagement and authenticity. (self-study, Endicott survey, teacher interviews, student shadowing)

Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exists at PRHS between and among all academic areas within the school. Collectively, the district is working toward a cohesive working document that strategically aligns a K through 12 curricula with sending schools in the district as a result of consolidation of three districts at the elementary level. It is evident that the administrative team believes in vertical alignment and realizes its necessity. It has become a major component of the district's strategic plan. The alignment is cohesive in grades 7 through 12, but the district is currently developing the same alignment within K through 6 levels. Subject Area Committees have previously convened to promote vertical alignment, but as the recent focus has been on developing the alignment with the CCSS in the elementary grades, particularly as they align with one another, the committees' work has been temporarily suspended. The district intends to reinstate these committees once consistency has been achieved. PRHS works closely with the Lewiston Regional Technical Center (LRTC) to allow students an opportunity to engage in course offerings through their programs. The recent implementation of an early release schedule has allowed teachers to work

collaboratively on aligning their individual curricula to match not only the 21st century learning expectations, but to be common between buildings in the three elementary schools. Teachers have the opportunity to meet and discuss the curriculum and work on common assessments during early release times, during ninth-grade and tenth-grade team meetings, and common planning times. The district-wide coordination and articulation of curriculum between and among academic areas as well as with sending schools will produce a cohesive educational experience to all students in all schools. (self-study, teachers, teacher interviews, school leadership committee, central office administrators)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. Instructional materials, equipment and supplies are sufficient to support students' achievement of the learning expectations. Facilities, although adequate, are shared with the middle school. The growth of the middle school's enrollment has made the allocation of space an issue as spaces previously dedicated to the high school have been converted for middle school use. Despite the program cuts over the last few years (there is currently only one world language offered to students and some art classes have been eliminated as well as a reduction in upper level technology education classes) and a lack of available flexible space, PRHS has found a way to keep the student-to-teacher ratio at 11:1. The library serves both the high school and the middle school students. Library materials support the curriculum for grades 7 through 12. The library media specialist acts as the district librarian supervising the Ed Techs in the elementary schools. The library offers instructional classes via their media specialist on the use of digital media for research purposes. The library budget has recently been increased. This has allowed for weeding and improvement of the print collection. The technology available and its consistent use are pervasive in the school. PRHS has opted into the MLTI program and uses the professional development opportunities to aid in staff exposure to best practices in the integration of technology and instruction. Technology has been an aid to student success and connects them to richer learning experiences, meeting the need of the technological aspects of the 21st century learning expectations. Professional development focused on the use of the iPad for curricular purposes has improved the intentional use of technology for the support of 21st century learning expectations. Various student support services are in place at PRHS that speak to the school's understanding of student needs both in and out of the classroom. Co-curricular organizations are available during and after school to meet the graduation requirements, however there is no after-school transportation. A list of the current organizations can be found easily through the school's website but student choice in co-curricular opportunities is not limited to that list. They have extensive opportunities for involvement in a myriad of co-curricular programs as well as a formal process for approving new ones. The school has cut curricular offerings in several areas including world languages, multimedia art classes, and upper level technology education limiting students' exposure to a variety of the engaging aspects of 21st century life. The supporting resources available at PRHS

allow teachers to implement the written curriculum, co-curricular programs, although some learning opportunities have been limited by recent cuts to the budget and staffing. (self-study, classroom observations, teacher interviews, students, teachers, standard subcommittee)

The district provides the professional staff at PRHS with sufficient personnel and time for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. Financial resources are also mostly sufficient for the same purposes, with the exception of a recent lack of funding for teachers to grow professionally by taking university courses. As a result of these budget limitations, teachers' ability to apply recent research to the revision of their curriculum has been limited. Despite this reality, PRHS is consistently devoted to providing teachers what they need in order to refine their curriculum. The use of "Teacher Pods," where teachers spend their preparation time, facilitates collaboration between teachers on the same team for the purpose of revising curriculum as necessary. Additionally, the district has supported the use of a recently adopted early release day every Wednesday for the purpose of collaboratively considering curriculum in addition to assessment, instructional strategies, and the use of technology. Workshop days are planned by the school's Vision Keepers who frequently support the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. Specifically, learning area coordinators are given goals that they bring back to the other teachers. Recently, this process has directed teachers to more completely integrate the language of the CCSS into their curriculum materials. More broadly, the district also supports the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum by financially supporting summer work for those purposes. Recently, the district has also produced a dynamic strategic plan in which curriculum design is described as a consistent focus of development in the coming years. Because the district supports the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, PRHS is able to maintain an engaging and continuously improving curriculum. (self-study, students, teacher interviews, teachers, panel presentation, school leadership committee, standard subcommittee, strategic plan)

Commendations

1. The rubrics designed to communicate the expectations of 21st century learning, which are successfully driving curriculum and student learning
2. The ongoing integration of 21st century learning expectations into course-specific rubrics that helps to maintain consistency
3. The effective and meaningful use of Roundtable in addition to classroom experiences to practice and achieve 21st century expectations
4. The common format of the Curriculum Documentation that sufficiently organizes the necessary information for course design
5. The school's consistent and reflective emphasis on depth of understanding and the application of knowledge
6. The clear alignment between the written and the taught curriculum

7. The use of early release time to engage educators in aligning curriculum guides to meet the 21st century learning expectations
8. The recent increases in support by the district, which provide personnel, time, and financial resources for the development and revision of curriculum
9. The ambitious strategic plan adopted by the district, which intends to continue to improve curricula
10. The extensive list of co-curricular activities including a variety of sports, organizations, and clubs

Recommendations

1. Ensure that the K through 12 curriculum is articulated in order to improve specific alignment of subject areas vertically and horizontally across the district
2. Develop and implement a formal structured process and timeline across the district for the review and revision of curriculum
3. Ensure that course offerings meet student needs in world languages, visual and performing arts, and technology
4. Integrate the 21st century learning expectations and the Common Core State Standards into all Curriculum Documentation guides
5. Formalize the Honors Challenge to encourage consistency by creating specific guidelines across the curriculum in all learning areas
6. Ensure that all classes and the Honors Challenge consistently provides inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking that engage and challenge students
7. Ensure that sufficient funding is available for a wide range of professional development including college courses
8. Formalize instances of cross-disciplinary learning in the curriculum beyond the Humanities course

3 Instruction

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

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:
 - personalizing instruction
 - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
 - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
 - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
 - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
 - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
 - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
 - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
 - strategically differentiating
 - purposefully organizing group learning activities
 - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
 - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
 - examining student work
 - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
 - examining current research
 - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

Conclusions

Although teachers at Poland Regional High School state that there is limited direct formal evidence that ensures teachers instructional practices align with the core values and 21st century learning expectations, there is documentation that supports this process is becoming a part of daily instructional routine. The Vision Keepers (PRHS leadership team) has developed a process to ensure that these core values and learning expectations will appear in daily instructional practice. According to the Endicott survey, 75 percent of staff and 77 percent of parents believe this practice is consistent. The district has committed to weekly early release days to support this alignment. Other practices include teachers working in PODs (office areas) in content areas and in teams, informal peer review, and curriculum development that aligns with 21st century skills. In Roundtable (daily advisory) teachers engage students in creating digital portfolios to track their learning expectations. The Vision Keepers review, revise, and present analytic rubrics to the full faculty for approval. Instructional practices are frequently examined to ensure consistency with school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Consequently, there is evidence that the instructional practices reflect the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations; however, a more formal, customary process will strengthen this practice across all instructional areas. (teacher post-observations, teachers, department meeting minutes, standards spreadsheet, Endicott survey)

Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations in a number of ways. Teachers deliberately personalize instruction and frequently engage students as self-directed learners. There is a pervasive emphasis on inquiry, and students are often asked to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. Students constantly reflect on practices and self-assess for understanding. Teachers formally engage students in cross-disciplinary learning occurs in some classes, most notably Humanities, however additional it is not consistent or intentional in other courses. One striking difference was found in the Endicott survey: 90.6 percent of teachers believe they personalize instruction, however only 46 percent of students state this view. The disparity in this report has not been clarified. The D-PAtH (A Different Path to Graduation) program offers the most significant example of personalizing instruction. This program is for students who are struggling to meet the demands of the regular school program. Each student has an individualized plan to meet the standards set in each course of study. Students in this program receive a great deal of one-to-one, personal support. In Sophomore Exhibition and Senior Celebration students design their own projects and present to a community panel. In several different areas of study, it is clear students have voice and choice and set their own goals. Some specific examples were seen in a Humanities book choice project, in Public Policy where students design their own public presentation, in introduction to theater which allows students to choose a play to direct, and in Wellness where students engage in the "Challenge By Choice" project. A notable offering at PRHS is Humanities I, II, and III, which are cross-disciplinary (English/social studies) courses. Other examples of cross-disciplinary offerings exist, but they are less formal and occur on an *ad hoc* basis. Humanities I, II, and III also offers students a way to engage as active and self-directed learners. This is seen in many student-directed units of study. Sophomore Exhibition and Senior Celebration allows students to propose a project of their choice, develop that project, and then present their final product to an audience. There are many examples of small group instruction in all instructional areas. In English, Literature Circles are used frequently to discuss books chosen by the students. Students work in

collaborative groups to answer essential questions and to solve a proposed problem. At PRHS students have the opportunity to write and direct plays, use technology to create presentations such as Podcasts, and reflect on these processes following completion. Environmental science class develops a community-based Waterpalooza project that engages fifth graders in a unit of environmental awareness. Teachers at PRHS emphasize inquiry and higher order thinking skills. This is a regular daily occurrence in Humanities I, II, and III and in other courses such as Robotics, digital sound courses, and AP courses. Ninety-four percent of teachers and 87 percent of parents report that inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills are emphasized. Science labs require inquiry and problem-solving related to real-world situations. Learning area coordinators ensure higher order thinking skills are embedded in all instruction. Core Plus mathematics is a curriculum that is inquiry-based. Frequently, students are given opportunities to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. Some examples are writing college essays, Stock Market game, science labs and student-led conferences. While students are consistently reflecting on processes as they are completed, formal self-assessment seems, at first, infrequent; however, students self-assess and peer assess in many different ways. With the deployment of the one-to-one student iPads only two months ago, technology is seamlessly integrated across the school. Websites such as Edmodo, Moodle, teacher-built websites, student-built blogs, Google Docs, Quizlet, and EasyBid were in evidence in most courses. Students regularly use iMovie, iPhoto, Keynote, and Pages to make presentations in class. Technology is becoming the norm in assessing student understanding in cross-curricular settings. As a result of the diverse array of effective instructional practices, Poland Regional High School supports the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, students, teachers, classroom observations)

Through a variety of instructional practices, teachers are able to meet the needs of each student. Formative assessment has been an integral part in the design of this school from its infancy. It is one way for teachers to check their instructional delivery and to adjust their instructional practice. 90.6% of teachers report strategically differentiating in their classrooms. Humanities teachers provide choice books, modified tests and projects, and alternative learning materials based on skills and reading ability; math instructors provide guided notes and allow product choices in projects like Math 2/3's Flip Book; Studio Art classes are driven by choice in student products. Group learning is used regularly and in a purposeful way. Literature circles, fishbowl discussions, and split room teaching are used by Humanities teachers to guide learning. Math teachers daily employ regular small groupings so students can create, defend and listen to conjectures when solving problems. Not only do students self-assess, but their peers critique their performance, knowledge, and proficiency using a variety of methods, dependent on the course. From entrance/exit slips to peer review, to Keynote presentations, students are empowered by teachers to meet an educational challenge at their own level. Heterogeneously grouped classes allow the interaction on an educational level of students who may or may not find themselves working toward similar goals. Whether pencil/paper traditional quizzing, warm-up entrance checks for knowledge, Edmodo response, jigsaw questions, or reflective journals, students' knowledge is checked and instructional practice are adjusted to meet the needs of each student. The Learning Lab, the Center, D-PAtH, teacher PODs, weekly early release days, and Honors Challenge demonstrate the commitment this staff has to meeting the needs of each student. Opportunities for advanced students to continue in an area of interest as a directed study were witnessed in a music class during a student-shadowing experience. Offerings are presented at the level of

educational understanding at which individual students can find success. Teachers, by design, use formative assessment during instructional time to adjust their delivery of material. The collective differentiation and conscious provision of additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom setting, allow teachers to reach more students. (student work, classroom observations, teacher interviews, building tour)

Not only do teachers individually and collaboratively adjust their instructional practices by using student achievement data, but curricular changes are strengthened due to this practice. Teachers consistently use student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments to improve their instruction. They continually examine student work, frequently use feedback from a variety of sources, and consciously examine current research to improve their classroom delivery and content assessment. Teachers by design collaborate on student achievement when they examine formative and summative assessments. Professional discourse occurs among staff at a variety of levels on a regular basis to better serve the educational needs of their students. An admirable attempt at collecting student data is charted in the intervention grouping report. Following mid-term assessments or at the end of a quarter/semester, teachers scan data to chart the success rate in courses for individual students. Teacher observations from administrators and peers strengthen instructional practice. "Getting to know your son/daughter" letters are distributed in some courses; student feedback forms and electronic surveys are a variety of sources teachers and supervisors use to improve instruction. Technological advances make it possible for the non-core courses (music, art, etc.) as well as the core classes to be assessed in a non-traditional method. (ex. submit a recorded piece of music or a preliminary drawing through Edmodo). Although an integral part of the original design of Poland Regional High School, it was through similar and constant examination of data and student feedback that prompted the Learning Center to currently staff two full-time technicians to support student achievement. The Center, redefined and in place to close the learning gap, is open and occupied beyond the hours of the regular school day as students request the support needed for success. D-PAtH has changed and continues to change as it evolves into a rigorous program for students who once may not have remained in school, but who now apply and await acceptance into this reputable non-traditional educational setting. Through the collaborative efforts of staff and administration, the success of these students reflects the passion of individual teachers to engage in professional discourse and to reflect on collected data as they altered this course to fit the needs of their clientele. Collaboration is the cornerstone to student success at PRHS and is anchored in the POD model seen in teacher workspace. Teachers are available for student support, consultation, and collaboration in content, teams, and grade levels. As one teacher stated, "...collaboration is unavoidable." Teachers set aside meeting times to discuss student concerns, curricular improvement, course success, and instructional strategies. The open-door policy of these PODs allows students' access to multiple teachers and supports their success. Evidence clearly defines a staff committed to improving their instructional practice in an attempt to better serve their students' academic progress. (department data results, teacher interviews, standard subcommittee, digital demonstration)

The teachers at PRHS are cognizant that they, too, are lifelong learners and reflect on their practices through a number of ways. Book talks and articles, such as *Coaching in the Classroom* and *Better Answers*, are emailed from the principal or a staff member to engage colleagues in research discussions of recent initiatives or possible paradigm shifts. Usually,

email responses are accepted as topic discussions, but some departments have discussed them informally in their PODs or during after-school meeting times. Individual teachers seek professional development in their content areas as well as in district training sessions for new initiatives such as Apple trainings in content, or course work for recertification as well as degree-level changes. Due to budget limitations, money for coursework reimbursement has been limited. As witnessed in its commitment to the reflective process needed, the "Power Hour" has been awarded to staff once a week throughout the district and supported by the community. This early release day process is an ambitious attempt to provide staff with the time needed to reflect on their own practice and maintain a highly professional level of expertise in their field. Teachers collectively maintain best practice or alter their instruction as needed based on reflection and research. Common planning time allows collaboration between grade levels and content which strengthens delivery and practice. According to the Endicott survey, 81.5 percent of students, 94.3 percent of teachers and 85.3 per cent of parents rate teacher expertise in content areas high. The staff at Poland Regional High School has had a positive impact on student learning, demonstrated through their own self-reflection of their practice, maintaining expertise in their content areas, and in content-specific instructional practices. (teacher interviews, learning area leaders, self-study, central office personnel, Endicott survey)

Commendations

1. The Roundtable program which includes instruction that fosters student-staff relationships and includes the development of a digital student portfolio
2. The robust integration of technology in all subject areas that aids in instructional exchange between teacher and students
3. The practice of grouping students to allow collaboration, inquiry, and problem-solving
4. The commitment by each learning area to higher order thinking skills
5. The use of differentiated instruction that supports the school's commitment to heterogeneous grouping
6. The wide array of instructional interventions used in D-PAtH, Learning Lab, the Center, guided academic support, strategies for learning class and co-taught classes
7. The in-house learning specialist who supports classroom instruction with reading strategies, differentiation, vocabulary building and formative assessments
8. The in-house focus on professional development that allows teachers to reflect on practice, develop common assessments, modify curriculum, and study current instructional strategies in their content areas
9. The commitment of staff to meet the individual needs of all students as reflected in frequent meetings in teacher teams, content areas/ and during early release time
10. The consistent use of formative assessment to guide instruction in meeting the needs of students
11. The commitment to instructional practices that support the school's adopted core values and beliefs

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a formal process that continuously examines teacher instructional practices for explicit consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning experience
2. Implement a formal process for students and parents to provide feedback to teachers about instructional practices which includes teacher reflection

4

Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
 - student work
 - common course and common grade-level assessments
 - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - standardized assessments
 - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
 - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

Conclusions

The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations and is in the process of implementing a means of aggregating whole-school progress toward those expectations. According to findings from the Endicott survey, 71.7 percent of teachers report that they understand the process to assess individual student progress in achieving the learning expectations. The school has developed and is in the process of implementing 21st century learning expectations. The school uses the digital portfolio for freshman and sophomore students in which they showcase examples in student-led conferences of how they are meeting the 21st century learning standards based on school-wide rubrics to their Roundtable teacher and to at least one parent or guardian two times per year. Poland Regional High School has plans to continue the implementation of the digital portfolios for juniors and seniors in the upcoming academic years. Students spoke knowledgably about the school's 21st century learning expectations. Because of the existence and implementation of a process based on school-wide analytic rubrics to assess student progress in achieving learning expectations, students are beginning to know where they are at any given time in relation to the standard and will be able to show growth over the course of their academic careers. (Endicott survey, digital portfolios, self-study, parents, students)

PRHS's staff is implementing a means of communicating individual student progress to the students and their families. While it has yet to reach full school implementation, the use of the electronic portfolios by the freshman and sophomore students gives parents a chance to examine their students' progress online with additional opportunities provided twice annually in the student-led conferences. Juniors and seniors also participate in student-led conferences, which allow them to communicate their progress. Additionally, 86.1 percent of parents report that they are provided with a formal report in addition to course grades, which explain their children's progress toward achieving school-wide learning expectations. PRHS students and parents are able to monitor their progress because of the level of communication with the school's staff. (self-study, panel presentation, Endicott survey)

PHRS is in the process of devising a method to share the school's progress in meeting the 21st century learning expectations to the wider school community. While there was evidence in the school's self-study of a "School Board Newsletter," a public document available on the school's website, this document only included information on the speaking and listening expectation. According to school leadership, they are in the process of continuing to expand the expectations in this document beyond just speaking and listening, but have yet to do so. Because PHRS is still in the process of implementing a system to communicate their progress in meeting the 21st century learning expectations, the school community may not be fully aware of the student expectations or their progress in meeting them. (self-study, panel presentation, school leadership committee)

The professional staff consistently collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. A wide variety of data such as common assessments, Lexile scores, NWEA scores, and PSAT scores are used to inform teachers of the strengths and weaknesses of students, and the staff makes adjustments and implements interventions to help improve individual student achievement. The teachers collaborate and

use the data to identify students who are struggling in classes and to determine intervention strategies that can be used to improve student performance toward meeting standards. Teacher teams also use this information to modify summative assessments to address individual student needs. The common assessment data in each learning area is used to find areas of weakness in different classes and implement solutions for students. Other support services are used to support students such as the guided academic support, alternative education, and the Response to Intervention team (RTI). The PSAT data is used as well for identifying students for Advanced Placement classes. Survey results indicated that 67.9 percent of school staff uses these methods to respond to inequities in student achievement. Because the PRHS staff uses common time to collect, analyze, and disaggregate a wide variety of data regularly, this allows opportunities to identify struggling students and to implement interventions in a timely manner. (teacher interviews, school support staff, school handouts, Endicott survey)

Teachers at PRHS regularly communicate to the students, prior to each unit of study, the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific goals to be assessed. Based on evidence provided in the self-study, most teachers seem to be providing the expectations and goals to the students. Examples were observed in classes across a number of learning areas. Teachers and parents alike indicated in the seventy percent range that teachers were providing this information, and according to teachers, the 21st century learning expectations have been equitably shared between the various and appropriate disciplines to ensure that they are all adequately addressed. Because PHRS teachers communicate in this way with their students, many students are aware of the goals and expectations that they are responsible for meeting. (self-study, Endicott survey, teacher interviews, students, student shadowing)

Prior to summative assessments, a majority of teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics and expectations for the assessment. According to the Endicott survey, 76.4 percent of students report that they understand what work they have to accomplish to meet expectations. The common assessment timeline created by the faculty demonstrates widespread use of common assessments across the curriculum. There was no indication of whether or not the rubrics stating the expectations were provided ahead of time. However, teacher interviews and a review of summative assessment samples indicated that the expectations are provided a majority of the time. A variety of course syllabi reviewed also indicated that those expectations are found in the syllabi as well. Students can reference that information throughout the school year if they choose to do so. In further review, however, the parents who participated in the Endicott survey report that only 63.5 percent is familiar and understands the school-wide analytical rubrics used. As a result, a majority of teachers at PRHS provide students with rubrics and expectations prior to summative assessments which enable students to know what is required of them prior to summative assessments. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, student work, course syllabi, students)

In each unit of study, teachers at PRHS employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. The use of formative assessments seems to be prevalent, from checking in with students to quizzes and/or exit slips, based on evidence collected during classroom visits. The self-study provides adequate evidence of the use of summative and formative assessments alike, although many of the summative assessments

provided as evidence seem to be of the traditional “pencil/paper” variety, however, during student shadowing a greater variety was displayed. Students reported that their teachers are consistently checking on their knowledge acquisition and that they are almost always working toward the standards that will be tested on their summative assessments. Due to the use of summative and formative assessments, teachers are able to monitor student progress and to assure that students are making steady progress toward meeting the standards. (classroom observations, self-study, students)

At PRHS, teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways through a variety of collaborative processes on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Time is built in to the schedule for teachers to collaborate on summative, formative, and common assessments. Grade-level content teams meet two times a month to discuss, plan future assessments, and make revisions based on student performance or needs. Learning areas meet once a month to create and revise common assessments. From here, subgroups are created to do additional work in the summer to further analyze, create, and revise assessments. Common planning time is also used to analyze and revise assessments. During this time, the common assessment protocol is used and teachers “blind score” student work from each class and analyze the data. From this process, adjustments are made to the assessments. The Roundtable advisors meet once a month to collaborate across curricular areas to create school-wide, grade-level projects such as the Sophomore Exhibition and Senior Celebration to assess standards. Also, the Humanities courses include an English and social studies teacher who plan together and create integrated lessons and assessments that meet the 21st century standards. As a result of all of this collaborative time, teachers are able to meet regularly to create, analyze, and revise assessments. (teacher interviews, school leadership committee, self-study, central office administrators, student work)

Teachers at PRHS have shown that they use specific, timely, and corrective feedback of their students’ work to both revise and improve their work. Survey results indicate that 83.1 percent of parents agree that the teachers provide timely/corrective feedback; however, 65.5 percent of students agree that teachers assess/correct their work in a reasonable amount of time even though 72.7 percent of students agree that the feedback from teachers help them improve their performance. Teachers use a variety of methods to provide feedback on student work. Teachers review and comment on work that is submitted digitally and send back work to students for further revisions or corrections very quickly. Teachers use the rubrics to provide feedback as well. The Center is an intervention strategy where students can go to revise work and to receive immediate feedback and support from a staff member. Students use a self-editing process followed by a teacher edit to help provide specific and corrective feedback. Student work samples show that they are required to make revisions, correct mistakes, update the work, re-test, and reflect on their performance. As a result of providing timely, specific, and corrective feedback, students are able to improve their work. (student work, teacher interviews, school handouts, publications, self-study, Endicott survey)

Teachers at PRHS regularly use formative assessment on a daily basis to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. According to the Endicott survey, 89.1 percent of teachers agree that they improve their instruction by using student achievement data from formative and summative assessments. Teachers were

observed employing a variety of formative assessments during instruction such as do-nows, exit slips, thumbs voting, teacher prompts, white board responses, and grouping. The introduction of iPads has greatly increased the ability of teachers to use formative assessments in class. The teachers use their “pod” time to share a variety of formative assessments used to help direct and revise instruction for future classes in order to improve student understanding of material presented. Teachers also use formative assessments such as quizzes, short writing assignments, and online activities on a weekly basis to inform them of student progress. The formative assessments allow teachers to adapt their short-term and long-term plans to help meet the students’ needs. Because PRHS uses formative assessments strategies on a daily basis, they are able to adapt their instruction to meet student needs and improve student learning. (Endicott survey, self-study, classroom observation, teacher interviews)

Teachers and administrators at PRHS, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of student work, common assessments both between courses and across grade levels, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations, data from the middle school, and data from post-secondary institutions, for the purpose of revising the curriculum and improving instructional practice. Teachers are consistently monitoring student work, whether it be electronically submitted, project-based or in-class assignments to see that students are learning optimally. The self-study provided examples of work, which teachers use to improve their instructional practices. Additionally these findings were further supported by the Endicott survey which shows that 75.2 percent of students, 83 percent of teachers, and 87.3 percent of parents agree that the teachers use a variety of methods to assess students’ learning, which they then use to modify and revise the curriculum and their own instructional practices. This examination of student work allows teachers to continually advance their curriculum and teaching practices to better educate the students of PRHS. Evidence indicates that common assessments are a regular aspect of the culture at PRHS, both on the level of such standardized tests as the NWEA, NECAP, PSAT, and SAT, but additionally, because the preponderance of individual courses regularly schedule their own common assessments. Teachers reported using those assessments to direct the education of the students. The wide variety of common assessments allow PRHS teachers to revise the curriculum and improve their teaching. Individual teachers are able to examine how their students are doing in terms of meeting the 21st century learning expectations through the use of their assessments, however, the inability of the school to fully report learning standards to the rest of the community suggests that a current form is not in place to share this information. No such document existed in the self-study. As such, it is safe to assume that while teachers in their PODs are aware of their own successes and shortcomings in regard to the learning expectations and are able to revise and improve the curriculum and improve their instructional practices, the faculty as a whole is unaware of how other teachers in other departments may be faring. When a system is in place to fully report individual and school-wide progress in achieving the learning expectations, faculty will be more aware and be able to address areas of need specifically as they relate to their discipline. The use of a spreadsheet document in which middle school students’ standardized test scores are compiled helps PRHS teachers to be aware of the skills that freshman students will bring to the classroom, and an annual meeting between middle and high school teachers in their individual PODs provides additional anecdotal evidence for teachers. However, attempts to obtain survey data from alumni as they pursue post-secondary education have been unsuccessful. While the school is notified of the number of students that need to take remedial math and

English classes once they arrive in college, there exists no additional data on how individual students are performing or on how they are meeting the demands of their other post-secondary coursework. Guidance reported that only a handful of responses to a survey were returned, and that those came only from the highest achieving students, and that ultimately the effort had been dropped. PRHS is finding success in integrating new students into high school as they transition from middle school, but they are not able to ascertain (except anecdotally from students who return to visit with their teachers) at what level their students are prepared for the rigors of higher education. Once the school can employ methods to collect information from alumni and post-secondary institutions it will have more complete information on which it can base future improvements of its curriculum and instructional practices. (self-study, teacher interviews, school support staff, administrators, Endicott survey, student work)

Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised by an in-school leadership team (Vision Keepers) to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Survey results indicate that 81.1 percent of staff agrees that the school-wide grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised. A majority (78.9 percent) of parents report that teachers' grading practices are aligned with the school's beliefs about learning. The faculty's grading guide provides information on the purpose and role of the teacher in grading and defines the standards. The core values are reflected in the standards. PRHS uses a trend analysis or averaging in an effort to find a "true score" for the students. The Vision Keepers review grading and reporting practices annually with additional proposals that arise regarding the grading and reporting practices. This issue or proposal is discussed and recommendations are made. The recommendations go to the faculty for discussion and a vote and then return to Vision Keepers for a final review. Depending on the nature of the proposal, some may move on to the school board for approval. However, the school is currently in a transition phase regarding the grading and reporting software and therefore real-time viewing of student grades by students and parents is not available at this time. Because PRHS regularly reviews grading and reporting practices, there is consistent alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. (self-study, school handouts, publications, Endicott survey)

Commendations

1. The successful implementation of digital portfolios for freshman and sophomore students.
2. The creation and widespread use of school-wide rubrics that address each of the 21st century learning expectations
3. The digital portfolio's presence as a web page allows for parental involvement in making sure that students are meeting the 21st century learning expectations
4. The strong RTI model in place
5. The common assessments and use of school-wide rubrics that ensures a common language is used across subject areas
6. The use of 21st century learning expectations that is prevalent and widespread across all disciplines and classes

7. The time built in for and the high level of staff collaboration
8. The protocols in place for analysis of common assessments
9. The use of technology for timely, specific, and corrective feedback
10. The use of intervention strategies for students to revise and improve their work
11. The daily use of formative assessments that drives instruction and adaptations
12. The regular review of grading and reporting practices

Recommendations

1. Formalizing and implement the process to assess school-wide progress toward achieving learning expectations
2. Develop and implement a process by which 21st century learning expectations are communicated to the larger school community
3. Ensure that parents have a process through which to adequately understand the 21st century learning expectations
4. Expand the use of digital portfolios into junior and senior classes
5. Increase the variety of ways in which students may demonstrate mastery of the standards beyond use of the “pencil/paper” exam
6. Implement a method to share school-wide progress toward meeting the 21st century learning expectations to the faculty as a whole
7. Acquire a consistent computer program for grading and reporting

SUPPORT STANDARDS

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

5

School Culture and Leadership

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).
3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
 - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
 - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
 - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
 - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

Conclusions

The Poland Regional High School community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. PRHS's initial mission statement, developed by the community at the inception of the school, reflects a purposeful pledge to foster academics, community, and safety that is pervasive in PRHS's school culture. The core values and beliefs adopted by PRHS actively reflect the existing school culture and are easily observable and felt throughout the school community. The school promotes and celebrates its core values as evidenced by the State of the School event in which students and staff participate in the development and assessment of the PRHS's core values, plans for improvement, and cultural expectations, and by the widespread displays of the core values, such as the drop ceiling panels, classroom and hallway signs, and inclusion on websites, syllabi, and distributed materials. Student-to-student interactions are positive, respectful, and encouraging. For example, the Student Representative Board (SRB) is an elected 32-member board that meets to discuss, design, and propose school-wide policy and procedure recommendations. The SRB functions in a highly respectful manner and with formal democratic protocols to propose and review areas of importance to the school. The SRB is designed to model and makes decisions based on PRHS's positive and supportive culture. Interactions between student and teachers are courteous, caring, supportive, and cooperative. According to the follow-up survey distributed to students in January 2013, 76 percent of students agree or strongly agree that "teachers ask for my ideas/opinions to improve how they teach." The school governance structure includes students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The Vision Keepers, a group comprised of students, teachers, administrators, and community members, serve as the PRHS leadership team. The Vision Keepers regularly and deliberately make policy and school programming decisions in consultation with the PRHS Core Values and Beliefs. This shared leadership fosters ownership and pride in PRHS. As a result of the safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture, PRHS is successful in fostering student responsibility for learning that results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. (teacher interviews, students, classroom observations, building tour, PRHS follow-up survey)

PRHS is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of his or her high school experience is enrolled in multiple heterogeneously grouped core courses. Most students are enrolled entirely in heterogeneously grouped courses. According to the Endicott survey, 74.2 percent of students report that they have a number of opportunities to take courses in which students of varying levels of ability are enrolled. Also, 90.6 percent of staff reports that the school requires every student, over the course of the high school experience, to enroll in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course. All mainstream courses at PRHS are heterogeneously grouped. Special education services are available when appropriate to foster inclusive teaching. Some core courses, such as Humanities, are co-taught by regular education and special education teachers. Students can elect to take the Honors Challenge available in each course in order to explore the course content in more depth, although this program may be insufficient to adequately challenge advanced students. Students with significant disabilities are enrolled in heterogeneously grouped classes such as Roundtable, wellness, and visual and performing arts. Students in the D-PAtH program enroll in some mainstream classroom courses in addition to enrollment in

their alternative educational program. As a result of every student being enrolled in heterogeneously grouped core courses, PRHS has established an educational environment that is equitable and inclusive. (program of studies, classroom observations, teacher interviews, self-study)

There is a rich and dynamic formal, ongoing program at PRHS through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The Roundtable advisory program is an essential component of the PRHS culture that was established in 1999 as the school opened. Roundtable was purposefully designed to provide an opportunity for students to get to know an adult and their peers outside of the academic classroom. Students are grouped by grade level and meet with their Roundtable advisors for 28 minutes each day. The Roundtable curriculum is designed to help students explore who they are, where they want to go, how they can get there, and how they are doing, both socially and academically. Roundtable is also a graduation requirement. In Roundtable, students plan for their two culminating assessments: the Sophomore Exhibition and Senior Celebration. Freshman Roundtable groups provide opportunities for students to learn about PRHS's culture and expectations. During their junior year, Roundtable groups work on community service projects and career exploration activities. Students meet with their parents and Roundtable advisor twice a year in student-led conferences to illustrate their academic progress and meeting the 21st century learning expectations. Digital portfolios will be required beginning with the class of 2016. These digital portfolios will be shared in these bi-annual student-led conferences and used to provide evidence for student achievement in their classes, co-curricular activities, and 21st century learning expectations. As a result of the Roundtable program, the students at PRHS are well connected to an adult and group of students that assist the students in achieving PRHS's 21st century learning expectations. (Roundtable handbook, self-study, classroom observations, teacher interviews, students)

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff of PRHS, engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning, use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices, dedicate formal time to implement professional development, and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Through the shared leadership model, the teachers and administrators at PRHS plan and implement professional development opportunities that meet the specific teaching and learning needs of the teachers and students. The Vision Keepers plan the professional development schedule for the year and the schedule is tailored to the needs of teachers and students. Regular time is allotted during early release Wednesdays in which teachers and administration address teaching and learning needs in learning area groups, grade-level teams, and Roundtable groups. Teachers and administrators engage in reading groups to discuss professional readings. Teachers regularly have opportunities for professional discourse in the pod workrooms that provide space and common planning time for teaching teams to discuss their professional practice. Learning area groups regularly review, assess, and revise standards, assessments, and rubrics. The Performance Archive Folder program (PAFs), is a rewards-based system that uses the Danielson Domains to review and reflect on teaching practices. Peer-led PAF review committees meet with teachers to review, assess, and provide feedback on a teacher's performance on the Danielson Domains, however, this

reflective process is likely to be eliminated during future contract negotiations in order to standardize the pay structure throughout the school district. Tuition reimbursement for teachers wishing to take graduate courses, however, is currently unavailable, despite the need and desire of teachers to take courses for professional enrichment, recertification, and initial certification. As a result of the extensive reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning, the curriculum, instruction, and assessment are subject to continuous improvement. (standard subcommittee, self-study, teacher interviews)

School leaders currently use a research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. Continuing contract teachers are currently evaluated twice in a three-year cycle. The evaluations are both announced and unannounced. Probationary teachers are evaluated three times during the first year and then twice per year after, with the option for more evaluations if necessary. Teachers are currently evaluated using the Danielson Domain model. Administrators complete a Teacher Observation form describing the observation and performance with respect to the Danielson Domains. At the end of each observation cycle, the administrators complete a more comprehensive Summative Evaluation Form based on the Danielson Domains. A spreadsheet is kept showing where each teacher is on the observation schedule. The PAFs system is also based on the Danielson Domains and is used to review and reflect on teaching practices. Peer-led, trained PAF review committees meet with teachers to review, assess, and provide feedback on a teacher's performance on the Danielson Domains. It is anticipated that the PAFs system will be discontinued at the end of the year, pending the negotiation of a new teachers' contract. Also, this is the last year the Danielson model will be used for classroom observations. Next year PRHS anticipates moving to a district-wide pilot teacher evaluation program based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards model. The use of a research-based evaluation and supervision system will allow for a focus on improved student learning. (principal, teacher observation forms, teacher interviews, teacher contract)

The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. The schedule is organized into four 80-minute blocks, alternating daily. The exception is that Spanish I courses, which are 40-minute periods daily, matched with 40-minute academic support periods. This schedule decision was purposefully made in order to add continuity to the Spanish curriculum. A daily Roundtable advisory period is built into the schedule, as well as an academic support period and a common planning period. The 80-minute blocks allow for in-depth, research-based instruction based on best practices. Professional collaboration is fostered by the pod groupings where a teacher office area is provided. Teachers work in close proximity in multiple teacher groupings. This grouping encourages cooperation and teachers value the collaborative atmosphere. The learning needs of all students are met by the alternative educational systems such D-PAtH, academic support periods staffed by classroom teachers, and regular education/resource room courses that are co-taught by special education and regular education teachers. As a result of the organization of time at PRHS, the school is able to provide research-based instruction, professional collaboration and meet the needs of all learners. (school handbook, schedule, self-study, classroom observations, student shadowing, building tour)

Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. There are currently 524 students and 52 teachers at PRHS. The majority of courses average 20 students per course. A small number of courses range from 25 students, such as visual/performing arts and some math courses, to 48 students, such as band. The teachers' student load is manageable and fosters individualization and differentiation of student learning and promotes authentic relationships between teachers and students. According to the Endicott survey, 90.6 percent of teachers report that they are strategically differentiating in their classrooms. Alternative educational programming structures, such as D-PATH, provide opportunities for students and teachers to work in small-individualized learning groups. In interviews, students consistently stressed that they feel connected to and appreciated as individuals by their teachers. Students consistently pointed to the accessibility and responsiveness of their individual teachers as a strength of PRHS. The connections students and staff have made at PRHS are pervasive across the school. Individual connections between students and staff are supported across the curriculum. Manageable class sizes, learning centers, and academic support periods are examples of how teachers have the opportunity and desire to get to know students as individuals. Roundtable and co-curricular activities extend these connections. As a result of the manageable student- to-teacher ratio, PRHS is appropriately staffed so that each teacher carries a course load with class sizes that enable the teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. (self-study, student shadowing, classroom observations, school leadership committee, Endicott survey)

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The school's core values and beliefs are pervasive across the school. The principal leads faculty and students through her commitment to these ideals. Parents, teachers, students, and school board all spoke highly of the principal's commitment to PHRS core values. According to the Endicott survey, 81.1 percent of the staff reports that they believe that the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The Vision Keepers regularly and deliberately make policy and school programming decisions in consultation with the PRHS core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Administrators take part in summer retreats to plan district and school-wide professional development and engage in a process of reviewing professional readings in their bimonthly A-Team meetings. SRB student leaders, in conjunction with Vision Keepers and other building leaders, regular reflect on and assess important school issues through the lens of PRHS's core values and beliefs. The positive culture throughout the building, demonstrated by students respect for staff and each other, is prime evidence of this leadership. As a result of the principal's instructional leadership and work with other building leaders, PRHS's leadership is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations. (parents, teacher interviews, students, standard subcommittee)

Teachers, students, and parents at PRHS are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. PRHS has developed a school governance structure that fosters shared leadership with all school community members. The Student Representative Body (SRB) is an elected 32-member board that meets to discuss, design, and propose school-wide policy and procedure recommendations such as valedictorian/salutatorian qualification guidelines, class fundraising responsibilities, and spirit week opening ceremonies. Upperclassmen serve as mentors for freshmen. The

upperclassmen mentors apply to be mentors and freshmen are recommended by teachers, middle school and high school student services staff, and requests to be mentees. The mentor program is undergoing an expansion and has recently increased to 27 pairs. The Vision Keepers, serve as the PRHS leadership team. The group is comprised of six teachers, two students elected from the SRB, two administrators, and an adult community representative. The Vision Keepers process school-wide policy proposals and decisions. Students and teachers are encouraged to make proposals to the Vision Keepers for consideration. The Student Judiciary Board (J-Board) is an elected committee of seven students, four teacher volunteers, and a stipended teacher who serves as chair, that reviews and makes recommendations on student conduct issues. These conduct issues brought to the J-Board are typically issues in which an offending student had shown disregard for the cultural norms of PRHS. Non-traditional consequences are often assigned in order to provide clarity on the cultural norms and meaningful reparations. As result of the shared leadership model at PRHS, teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promotes responsibility and ownership. (students, teacher interviews, standard subcommittee, self-study)

Teachers at PRHS exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. The teachers at PRHS regularly take on and readily accept leadership roles through work in the Vision Keepers, as Roundtable leaders, as learning area leaders, and as chairs and facilitators of committees. Teachers are dedicated and diligent in their work to review and revise standards, assessments, and rubrics in their learning areas and teaching teams. The decision-making process at PRHS is highly democratic. The culture of PRHS fosters this culture of shared leadership. Teachers at PRHS frequently collaborate with colleagues on course offering and educational programming concerns. The teacher pods help facilitate this collaboration by grouping teams of teachers together in a shared workspace. Many teachers serve as advisors and coaches for co-curricular activities. Teachers are highly involved in this non-academic work in order to foster the positive cultural expectations and to promote student engagement. Teachers frequently propose new course offerings, recommend changes to existing courses, and advocate for additional assistance programs for students. As a result of the PRHS teachers' initiative and leadership, the students' engagement in learning is enriched. (standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, self-study)

The school board, superintendent, and principal of PRHS are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school board and principal of PRHS have a positive working relationship in which information is shared freely and communication is effective. The school board looks to the principal as a partner in the process of running the district's educational programming. The superintendent and principal also have a positive working relationship. Administrators take part in summer retreats to plan district and school-wide professional development and engage in a process of reviewing professional readings in their bimonthly A-Team meetings. The superintendent, school board, and principal collaborate to prepare a responsible budget and a strategic plan based on district-wide student needs. Given the significant administrative changes in the recent past, the current administration is focused on making their work a collaborative effort. As a result of the collaborative, reflective, and constructive professional relationship established between and among the school board, superintendent, and principal, PRHS fosters

a positive professional working environment that supports students in meeting the 21st learning expectations. (school board, standard subcommittee, central office administrators, teacher interviews)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. Many ideas and initiatives have been brought to the principal through Vision Keepers; ideas that have been implemented as school policy. One example is the previously cited change in valedictorian eligibility criteria. According to the results from the Endicott survey, 90.6 percent of staff feels that the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The change began with students, was supported by the principal and approved by the school board and superintendent. The school board supports the principal and sees her as one of the school's strengths. The principal, after some turnover in superintendents over the past few years, works well with the new superintendent. The school exudes a climate in line with the principal and school's vision, demonstrating that she has the authority to lead the school. As a result of the decision-making authority provided by the school board and superintendent to the principal of PRHS, the principal is able to support the teaching and learning needs of PRHS in order to foster a positive professional culture and to assist the students in achieving PRHS's 21st century learning expectations. (school board, standard subcommittee, central office administrators, teacher interviews, Endicott survey)

Commendations

1. The positive, supportive, and respectful school culture
2. The wide-spread heterogeneous grouping
3. The Roundtable advisory program
4. The commitment to planning targeted professional development and collaboration time
5. The sufficient time and structure for teaching and learning to meet the needs of all learners
6. The appropriate class sizes
7. The involvement of all school community stakeholders in the decision-making
8. The school governance structure that results in shared leadership with all stakeholders
9. The initiative taken by teachers to improve teaching and learning
10. The current positive working relationship between and among central office administration, school board, school administration, and teachers
11. The autonomy afforded to the building principal and teachers to make decisions to improve teaching and learning

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a research-based evaluation and supervision system that focus on improved student learning
2. Ensure that tuition reimbursement is available for those teachers wishing to take graduate courses

6

School Resources for Learning

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - deliver a written, developmental program
 - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
 - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
 - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
 - use an appropriate referral process
 - conduct ongoing student health assessments
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
 - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
 - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
 - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
 - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
- collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
 - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Conclusions

Poland Regional High School (PRHS) has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. To provide this support PRHS has implemented a tiered structure of interventions that are delivered through a coordinated communication system that involves a broad range of support staff. Specifically, the school utilizes the RTI Team and the Student Services Team as critical structures to identify at-risk students at an early stage. Teams meet on a weekly basis to discuss student progress and to share concerns. Teachers or another staff member may refer students to the RTI Team or Student Services Teams or a member of the team may make the referral. The teams utilize referral information, assessment data, anecdotal information, grade data, and attendance information to determine appropriate intervention strategies. Once a student has been identified, the teams have access to a variety of tiered intervention programs to assign appropriate support. Currently, traditional academic support is in place for all students. When needed, guided academic support is assigned in place of academic support to provide a small-group environment with additional support and structure. In addition, 9th and 10th grade students have academic support with an assigned team teacher. The Center is open each day from 7:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for students to receive additional support as needed. The Center provides a learning lab environment for students to get help, retake tests and quizzes, or work in a quiet structured setting. Two staff members are available in The Center to provide extra help. Students may be assigned to The Center as part of the intervention process when they are identified as needing extra support to meet learning expectations. For students needing a higher level of intervention, PRHS has implemented an alternative program known as D-PaTH (A Different Path to Graduation). The program generally serves students in 10th through 12th grade who have not achieved success in 9th grade with lower level interventions. Students identified through the IEP or 504 processes are supported through a learning lab program that offers skills remediation and academic support for core classes. These students also receive support in the classroom through educational technicians, co-taught courses, and a variety of resource placements. Applied Academics is a self-contained resource program that provides a small group setting for humanities, math, and science courses. Students meet the content standards through differentiated instruction that provides project-based learning opportunities with real-world applications. The School-to-Work Program is a self-contained program serving approximately 14 students with specific disabilities requiring behavioral/emotional support. PRHS also offers a Functional Life Skills Program that utilizes a variety of support specialists to assist students with severe disabilities. The support provided by the RTI and Student Services Teams to quickly address and identify at-risk students ensures that the well-developed system of interventions will support each student's achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, guidance counselors, student support services staff, standard subcommittee, RTI team, teacher interviews)

Poland Regional High School works diligently to provide information to families, seeking out those most in need, so that they are aware of and understand available student support services. In keeping with their core values, the PRHS staff actively works to engage and inform parents regarding all aspects for their children's learning with an emphasis on early intervention and post-secondary planning. School counselors, support services personnel, and administrators utilize email, newsletters, social media (Twitter), and school

websites to inform students and parents of important events, school activities and resources, open houses, and a broad range of college and career planning activities. Parents are kept informed regarding their child's academic progress through progress report updates six times per year, quarterly grade reports that can be viewed in Infinite Campus, the school data management system, and through the Roundtable advisory program that includes two student-led conferences annually and additional meetings as necessary. It is a common expectation at PRHS that teachers initiate contact with parents through email or telephone contact when concerns arise regarding a student's progress. In addition, the RTI and Student Services Team meetings often result in outreach to parents of at-risk students who may be recommended for targeted school interventions or referral to outside supports. This dedicated and consistent approach to communicating important information to families ensures that students and parents understand and are aware of available resources to support student achievement of 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, parent interviews, student support services staff, RTI team, teacher interviews)

Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. All students are provided with an iPad for 1:1 technology. Guidance uses Twitter to update parents when appropriate. While the college application process utilizes websites as resources, management of the submission of supporting documents is still managed by a paper process. The school has its own YouTube channel for broadcast of student work. Infinite Campus provides access to the school lunch payment system, quarterly grade averages, but not live student progress reports. Parents and students can access health forms, the library catalog and databases, the wellness website, the PRHS Program of Studies, student handbook, co-curricular information, core values, learning expectations, academic calendar, parent newsletter and other announcements on the PRHS's website. Infinite Campus is also used for master schedule of courses, student records, health care records, enrollment information, behavior documentation, co-curricular activities and attendance. The library offers online databases, links to research supports, citation machines, and instruction on website evaluation. Identified students are served by several specific iPad apps, such as Dragon Speak and iPad reader applications. Records are maintained on Google Docs, LiveBinder, and Infinite Campus records that include IEPs, written notices, 504 plans, contact logs, and IEP progress reports. Support services use technology effectively and efficiently to deliver a broad and effective range of services for each student. (self-study, websites, teachers, parents)

The PRHS's school counseling program delivers a comprehensive, written, developmental guidance program through appropriate staffing of three certified school counselors, one full-time support staff, and a district-wide registrar. School counselors meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling, and engage in individual and group meetings with all students. Collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers is consistently achieved through a clear and well-established process. The school counseling program uses ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. School counselors meet with students individually and in groups on a regular basis throughout all four years of high school. With a student-to-counselor ratio of 175:1, counselors currently have sufficient time to meet with students individually on a more

frequent basis as needed. Students often need additional support when working through personal issues or throughout the college application process that requires multiple individual meetings with the school counselor. The student-to-counselor ratio supports this need and addresses the lack of other supports that may be available to students struggling with personal/emotional concerns. The community of Poland is somewhat rural and offers limited mental health resources particularly for families that may not be covered by health insurance. PRHS provides a special education social worker who serves IEP identified students, but does not provide social work services to regular education students. Regular education students are supported through the school counselor office with referrals to outside agencies as needed. PRHS provides space in school for two outside counselors and one targeted case manager, all of whom are available to students for consultation and treatment. Substance abuse counseling is provided in the school setting through the use of an outside counselor and is offered free to students in need. Sexual Assault Response Services offers a drop-in program one time per week through the school counseling office and, again, the service is free to all students. School counselors serve as the DHHS referral contact and support for students in crisis. Crisis intervention services are often initiated through the school counselor's office and may precipitate a referral and collaborative support with outside resources/agencies. The current student-to-counselor ratio is a key factor that allows the counseling staff to provide this broad range of support to individual students. A recent change still in the implementation stage will shift responsibility for 504 case management from the special education staff to school counselors. It is not clear at this time what, if any, impact this will have to current services. While a large portion of the school counselors' time (approximately 50 percent) is spent in individual counseling with students, the time is evenly balanced over the three counseling domains to support the delivery of the well-defined comprehensive guidance program. Students meet individually to discuss course selection each year with a focus on developing an appropriate post-secondary plan. During the 11th and 12th grade years, counselors meet with individual students to create a specific post-secondary plan with action steps to guide the student through the college application process, a requirement for graduation from PRHS. Students can arrange a meeting with their school counselor at anytime by scheduling an appointment before or after school, during lunch, or during an academic support. Students frequently see counselors for personal/social concerns that may be impacting their academic success, academic planning, and career and college planning needs. Counselors play a critical role in the overall support structures of the entire school as members of multiple teams including IEP teams, RTI team, Student Services team, and 504 teams. While the time spent working with these structures is not clearly defined, it appears to be a significant part of the daily workload and supports the collaborative nature of the services provided.

Roundtable is a fundamental part of the implementation of the 9 through 12 comprehensive guidance program. The school counselors develop and support the curriculum and activities that are implemented through this advisory program. Each year students are engaged in a Roundtable focus that supports the development of post-secondary goals and the attainment of the 21st century learning expectations through the following guiding questions: Who am I?, Where am I going?, How am I going to get there?, and How am I doing? This theme is imbedded in all four years of Roundtable and provides consistency and helps create relevant connections between academic goals and career goals. Through Roundtable the school counselors meet with grade-level students in groups to deliver components of the comprehensive guidance curriculum and monitor progress toward identified goals.

Roundtable provides an effective delivery system for many of the college and career readiness standards outlined in the comprehensive plan. All students receive solid preparation and support to guide them through their academic development.

While the comprehensive guidance curriculum is thoughtfully delivered at the 9 through 12 level, the full curriculum is designed as a K through 12 plan. Two elementary schools in the district do not have certified school counselors, but do have social workers in place to support students. This factor impacts the delivery of the K through 12 guidance curriculum and results in limited exposure to career standards at the elementary level which in turn impacts the exposure and preparation that students have received as they enter the high school.

School counselors use a variety of data on a regular basis to determine progress and support needed for individual students and to assess the effectiveness of guidance programs. Grades, attendance, behavior, and progress toward credit requirements are tracked through Infinite Campus and are reviewed regularly. PSAT, SAT, and AP scores are utilized to assist in academic, career, and college planning. Data is collected through Roundtables to help support individual student planning and track progress toward 21st century learning expectations. Survey data is collected from students and parents after group presentations, evening programs, and special events to assess understanding of concepts and resulting needs. Counselors collect data regarding post-secondary placement to determine the success of college placement efforts and to provide the larger community with an understanding of student achievement. School counselors use this data to make appropriate adjustments to the services offered to better support student need. One example is the addition of "Guidance Late Nights" for the fall semester to provide support to students and parents who may need support with the college application process. During the Late Nights the guidance office will remain open from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. to provide greater access to students and parents. In a second example, school counselors pursued a MELMAC grant opportunity after reviewing Mitchell Institute data that indicated a decline in college persistence rates during 2010 and 2011 after losing funding for several key programs that supported college access. The comprehensive, developmental guidance program delivered by the school counselors at PRHS is an effective support system that provides for individual and group counseling needs, program implementation, and resource referral and outreach that meet the ongoing and changing demands of the students and community. (self-study, program of studies, Roundtable handbook, student support services staff, students, student shadowing, standard subcommittee)

PRHS and Whittier Middle School share health services that are staffed by an RN, who spends 85 percent of her time at PRHS and one full-time LPN who provide an array of health services including preventative health and direct intervention services; an informal referral service, ongoing student health assessments; data use, including feedback from the school community to improve services and to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The nurse's office is staffed and open throughout the day for students in grades 7 through 12. Ongoing preventative programs include immunization tracking, 504 medical health care plans, vision screening and BMI data collection for grade 9, medical interventions, flu shot clinics, distribution of medication for students and monitoring of diabetics and other chronic health issues. There is a monthly PRHS health newsletter, delivered electronically,

covering seasonal topics such as Lyme disease and flu, and including contact information for the nurses. Direct care includes caring for students suffering from headaches, anxiety, back pain, and normal aches and pains to emergency care for accidents or health episodes. The staff, students and parents feel that the health suite is adequate for their needs. There is a large office for confidential meetings, a handicap accessible bathroom, and a quiet, private space for a student to rest. Records are kept electronically, using Infinite Campus, and not available for public access. An informal process is in place for referral to outside agencies. Often, the assessments and interventions arise from emergency situations, and direct communication between the student and nursing staff is the most effective way to help. The nursing staff also participates in the weekly Student Services meetings held on Friday mornings where other interventions may occur. A number of outside services are available and include ER or walk-in clinics; family counseling; substance abuse counseling; dental clinics; mental health services; suicide prevention; family planning; pregnant teen support; Department of Human Services; food banks; homeless shelters; physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Some forms have been revised and streamlined and a concussion program has been put into place, based on feedback from staff and parents. Data is being collected on health issues, but time and staffing constraints prohibit additional school and community programs from being implemented. A wellness coordinator had been in place to develop and implement these programs, but the position was lost when grant funding expired. Assessment data is used to identify and address needs related to health issues, however funding limits the school ability to address identified needs. The school has a health care program, delivered by certified licensed personnel, for all students that include both direct and preventative care, in an environment that offers confidentiality and a full suite of services. (Endicott survey, student shadowing, teachers, self-study)

Library/media services are integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices by collaboration between teachers and the certified library media specialist and a full-time education technician who are involved in the implementation of the school's curriculum; offer a wide range of materials and other information services; are available for student and faculty use before, during and after school; are responsive to students' interests and needs as independent learners; and conduct both formal and informal assessments to improve services and ensure students success. The library serves students in both the high school and the Whittier Middle School. It is staffed by a full-time certified library media specialist and a full-time Ed Tech III. The library media specialist has been in the position since 2012. During the 2011-12 school year, there was no library media specialist from October through June, since the previous library media specialist left for another position and was not replaced. The new person is integrating library services within the curriculum and offers lessons and instructions at staff members' request. She collaborates with the faculty to design lessons that address learning targets and standards. The library media specialist attends team meetings, Roundtable meetings and content area meetings to share and promote library services. The library is welcoming, bright and located at the front of the building. The facility meets minimal requirements for current programming. There is a variety of seating for small group, class and individual use and co-curricular offerings. However, available storage space has been taken over by other building needs. Storage and educational space is now inadequate. Spaces are now being used for a middle school classroom, an office for the middle school social worker, and an office for the high school social worker as well as a technology office for the middle school and high school. New materials are attractively displayed, and the library has been

rearranged to make materials more accessible to students. A number of titles were weeded, bringing the average age of the collection from 16 years to 14 years. A vigorous weeding program is still in place, and the budget has been increased to add more print titles. The space is shared by the middle school, and the collections are integrated. At the moment, the literacy activities are focused around the middle school. This year, there was an increase in the print budget to \$10,000 and the addition of a line item for non-print items such as online databases, DVDs or media-streaming subscriptions. Equipment purchases are largely related to technology use, and are covered by the technology budget. Some external DVD players were purchased for teachers to sign out as needed. The technology budget also covers bulb replacements for projectors. The library offers interlibrary loans to supplement their collection and encourage independent learning and welcomes suggestions from students and faculty for additions to the collection. There is a survey link on the library's website for teacher input on new curriculum items. The library staff does informal formative assessments after lessons; statistics are maintained on student/ staff use and circulation statistics. The library collection is evaluated regularly using the software Titlewise, by Follett Company that gives a breakdown of collection distribution and age. The information provided is used to weed and add to the collection. The library staff and the teachers collaborate on summative assessments and on final projects/papers. The library is open from 7:15 a.m. until 3 p.m. daily to students and staff. Occasionally, there are evening hours, during student-led conferences and in conjunction with Sophomore Exhibit and Senior Celebration preparations. Because the library staff are active participants in the curriculum and instructional practices of PRHS and provide a variety of materials, library services support all students in their successful achievement of standards. (teacher interviews, self-study, Follett Titlewise study, student handbook)

PRHS provides a strong support system for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA and English language learners with a full staff of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who collaborate with all teachers, support the culture of inclusive learning for all students, and use assessment and data, including feedback to revise and improve services for every student to ensure success in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. There are 7.5 special education teachers who evaluate student progress on IEP goals and behavior plans, facilitate student-led conferences, supervise education technicians, provide a Functional Life Skills curriculum; an academic evaluator/special education team leader for grades 7-12 that performs academic evaluations, schedules IEP meetings, and is in charge of paperwork; a literacy coach/instructional strategist coordinates RTI for grades 9 and 10, maintains the Center, teaches Strategies for Learning, mentors new teachers and provides instructional strategies for teachers; a two-thirds time academic coach/RTI and one-third K through 12 ELL coordinator; a social worker; therapists providing speech, occupational, and physical therapy services K through 12, a special education director, administrative assistant, and two psychological services providers. Thirteen educational technicians work with students within mainstream classes and special education programs; assist in implementation of lesson plans, supervise students on an individual basis, and assist in the Center. High school special education teacher caseloads range from 13-22 students with IEPs and 504 plans. 504 students are being transferred from special education to their guidance counselors to help balance caseloads. Special education teachers hold regular meetings with educational technicians to ensure smooth delivery of accommodations and modifications. Special education teachers meet monthly for one and one-half hours to review range of services and programming options. The academic

evaluator/team leader also attends monthly district special education meetings and communicates relevant information to high school staff. She also meets with middle school staff to determine what services upcoming 9th grade students will require to be successful. She attends the IEP meetings of these students in the spring to ensure continuity of support. The academic coach coordinates Response to Intervention with the 11th and 12th grade teachers and attends the weekly student services meeting (along with the social worker), as well as attending other meetings focusing on specific 11th and 12th grade students. Classes at PRHS are heterogeneously grouped since the school's inception. Students are mainstreamed in many classes, with academic support services as needed. Some classes are co-taught with a special educator, and more teachers are being trained in the co-teaching model. Resource room math is being phased out and moving to a co-taught class. All students are in a heterogeneous group in Roundtable. Educational technicians provide classroom support, as stated in student IEPs. In addition, students have access to additional supports through D-PAtH, Reading Workshop, The Center, the Learning Lab, Strategies for Learning class, and credit recovery. NWEA scores and PRHS data in reading and math are used to identify and place students in appropriate classes and additional supports. Progress reports and report cards are evaluated each quarter to determine student interventions for identified special education students and regular students. All students are eligible for academic supports and strategies. 504 plans and IEPs are updated based on standardized testing and school-wide standards assessments. Each learning area uses common assessments to evaluate student progress and achievement of 21st century learning expectations. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA and English language learners are firmly embedded in PRHS culture, curriculum and enable students to achieve 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, self-study, teachers)

Commendations

1. The coordinated communication system managed through the Student Services and RTI Teams
2. The tiered intervention system that provides appropriate and timely support
3. The dedicated outreach to engage all parents/guardians in their children's learning, especially at-risk students
4. The use of Twitter and other new media to communicate with the community and students
5. The coordinated comprehensive guidance program designed to meet 21st century learning expectations
6. The fully developed and implemented Roundtable program
7. The full-time coverage by licensed/certified health care staff
8. The variety of outside agencies used in interventions
9. The updating of the library collection
10. The increase of the print budget
11. The strong support system available to identified students to ensure student success and meeting 21st century expectations

Recommendations

1. Enable parent portal access to live student grades and assignments throughout quarter
2. Establish a formal process for health-related referrals to outside services
3. Ensure staffing and resources to provide wellness outreach services for students and community
4. Assess the impact to current school counseling services incurred by the shift of 504 responsibility
5. Ensure that the K through 12 comprehensive guidance plan reflects current K through 6 staffing
6. Ensure that library media services has sufficient media, databases, as well as print and non-print materials to support curriculum , instruction , and enable student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
7. Develop a plan to restore storage space to the library



Community Resources for Learning

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

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

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body is currently providing dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, a full range of technology support, curriculum revision, as well as sufficient professional and support staff, equipment, and instructional materials and supplies at Poland Regional High School. Over the last four years, the budget process for the district has experienced challenges. The district is just now recovering from strained relationships between the community and the school district through a concerted effort to improve communication with the community. A lack of confidence by the community toward the school district and the previous leadership led to four failed budget referenda and a reduction in funds. The overall budget trend for Regional School Unit #16 (RSU#16) FY '09 to FY '13 shows a dramatic decline of 15.4 percent with an overall budget decrease in the PRSH allotment of \$588,741 (11.9 percent). The budget decrease for the high school for the three-year period of FY '09, '10, '11 was 15 percent. An upturn in budget funding for the FY '12 and FY '13 resulted in a slight increase of 1.7 percent and 2.7 percent respectively. Even though a reduction of 19 staff members occurred during the loss in funding, PRHS has maintained quality programs and services. However, Latin and French were cut, leaving Spanish as the only offering in the world languages learning area. Other programs that were impacted by the budget decrease were the wellness program, curriculum development, learning area supplies, and maintenance and repair of the building and school plant. In addition, upper level technology classes for PRHS students are now only available through the Lewiston Regional Technical Center (LRTC). To overcome the loss of funds in the athletic budget, PRHS created a participation fee for athletics. Students are required to complete Wellness 1, 2, and 3 to graduate, yet the lack of funding impacts the quality and quantity of current equipment. The PRHS is involved in the Maine Laptop Technology Initiative (MLTI) program that provides one-to-one computing for students and teachers. Even though a loss of a technology support staff member now results in additional time for equipment repairs, 51 percent of the staff indicates that the district provides adequate funding for a wide range of technology support. The amount budgeted for professional development has declined and those budget lines have been inconsistently funded. From FY '11 to FY '12 amounts went from \$32,198 to \$29,617 resulting in reduced opportunities for teachers to achieve increased educational training and certifications. The budget amount for FY '13 of \$42,844 restores professional development lines and increases the availability for teacher tuition for graduate-level courses. However, current year funds for teacher tuition for graduate courses were exhausted from summer coursework by staff; no more funds are available for this school year to reimburse faculty for graduate courses. Thus, although the current budget includes the increase in professional development funds, it does not meet the needs of the staff. The creation of a local, pre-K charter school has resulted in the requirement for the district to provide funds to the school; this allocation changes from year to year, impacting the district's ability to provide dependable funding. Therefore, due to a history of recent budget cuts, PRHS has undergone changes and cuts; the school has adjusted and compensated for these challenges in order to continue to provide quality programs and services. (self-study, teachers, parents, standard subcommittee, Endicott survey)

The school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and

to keep the school clean on a daily basis. The PRHS maintenance director, in weekly collaboration with the principal, develops and reviews the scheduled maintenance and repair orders to be completed. Requests for needed repairs are submitted electronically by teachers and staff, which create work orders and results in the timely completion of repairs. All major facilities equipment is maintained and replaced based on a formal repair/replacement plan developed by the maintenance director. Classroom and cafeteria furniture are also replaced on an annual rotating basis as part of the maintenance director's plan. The maintenance director has identified several items in need of future repair or replacement, including HVAC units, rooftop heating units, and collapsible classroom walls. The recently created capital improvement budget line items have begun to provide funds to update and replace equipment on an as-needed basis. The district has developed a capital improvement plan in the 5-Year Strategic Plan in order to ensure the replacement of major equipment. PRHS and the Whittier Middle School is regularly cleaned and maintained by eight full-time personnel. Funding for weekend custodial services has been eliminated, with these needs now covered by the maintenance director; as a result, the school has not effectively addressed the need for weekend custodial services so that the high school can be regularly used by the students and the community seven days a week. The custodial and maintenance staff provides a clean and well-maintained environment. The results of the Endicott survey indicate that students (72 percent), staff (94 percent), and parents (98 percent) agree that the school is clean and well maintained. Because the school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, properly maintains, catalogues, and replaces equipment, and keeps the school clean on a daily basis, students and staff are able to teach and learn in a facility conducive to achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, building tour, teachers, Endicott survey)

The district has developed, and the community has initially funded, a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. In the fall of 2012, RSU #16 began work on a strategic plan. With guidance from the School Board's Public Relations Committee and a consulting firm, information was gathered through meetings with town officials, community input forums, staff and community surveys, and conversations with administrators, staff, and students. The RSU #16 School Board adopted the 5-Year Strategic Plan on May 13, 2013. The detailed, comprehensive, and ambitious plan includes five goals: create equitable opportunities for students to succeed, ensure that all students experience high quality instruction, build community collaboration and communication, maintain and improve operations and facilities, and model excellent governance. A sample of the 21 objectives and 70 strategies within these goals address needs in instructional practice, curriculum design, professional development, technology, school culture, staffing, communication with the community, and facility and capital improvements. The plan includes steps to monitor and evaluate progress of the implementation of the plan. The funding and implementation of the objectives and strategies in the 5-Year Strategic Plan, including addressing future staffing and facility needs, will be integral to ensure continued high quality programs and services. The initial funding and development of the 5-Year Strategic Plan provides a framework and timeline for addressing programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. (school board, building tour, panel presentation, central office administrators, 5-Year Strategic Plan)

Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. Learning area coordinators meet with their team members to identify needs and wants within the learning area. Learning area coordinators then submit a Budget Request Form to the principal. The principal develops budget lines for educational supplies, textbooks, and equipment based on the requests from the learning area coordinators. Similarly, the technology coordinator and IT technician identify any needs, replacements or upgrades needed to the technology infrastructure required to support students and staff. Requests for proposals from staff for the technology budget are made requiring a description of what is being requested along with how it will be used to enhance or improve student learning. The principal brings the proposed high school budget to the RSU #16 administrative team to develop the overall budget for the district. If monies need to be trimmed from the proposed high school budget, the principal then makes decisions, often with input from learning area coordinators, as to where cuts can be made to meet the expectations of the RSU #16 Budget Committee and School Board. The school board relies on input from the principal and other district administrators in order to make informed decisions regarding budget allocations and reductions. Once the district budget is passed, learning area coordinators manage purchase orders and allocate funds, with the approval of the principal and the RSU #16 finance office. The inclusive budget process ensures that faculty and administrators have a voice in the development and implementation of the budget, resulting in a buy-in of all concerned parties. (self-study, school board, teachers, standard subcommittee)

In spite of overcrowding in the middle school, which affects the high school spaces, the school site and plant, through the efforts of faculty and staff, supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The Endicott survey reveals that almost 89 percent of the PRHS staff and almost 90 percent of the parents agree that the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The science labs, library, and cafeteria are adequately equipped to meet the demands of quality student programs. Parking for teachers, students and visitors is optimal. A noteworthy improvement to PRHS is the wood chip boiler, which provides heat for the entire facility. An ongoing challenge for the delivery of quality programs and services stems from the consolidation of district middle school students into Whittier Middle School, which adjoins the PRHS building. This resulted in the increase of middle school population to 260 middle school students in a wing designed for 120 to 140 students. The resulting needs of the middle school have strained classroom and office space in the PRHS facility. Services and programs for students such as D-PAtH, School-to-Work, Learning Lab, and The Center have impacted the spaces available for meetings with parents, testing for students, and pull-out space for co-taught classes. School psychologists and outside service providers have difficulty accessing space to test or work with students. The library storage area is used as the computer technology offices and repair room. An electrical transformer is located in a space now used for instruction in the editing room of the TV studio. The district has identified these middle school/high school space constraints as an area to rectify in the 5-Year Strategic Plan. Even though these challenges with available space exist, PRHS has maintained quality school programs and services for their students. (teachers, parents, standard subcommittee, building tour, students)

The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. Following a visit by the Maine Municipal Association in December 2012, protocols

and procedures were implemented for cleaning major equipment including the wood boiler. An audit was performed in May 2011 by the School Facilities Management System Department of the Maine Department of Education, resulting in a list of maintenance work for every building in the district. Records of compliance with state regulations are kept in a variety of locations. Recent reorganization of hazardous chemicals in science labs has resulted in improved cataloging and storage of these materials. A plan has been developed for the continued storage and disposal of these chemicals. Due to the increase in middle school population, additional portable classrooms have been utilized outside the main school building. Even though security cameras and locks are available at the entrance to the middle school, they lack these features on the door leading to and from the portable classrooms. The emergency plan has been updated recently. Fire drills are regularly practiced, and the high school practiced a lockdown drill for the first time in the spring of 2013, including an assembly prior to the drill that instructed students on how to respond during a lockdown. Plans are in place to practice lockdowns. Therefore, because the school maintains documentation that the physical plant meets applicable regulations, students are able to learn and staff members are able to teach in a safe environment. (building tour, self-study, building inspection certificates)

All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. Over a four-year PRHS career, every student completes seven student-led conferences during which the student discusses his or her learning with a parent or guardian and the student's advisor. The attendance rate for these meetings is consistently over 99 percent. Teachers are able to report grades to parents and students through two electronic formats. The Easy Grade Pro (EGP) allows for direct email of grades and through Infinite Campus (IC) progress reports are sent to parents and students three times per semester. Even though there are two ways for teachers to report grades out to students and parents, parents and students do not have live, real-time access to these reports at any time during the school year. Parents without email receive grades, reports and newsletters through traditional mailings. School events are advertised through the RSU #16 website, the school marquee, local cable station, postcards, Adult Ed and tweeting. The 9th and 10th grade literacy coaches and 11th and 12th grade academic coaches can make connections with students who might be struggling academically and then contact teachers and parents to become involved. Through school counselors and Roundtable advisors, meetings are arranged which include both the student and their parent(s). Additionally, the Endicott survey reveals 74.5 percent of parents believe that the professional staff actively engage families as partners in the education of their children. The Endicott survey also shows that 83 percent of faculty believes that they are active partners with families in their children's education. Therefore, because of these various methods of communication, parents are active partners in their students' academic life. (Endicott survey, parents, students, panel presentation, student shadowing, faculty handbook)

The school develops extensive and productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. The Endicott survey reveals that 77.6 percent of parents believe that the school has effective partnerships with parents, the community, businesses, and higher education institutions. The PRSH Knights Pride Boosters provide student-athletes and teams with financial support through their fundraising at the "Snack Shack" facility. In addition, through a three-town partnership and the Knights Pride Boosters, both indoor and outdoor facilities are used for children's and adult recreation

programming. Parents are strongly represented through the Project Graduation Committee. This committee develops, organizes, raises funds for and supervises the annual post graduation evening event (Project Grad). Parents and community members are active in the theater program, serve as mentors for Senior Celebration, coaches for athletic teams, hosts for job shadows and internships, interviewers for mock interviews, and chaperones for school trips. Parents are an integral part of the student-led conferences that occur in October and March of each year. The Grand Turismo and Parent Turismo programs introduce parents or guardians to local college options and promote financial literacy. The Endicott survey indicates that 72.2 percent of parents report that there is the opportunity to meet teachers, building administrators, and school counselors. Various alternative programs are available for student enrollment such as internships, early college programs, community service projects, and career fairs. Poland Regional High School has early college agreements with local institutions such as Bates College, University of Southern Maine, Central Maine Community College and St. Joseph's College. PRHS partners with Early College for ME-Androscoggin and an advisor from CMCC to help parents and students navigate these higher educational institutions. Students may also take online classes through Academ-e at the UMaine system and other programs through the University of Maine at Fort Kent. The mock interview programs, held in the spring for juniors, connect many colleges, businesses and community members with PRHS students. PRHS students participate in "Maine Day" at Bates, Colby and Bowdoin Colleges, which provides experience in admission practices. In addition the Aspirations in Maine program at Bowdoin is available for freshmen to attend a one-day program during which students are hosted by a college student to get a "taste of the college experience." Co-curricular groups, such as the Bates Girls Group and Bates Boys Group, provide informal mentoring for PRHS students. The PRHS guidance department is part of is the Androscoggin Area Guidance Collaborative. This organization hosts the annual Androscoggin Career Fair in January at the Central Maine Community College campus. Sophomores have an opportunity to hear presenters from over 80 career or career clusters. Guidance counselors work with state agencies such as Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) to provide an annual Financial Aid Night. Case management and social work services are provided by Spurwink Services, a wellness counselor through Community Concepts and an independent social worker in private practice give space for student counseling services. There is also a weekly drop-in time with an educator from the Sexual Assault Crisis Center in Lewiston and a substance abuse counselor. The Lewiston Regional Technical Center (LRTC) provides programs for 30 to 50 students every year. There are connections through local businesses and industries that provide internship programs for Poland Regional students. In addition to internships these community businesses also provide job shadowing opportunities. Through the various parent, community, business and higher educational institution collaborations, the students of PRHS have ample opportunities to enhance their learning. (Endicott survey, parents, students, teachers, standard subcommittee)

Commendations

1. The continued delivery of a high quality academic program given recent funding reductions
2. The exceptional manner in which the faculty and staff are meeting the needs of the students despite funding and space reductions

3. The custodial and maintenance staff's work to provide a clean and well-maintained environment
4. The creation and adoption of a detailed, comprehensive, and ambitious 5-Year Strategic Plan
5. The involvement of the faculty and principal in the development and implementation of the budget
6. The maintenance of high quality school programs by the faculty and staff in a high school site impacted by the overcrowding of the adjoining middle school
7. The purchase of a wood chip boiler to provide a dependable source of heating
8. The recent reorganization, cataloguing, and storage of hazardous chemicals in the science lab
9. The active engagement of parents as partners in each student's education through Roundtable, student-led conferences
10. The opportunities for students to take post-secondary courses at local colleges
11. The variety of options available for students to learn outside of the high school through internships, job shadowing, the Lewiston Regional Technical Center (LRTC), Androscoggin Career Fair, etc.

Recommendations

1. Develop a long-term plan, as identified in the 5-Year Strategic Plan, for addressing the space constraints created by the consolidation of the district's middle school population
2. Develop and implement the capital improvement plan in the 5-Year Strategic Plan in order to ensure the replacement of major equipment
3. Continue to implement the objectives and strategies in the 5-Year Strategic Plan to ensure high quality programs and services
4. Ensure funding for a wide range of school programs and services to meet students' needs including world languages, the arts, and technology education
5. Implement a procedure for parents and students to access live reports on student progress
6. Develop and implement a plan to remove the electrical transformer from the editing room of the TV Studio
7. Ensure that sufficient funding is available for a wide range of professional development including college courses

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 66. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The visiting committee would like to recognize the faculty, staff, and administration of Poland Regional High School for the hospitality and openness extended to them during the visit as well as the thoroughness and professionalism demonstrated in the preparation of the self-study report.

**Poland Regional High School
NEASC Accreditation Visit
November 3 - 6, 2013**

Visiting Committee

George Edwards NEASC Burlington, MA 01803	Catherine Geren Massabesic High School Waterboro, ME 04087
Susan St. Pierre Spruce Mountain High School Jay, Maine 04329	Dee Goodman Ellsworth High School Ellsworth, ME 04605
Michelle Adams York High School York, ME 03909	Jack Kelly Sanborn Regional High School Kingston, NH 03848
Donna Ackerman Spaulding High School Rochester, NH 03867	Tom McDowell Yarmouth High School Yarmouth, ME 04096
Matthew Anderson Buckfield Junior/Senior High School Buckfield, ME 04220	Will Putnam Gray-New Gloucester High School Gray, ME 04039
Shauna Dunn Gorham High School Gorham, ME 04038	Larry Schooley Oceansie High School - West Rockland, ME 04841
Meg Fox Noble High School Berwick, ME 03906	Teri Wark South Portland High School South Portland, ME 04106
Nicolas Gannon Lisbon High School Lisbon Falls, ME 04252	Patricia Woodbury Biddeford High School Biddeford, ME 04005

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

Poland Regional High School

Commendations

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

1. The thorough and inclusive process used to develop the mission statement, core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. The core values that are posted and embraced throughout the school
3. The continued inclusion of all members of the school community in the commitment to the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
4. The requirement that students are active participants in their school community outside of the classroom through participation in co-curricular activities
5. The many student programs and procedures that embed the core values in daily school experiences, such as student-led conferences, the State of the School Day, and Roundtable
6. The process the Vision Keepers engage in to make decisions for the school, which includes extensive feedback from the school community
7. The commitment to review and revise curriculum, instructional practices and assessment, using best practices and relevant research

Curriculum

1. The rubrics designed to communicate the expectations of 21st century learning, which are successfully driving curriculum and student learning
2. The ongoing integration of 21st century learning expectations into course-specific rubrics that helps to maintain consistency
3. The effective and meaningful use of Roundtable in addition to classroom experiences to practice and achieve 21st century expectations
4. The common format of the Curriculum Documentation that sufficiently organizes the necessary information for course design
5. The school's consistent and reflective emphasis on depth of understanding and the application of knowledge.
6. The clear alignment between the written and the taught curriculum
7. The use of early release time to engage educators in aligning curriculum guides to meet the 21st century learning expectations
8. The recent increases in support by the district, which provide personnel, time, and financial resources for the development and revision of curriculum

9. The ambitious strategic plan adopted by the district, which intends to continue to improve curricula
10. The extensive list of co-curricular activities including a variety of sports, organizations, and clubs

Instruction

1. The Roundtable program which includes instruction that fosters student-staff relationships and includes the development of a digital student portfolio
2. The robust integration of technology in all subject areas that aids in instructional exchange between teacher and students
3. The practice of grouping students to allow collaboration, inquiry, and problem-solving
4. The commitment by each learning area to higher order thinking skills
5. The use of differentiated instruction that supports the school's commitment to heterogeneous grouping
6. The wide array of instructional interventions used in D-PAtH, Learning Lab, the Center, guided academic support, strategies for learning class and co-taught classes
7. The in-house learning specialist who supports classroom instruction with reading strategies, differentiation, vocabulary building and formative assessments
8. The in-house focus on professional development that allows teachers to reflect on practice, develop common assessments, modify curriculum, and study current instructional strategies in their content areas
9. The commitment of staff to meet the individual needs of all students as reflected in frequent meetings in teacher teams, content areas/ and during early release time
10. The consistent use of formative assessment to guide instruction in meeting the needs of students
11. The commitment to instructional practices that support the school's adopted core values and beliefs

Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. The successful implementation of digital portfolios for freshman and sophomore students.
2. The creation and widespread use of school-wide rubrics that address each of the 21st century learning expectations
3. The digital portfolio's presence as a web page allows for parental involvement in making sure that students are meeting the 21st century learning expectations
4. The strong RTI model in place
5. The common assessments and use of school-wide rubrics that ensures a common language is used across subject areas
6. The use of 21st century learning expectations that is prevalent and widespread across all disciplines and classes
7. The time built in for and the high level of staff collaboration
8. The protocols in place for analysis of common assessments
9. The use of technology for timely, specific, and corrective feedback

10. The use of intervention strategies for students to revise and improve their work
11. The daily use of formative assessments that drives instruction and adaptations
12. The regular review of grading and reporting practices

School Culture and Leadership

1. The positive, supportive, and respectful school culture
2. The wide-spread heterogeneous grouping
3. The Roundtable advisory program
4. The commitment to planning targeted professional development and collaboration time
5. The sufficient time and structure for teaching and learning to meet the needs of all learners
6. The appropriate class sizes
7. The involvement of all school community stakeholders in the decision-making
8. The school governance structure that results in shared leadership with all stakeholders
9. The initiative taken by teachers to improve teaching and learning
10. The current positive working relationship between and among central office administration, school board, school administration, and teachers
11. The autonomy afforded to the building principal and teachers to make decisions to improve teaching and learning

School Resources for Learning

1. The coordinated communication system managed through the Student Services and RTI Teams
2. The tiered intervention system that provides appropriate and timely support
3. The dedicated outreach to engage all parents/guardians in their children's learning, especially at-risk students
4. The use of Twitter and other new media to communicate with the community and students
5. The coordinated comprehensive guidance program designed to meet 21st century learning expectations
6. The fully developed and implemented Roundtable program
7. The full-time coverage by licensed/certified health care staff
8. The variety of outside agencies used in interventions
9. The updating of the library collection
10. The increase of the print budget
11. The strong support system available to identified students to ensure student success and meeting 21st century expectations

Community Resources for Learning

1. The continued delivery of a high quality academic program given recent funding reductions

2. The exceptional manner in which the faculty and staff are meeting the needs of the students despite funding and space reductions
3. The custodial and maintenance staff's work to provide a clean and well-maintained environment
4. The creation and adoption of a detailed, comprehensive, and ambitious 5-Year Strategic Plan
5. The involvement of the faculty and principal in the development and implementation of the budget
6. The maintenance of high quality school programs by the faculty and staff in a high school site impacted by the overcrowding of the adjoining middle school
7. The purchase of a wood chip boiler to provide a dependable source of heating
8. The recent reorganization, cataloguing, and storage of hazardous chemicals in the science lab
9. The active engagement of parents as partners in each student's education through Roundtable, student-led conferences
10. The opportunities for students to take post-secondary courses at local colleges
11. The variety of options available for students to learn outside of the high school through internships, job shadowing, the Lewiston Regional Technical Center (LRTC), Androscoggin Career Fair, etc.

Recommendations

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

1. Develop and implement a process to regularly and deliberately review and revise the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations that includes all members of the school community
2. Use student achievement data on the school-wide learning expectations to inform the review and revision of the core values, beliefs, mission statement, and learning expectations
3. Ensure that the learning expectations continue to drive assessment, instruction, and resource allocation
4. Ensure that the Ethical Use of Technology rubric provides guidance to support the digital citizenship curriculum

Curriculum

1. Ensure that the K through 12 curriculum is articulated in order to improve specific alignment of subject areas vertically and horizontally across the district
2. Develop and implement a formal structured process and timeline across the district for the review and revision of curriculum
3. Ensure that course offerings meet student needs in world languages, visual and performing arts, and technology
4. Integrate the 21st century learning expectations and the Common Core State Standards into all Curriculum Documentation guides
5. Formalize the Honors Challenge to encourage consistency by creating specific guidelines across the curriculum in all learning areas
6. Ensure that all classes and the Honors Challenge consistently provides inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking that engage and challenge students
7. Ensure that sufficient funding is available for a wide range of professional development including college courses
8. Formalize instances of cross-disciplinary learning in the curriculum beyond the Humanities course

Instruction

1. Develop and implement a formal process that continuously examines teacher instructional practices for explicit consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning experience
2. Implement a formal process for students and parents to provide feedback to teachers about instructional practices which includes teacher reflection

Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. Formalizing and implement the process to assess school-wide progress toward achieving learning expectations
2. Develop and implement a process by which 21st century learning expectations are communicated to the larger school community
3. Ensure that parents have a process through which to adequately understand the 21st century learning expectations
4. Expand the use of digital portfolios into junior and senior classes
5. Increase the variety of ways in which students may demonstrate mastery of the standards beyond use of the "pencil/paper" exam
6. Implement a method to share school-wide progress toward meeting the 21st century learning expectations to the faculty as a whole
7. Acquire a consistent computer program for grading and reporting

School Culture and Leadership

1. Develop and implement a research-based evaluation and supervision system that focus on improved student learning
2. Ensure that tuition reimbursement is available for those teachers wishing to take graduate courses

School Resources for Learning

1. Enable parent portal access to live student grades and assignments throughout quarter
2. Establish a formal process for health-related referrals to outside services
3. Ensure staffing and resources to provide wellness outreach services for students and community
4. Assess the impact to current school counseling services incurred by the shift of 504 responsibility
5. Ensure that the K through 12 comprehensive guidance plan reflects current K through 6 staffing
6. Ensure that library media services has sufficient media, databases, as well as print and non-print materials to support curriculum , instruction , and enable student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
7. Develop a plan to restore storage space to the library

Community Resources for Learning

1. Develop a long-term plan, as identified in the 5-Year Strategic Plan, for addressing the space constraints created by the consolidation of the district's middle school population
2. Develop and implement the capital improvement plan in the 5-Year Strategic Plan in order to ensure the replacement of major equipment

3. Continue to implement the objectives and strategies in the 5-Year Strategic Plan to ensure high quality programs and services
4. Ensure funding for a wide range of school programs and services to meet students' needs including world languages, the arts, and technology education
5. Implement a procedure for parents and students to access live reports on student progress
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