New England Association of School and Colleges, Inc.

Commission on Public Schools

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Team for Quinebaug Middle College

Danielson, CT

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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 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 this school in terms of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Neither the total report nor any of its subsections is to be considered an evaluation of any individual staff member but rather a professional appraisal of the school as it appeared to the visiting committee.

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

The Committee on Public Secondary School's Standards for Accreditation serve as the foundation for the accreditation process and by which accreditation decisions are made. The seven Standards are qualitative, challenging, and reflect current research and best practice. The Standards, written and approved by the membership, establish the components of schools to ensure an effective and appropriate focus on teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Teaching and Learning Standard

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 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. Each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define 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.

CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Standard

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 specific and measurable criteria for success, 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.

INSTRUCTION

Teaching and Learning Standard

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.

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

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 to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics

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 specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

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.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Support Standard

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 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.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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.

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Quinebaug Middle College (QMC) was established in September 2008 as an interdistrict public magnet high school for grades 10-12. Thirty-two 10th grade students enrolled in the first class of QMC (then called Quinebaug Valley Middle College High School). When the school was founded many students decided to attend because they had struggled in the traditional school setting and were at-risk of not graduating from their designated public high school. Other students were drawn because of the opportunity to take college courses and potentially to earn an associate degree while still in high school. Without this access to free college courses many students would not have explored the possibility of college at all. In the fall of 2013, QMC began accepting ninth grader students and reached full capacity with 180 students in the fall of 2015. Students are accepted through an open, non-merit based lottery, that currently draws from 19 districts in Northeastern Connecticut. Quinebaug Middle College is located in Danielson, Connecticut within the Quinebaug Valley Community College's campus and operates within the EASTCONN District. EASTCONN is a Regional Educational Services Center (RESC), serving 33 towns with a student population of nearly 40,993.

Northeastern Connecticut has historically been an area dependent on various forms of manufacturing. Along with the numerous small manufacturing companies, the area's largest employers include Frito-Lay, Foxwoods Resort and Casino, and Mohegan Sun. Farming is also one of the area's important economic employers. Students at QMC are able to work within the community after school and during summer vacation.

As of the 2014 census, there were 116,998 people, 44,487 households residing in Windham County. The racial makeup of the county was 92.8% white, 2.9% black or African-American, 1.4% Asian, 0.6% American Indian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 2.2% from two or more races. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 10.9% of the population. The median income for the county was $59,218. Within the county 10.3% of people were considered persons in poverty. Eighty-eight percent of persons aged 25 or older have a high school diploma or higher and 22.9% hold a bachelor's degree or beyond.

In the 2015-2016 school year, the students of QMC were divided among four grades: with 37 ninth grade students, 54 tenth grade students, 47 eleventh grade students, and 31 twelfth grade students. These 178 students came from 19 districts including, Windham (15%), Killingly (25.1%), Plainfield (13.8%), Brooklyn (9.6%), Putnam (6%), Pomfret (2.4%), Woodstock (1.8%), Voluntown (3%), Thompson (7.8%), Eastford (0.6%), Coventry (0.6%), Canterbury (2.4%), Hampton (0.6%), Lisbon (1.2%), Mansfield (0.6%), Norwich (3%), Sterling (4.2%), Griswold (2.4%) and Montville (0.6%). The 2015-2016 racial makeup of QMC includes 0.6% Native American students, 1.8% Asian students, 3% black students, 16.2% Hispanic students, and 78.4% white students. In 2015-2016 QMC supported 16 students on Individualized Education Plans (9%) and 42 students qualifying under Section 504 Accommodations (24%). For 2016-17, QMC supports 19 students on Individualized Education Plans (12%) and 36 students qualifying under Section 504 Accommodations (19%). On average, 40-50% of the student body report eligibility for free and reduced lunch programs.

Per pupil expenditures were $11,900 for the 2015-2016 school year. Comparatively, the state average for per pupil expenditures in 2015-2016 was $16,250. The cost of attendance is defrayed by state funding in combination with sending town tuition. In 2015-2016, Local Educational Associations (LEAs-sending towns) paid $3,100 in tuition for regular education students and $4,000 for special education students. For the 2016-2017 school year, there will be an increase in tuition to address the shortfall of state-funding and sending towns are billed $3,400 for tuition of regular education students and $4,300 in tuition costs for any special education students. For 2016-2017 EASTCONN has absorbed the shortfall in state funding which was not covered by the LEAs. Since state funding for the 2017-2018 school year may be reduced again, QMC students, parents, teachers and administrators will be advocating to state legislators for the need for level funding for magnet schools.

QMC's Operation Plan defines QMC as a school who will enroll at-risk, disadvantaged youth and will support them while they take advantage of opportunities at the middle college, such as participating in college

coursework. The state of Connecticut reports the dropout/graduation rate in four-year cohorts. QMC's 2014 four-year cohort group graduation rate was 56.3%. Some students who enroll at QMC are already behind the "four-year graduation rate cohort" and may already be classified as a dropout. In the past attendance has been a factor in students graduation success. Truancy has been an issue, though through intervention strategies attendance has risen during the 2016-2017 school year and is approximately 88%. According to the State Department of Education for Connecticut, students who do not graduate within the fourth year after the start of their initial freshman year are considered a "dropout." Prior to the Class of 2018 (QMC's first fully enrolled 9th grade class), students would enroll in QMC after at least one unsuccessful year of high school. These students would enroll with credit deficiencies and would graduate from QMC, but not necessarily in the four-year cohort group time frame. As a result of the limited academic success prior to students arriving at QMC, the four-year graduation rate at QMC was quite low. However, according to recent data from the State Department of Education, as of 2016 QMC's four-year cohort graduation rates have increased to 78.4%.

The class of 2014 had 22 students who were in the graduating class, and 77% pursued post-secondary education at a two- or four-year institution. Six students (27%) of QMC went on to a four-year college or university, 11 students (50%) chose to continue post-secondary studies at Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC). One student (5%) chose to enlist in the military and 4 students (18%) entered the workforce. The graduating class of 2015 was composed of 29 students. Of those students, 62% pursued post-secondary education at a two- or four-year institution. One student (3%) attended a four-year university, 15 students (52%) decided to continue at QVCC, another two (7%) went to other two-year community colleges, one student enlisted in the military (3%), and 10 students went on to employment (34%). The class of 2016 comprised of 35 students. Of those students, 77% pursued post-secondary education at a two- or four-year institution. Eight students (23%) enrolled at a four-year college/university, 12 students (34%) went onto QVCC and another 7 students (20%) enrolled at other two-year institutions. No students enlisted in the military and 3 students (8.5%) chose employment. Two students ceased attending school and withdrew, without completing graduation requirements (6%) in the 2015-2016 school year.

The students at QMC benefit from local partnerships with QVCC, access to EASTCONN's resources, and Wyman's Teen Outreach Program. QMC students, who meet the academic requirements, are allowed to direct enroll and earn college credit in QVCC courses. For the fall 2016 semester, 10% of the student body received college credit. For the spring 2017 semester, 21% of the QMC students are directly enrolled in QVCC courses, including two freshman students. EASTCONN provides opportunities for students through work-study experiences at the *Food For Thought Cafe* on campus and COOL (Career of Our Lives Program). Additionally QMC has a partnership with UCONN's Early College Experience (ECE) program.

Additionally, QMC was the recipient of a three-year $1.5 million federal grant awarded through Magnet Schools of America in 2013. This grant allowed an expansion of educational programming in STEM-related content, interdisciplinary curricula and units, and enhanced pathways to college and career readiness. Among the resources funded by the grant was the creation of a mobile STEM lab, which provides hands-on learning experiences and field work, using sophisticated equipment, to QMC students as well as students throughout the region.

QMC also sponsors and supports student recognition programs such as Citizens of the Week, Academic Awards, Honor Rolls, College Credit Celebrations in the fall and spring, *Quin-E-Blog* the QMC newsletter, and hosts a National Honor Society induction annually. The graduation ceremony gives particular recognition to our graduating seniors with ten awards related to academics, character, and perseverance.

Quinebaug Middle College is a democratic learning community. Student leadership is expected from the members of the school community, and student voice is welcomed and encouraged. Students meet every day, except Fridays, in grade-level advisory groups for 30 minutes. Advisory times are used to develop student success plans, create additionally opportunities for students and teachers to develop deeper relationships, and reinforce the school's core values and beliefs. Three times a month students, faculty, and administration use a Town Meeting as a forum to communicate ideas for the betterment of the school, share successes, and engage in the democratic process. One Friday a month is reserved for committee work. Committees are student- and teacher-created groups which provide leadership throughout the school.

Related Files

- [2017-02-21-18:32_bulletin-article-06-18-16-education---manufacturing-workforce.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-21-18:32_bulletin-article-06-18-16-high-tech.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-21-18:32_qmc-site-visit-rubric-sept-26-2016-rev1tag---msap-grant.docx](#)
- [2017-02-21-18:32_qmc-4-year-graduation-cohort.jpg](#)
- [2017-02-21-18:34_neasc-cpss-aggregate-report-14-15-1.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-21-18:34_quinebaug-middle-college---neasc-cpss-self-study-survey-results-03-11-16.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-21-18:45_quinebaug-middle-college-profile-jan-28.2013.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-21-18:50_profile-of-the-quinebaug-middle-college-student-population14-15.docx](#)
- [2017-02-28-17:00_attendance-2016-2017.xlsx](#)

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Inspiration, kindness and respect are the fundamental principles of Quinebaug Middle College. Our democratic learning community offers opportunities to build self-confidence and academic success through responsible choice-making, personal wellness, critical thinking and social and civic responsibility.

The learning community of Quinebaug Middle College believes that:

- All members are learners first, who work together to create dynamic, sustainable relationships and meaningful learning and service opportunities;
- All students achieve at high levels when they engage actively with their learning, are responsible community members and are kind to others;
- Our educational experiences promote critical thinking, value diverse perspectives and foster intellectual and emotional growth;
- Ownership of personal choices empowers all learners to become thoughtful and engaged citizens;
- Our location within Quinebaug Valley Community College empowers students to believe in their rights and their ability to pursue higher education.

The learning community of Quinebaug Middle College is committed to:

- Educating the whole person– intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially;
- Creating and maintaining respectful interactions among all members;
- Identifying, communicating and reflecting on issues and values related to personal and collective responsibilities;
- Maintaining a safe setting in which community members develop, share and practice meaningful learning experiences;
- Supporting all aspects of student development, including individualizing emotional, personal and academic learning; • Effective, meaningful collaboration with Quinebaug Valley Community College.

The learning community of Quinebaug Middle College provides:

- Inspiration and motivation for learning that can transform lives;
- A safe, supportive, and stable learning environment that allows students to focus on their achievement of current and future goals;
- Challenging educational opportunities for academic, physical, social and civic learning;
- Opportunities for creative, real-world application of students' learning;
- For-credit college learning experiences and various ways for students to demonstrate their learning.

Related Files

- [2017-02-01-14:33_core-values-and-beliefs---2016-2017.pdf](#)

Introduction

Introduction

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

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

As the responsible agency for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public secondary school member institutions, CPSS requires visiting teams to assess the degree to which the evaluated schools align with 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 team, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study, the valid recommendations of the visiting team, 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 Quinebaug Middle College High School, a committee of members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included representation from the student body, parents of students and representatives from the EASTCONN administrative offices as well as representation from QVCC.

The self-study of Quinebaug Middle College High School extended over a period of 18 school months from

September of 2015 to March of 2017. The visiting team was pleased to note that all QMC students participated in the self-study and some completed their own NEASC Accreditation Report based on their view of the school's adherence to the standards. Paula Cohen the Executive Director of EASTCONN, Toni Ryan, Director of Curriculum and Tom Cronin, Director of Education at EASTCONN also joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's core values, beliefs, and 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, Quinebaug Middle College 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 Team

A visiting team of 9 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Quinebaug Middle College High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Danielson and Norwich CT, 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 aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, guidance counselors, special educators, school administrators, and diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Quinebaug Middle College High School.

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

-      review of the school's self-study materials

-      54 hours shadowing 18 students for a half day

-      a total of 71 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 18 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning

-      group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

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

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Committee on Public Secondary Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of Quinebaug Middle College High School.

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Quinebaug Middle College (QMC) frequently engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. QMC's Core Values and Beliefs were created by a variety of stakeholders and are reinforced in the structures that were established. Consistent references to the core values and beliefs help students and staff maintain their commitment to a democratic learning community, and the principles of "Inspiration, Kindness and Respect."

The core values and beliefs were created by QMC staff, administration, community members, students, and parents over the course of several meetings during QMC's earliest years. QMC's Core Values and Beliefs were partly inspired by the Code of Ethics that was created and approved by the founding students and faculty in September 2008. To begin thinking about the creation of QMC's Code of Ethics, the entire faculty facilitated a week-long seminar on William Glasser's, *Choice Theory* and *Every Student Can Succeed* which focus on the five basic needs as well as non-traditional learning communities. Students and staff participated in a community-building activity based on the students' "ideal" school and separated into small groups to share with each other the desirable characteristics that would be present in their ideal school. From this activity, "Inspiration, Kindness, and Respect" became the founding principles of QMC's core values and beliefs. The core values and beliefs were approved through a process that began with a series of meetings that took place between March and June 2010, during which stakeholders, again comprising of staff, administration, community members, students, and parents, reviewed critical foundational documents of the school, including the operations plan, code of ethics, application forms, brochures, handbooks, and other informational materials. In September 2010, faculty voted on the statement and approved the August 25, 2010 version of the statement of core values and beliefs.

QMC has a clear set of written core values and beliefs set forth in its student and parent handbook, program of studies, website, school hallways, and all classrooms. Staff, administration, students, and parents can readily cite these core values and beliefs in general terms and can state specifically, and passionately, how these values and beliefs about learning impact their lives. Additionally, since the founding of the school, QMC has fostered a democratic learning environment through a variety of processes such as advisory periods four days a week, staff run bi-weekly faculty meetings, weekly collaboration meetings, and a weekly school-wide "town meeting" run by students who use Robert's Rule of Parliamentary Procedure. Every town meeting begins with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the reading of the core values and beliefs. The town meeting records are consistently maintained and updated using Google Docs which provides a reliable record of all past motions and policy procedures. The student democratic committee compiles all the town meeting approved motions and ensures they are followed in subsequent meetings. A portion of the town meeting includes respectful discussion of school policy and cultural practices.

Consistent references to the core values and beliefs help students and staff maintain their commitment to a democratic learning community, and the principles of "Inspiration, Kindness and Respect." The core values and beliefs are posted in every classroom and read aloud weekly at the town meeting. Endicott survey results reflect that 89.3 percent of the students and 92.5 percent of responding parents are familiar with QMC's core values and beliefs about learning.

As a result of frequent engagement in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by research-based best practices to identify and commit to core values and beliefs about learning, QMC helps all students and staff maintain their commitment to a democratic learning community, and the principles of Inspiration, Kindness and Respect.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Quinebaug Middle College has, in some areas, challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies. Each expectation is defined by school-wide analytic rubrics which define targeted high levels of achievement. While QMC has formally identified and developed school-wide rubrics which correspond with the school's 21st century learning expectations, the standardized use of these rubrics from class to class is a work in progress. In an effort to grow in this area, QMC is making a concerted effort to increase the formal use of these rubrics across the school.

During the summer of 2015, the entire faculty met in order to update learning expectations based on the *Framework for 21st Century Learning* and to be more general across curriculum. QMC has identified eight challenging academic, social, and civic learning expectations and has created school-wide rubrics for each of these using clear and consistent language. One revision was to make the rubrics more student focused by changing the wording so all statements were student focused. For example, "I am an active participant in all town meetings, advisory sessions, classes, and take on leadership roles on a regular basis."

Considering the *Framework for 21st Century Learning*, the rubrics reflect those learning expectations in categories of effective writing, active reading, effective communication, problem-solving skills, scientific problem-solving skills, independent projects, social and civic expectations/code of ethics, and success skills. Each of these rubrics have learning expectations broken down into specific and descriptive criteria with targeted high levels of achievement. The rubrics indicate the targeted high level of achievement with an exemplary grade. Grades below this level are categorized as proficient, basic, and developing. Beginning in school year 2016-2017, the eight rubrics were assigned by discipline with the exception of art and music classes. It was required that all teachers use their assigned rubric, based on discipline, at least once per semester. Student work samples indicated that the school-wide rubrics are used more than what is required.

Although these learning expectations and analytic rubrics formally exist, there is little agreement on whether the expectations are challenging and whether they are always measured using the school-wide rubrics by all teachers. Based on the results of the Endicott survey taken during January 2016, fewer than half of the students agreed that the learning expectations are challenging; slightly more than half of the staff agreed that the expectations are challenging; and 64 percent of parents agree that the expectations are challenging. Conversely, toward the end of the year, students, faculty, and parents took a climate survey. This survey showed that the majority of students agree that their work at QMC was challenging. The majority of faculty are neutral regarding the challenge of coursework at QMC. In the same survey, the majority of parents reported that they do not know what teachers expect of their children. These results caused staff to question whether students and parents knew what 21st century learning expectations were and whether staff were responding to the "challenging" or the "measurable" part of the question.

After informal discussion among faculty, it was decided that the majority of staff agreed that the expectations were challenging, but not necessarily being measured according to the school-wide rubrics. They were being used inconsistently and sometimes, not at all. QMC is currently working to make its 21st century learning expectations more clear to students and parents/guardians by including the learning expectations in curriculum, syllabi, and lessons. QMC is also working to implement the rubrics, across all disciplines and curriculum, more consistently. In academic year 2016-2017, QMC launched the portfolio system in order to clarify the school's learning expectations and their measurement. Every student created a portfolio in which all of their teachers, in every class, include at least one appropriate rubric, defining the learning expectation and feedback regarding its assessment.

When 21st century learning expectations for all students are defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, all students are allowed the opportunity to reach high levels of achievement.

While the school has 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and

civic competencies, continued communication about these expectations will support all students achieving those expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

QMC'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 most resource allocations.

The application of Glasser's *Choice Theory* promoted the development of the school's democratic learning community. Students themselves have played a leadership role in the evolution of the democratic learning community. QMC's school community is clearly accustomed to this democratic process through which student voice is front and center as self-sufficient decision makers. Existing school structures including the town meeting, weekly service learning opportunities, student-led committees, a Code of Ethics, and school wide-rubrics, by design, extensively demonstrate and promote QMC's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Students' ability to declare the meaning of these core values and beliefs is showcased in the town meeting forum. Both the Endicott survey (85 percen). and 2015-2016 climate survey results indicate QMC's core values and beliefs are well understood by students, parents, and faculty, and are actively reflected in the culture of the school. Understanding of 21st century learning expectations for students has shown growth over time. Between the Endicott survey in December 2015 and the climate survey at the conclusion of the school year in 2016, students understood these expectations at a greater rate than they had previously. Students, parents, and teachers continually express how the core values and beliefs of inspiration, kindness, and respect are part of the community's lived experiences. Parents overwhelmingly expressed that their children feel safe and happy at QMC. Students proudly reported that QMC does not tolerate bullying and "kids are not afraid to show who they are." Students also cherished the mutual respect between their teachers and themselves, citing teachers as their friends as well as providers of academic guidance. Teachers provided several anecdotes of how students exhibit kindness toward each other, such as when a transgender student was welcomed, nurtured, and now thrives at QMC.

Specific changes are being made to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In the summer of 2016, all QMC faculty undertook a school-wide review, revision, and documentation of curriculum. This process was designed to focus on aligning the written and taught curriculum with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Faculty in every learning area documented, unit by unit, the curriculum in each of their classes. School-wide rubrics were assigned by discipline, and QMC faculty discussed formally aligning these school-wide rubrics with instructional practices and using at least one rubric in their units per semester. School-wide and frequent use of the Google Drive and associated components, including Google Classroom, as well as Schoology, an online learning management system, by faculty and staff potentially encourages collaboration around instruction toward 21st century learning expectations.

QMC is driven by core values and beliefs that are pervasive in its existing school structures. Instruction and assessments beyond the traditional curriculum exist in QMC's advisory classes for each grade level meeting four days per week. First-Year Experience, the town meeting, and service learning serve to demonstrate that QMC's core values and beliefs remain intact regardless of the specific goal for the event. For example, First-Year Experience purposefully teaches empathy through kindness, a core value. A teacher eloquently stated that kindness inspires respect and this is demonstrated through the oft-cited welcoming QMC atmosphere. Additionally, QMC's code of ethics, school-wide rubrics, and democratic learning community are constantly being addressed inside these programs. Student-led committees such as book selection, spirit wear, and events leadership among others, serve as evidence that QMC's core values and beliefs are strongly embedded in its culture. Student-led senior capstone projects serve to showcase core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations; there is the expectation that every capstone project has a strong community connection and impact.

For example, QMC's town meetings begin with a formal recitation of the core values statement which is read by the students chairing that week's town meeting. This serves the purpose of introducing new students to the core values as well as reinforcing for the learning community the primary role the school's core values play in the

school. The "new business" section of the town meeting agenda deliberately gives students the voice to make motions that support responsible choice-making, personal wellness and social and civic responsibility. Some examples of motions that reflect QMC's Core Values are the dress code, phone use, and gender neutral bathrooms, which allowed students to develop protocols that respect diversity among members of the school community. There is also a section on the town meeting agenda where staff and students post examples of kindness, inspiration and respect that have been observed and experienced throughout the school that week. Some examples include students thanking students for academic help, buying lunch, being a good friend or helping someone in trouble or crisis. Once a month, instead of town meeting, staff and students partner to form and run committees providing opportunities for students to apply their knowledge of core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations. QMC's service learning groups incorporate components of kindness, inspiration and respect. Senior capstone projects serve to showcase the core values and beliefs to the QMC community; there is the expectation that every capstone project has a strong community connection and impact.

Since QMC'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 most resource allocations, virtually every student and staff member has internalized a code for how to meet with success as a citizen of the school culture.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

A plan is in place to review and revise the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and community priorities . This plan was developed in the fall of 2016 with the first meeting being held in December of 2016. QMC's current review and revision process of its core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations is presently a process that relies most heavily on the success of the democratic learning and leadership programs and structures the school created that were deliberately rooted in the school's core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations. All of QMC's programs are deliberately designed to create opportunities for students to apply QMC's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations through the success of students and teachers involved in or leading a particular component of a QMC program. Some examples of its programs that are designed to incorporate core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations include QMC's town meetings, service learning, senior capstone projects, and QMC's First-Year Experience, a college readiness course.

Every Tuesday teachers have the opportunity to meet with colleagues during collaboration meetings. These meetings often focus on curriculum, teacher mentoring (TEAM), and incorporating technology. Every other Thursday the staff meets as a whole group. Staff meeting topics include student attendance, event planning, parent involvement, and committee updates or changes. Previously on alternating Thursdays, the staff had the chance to work in committees for the betterment of the school. QMC is working toward reviewing student achievement and standardized assessment data in service of reviewing and revising its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Each month, the principal, several staff members, parents, and members of the community participate in governance climate and communications (GCC) meetings. The purpose of the council is for stakeholders to discuss topics pertinent to QMC and to recommend changes to the administration.

QMC has numerous programs in place that illustrate the pervasiveness of QMC's Core Values and Beliefs throughout its school culture, however QMC is still in the process of establishing a formal, research-based review of QMC's Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- school leadership

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The thoughtful and deliberate creation of QMC's core values and beliefs

Commendation

The commitment of the community to its core values and beliefs

Commendation

The visibility of the core values and beliefs throughout the school

Commendation

The assignment of the school-wide rubrics to specific academic disciplines

Commendation

The pride and passion of the school community for their core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The democratic learning community structures that are unique and cherished aspects of the school

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Clarify and revise the school-wide rubrics provide specific and measurable criteria for success targeting high levels of achievement for each learning expectation

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan for to regularly review and, if necessary, revise the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities

Recommendation

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Parts of the curriculum are purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The curriculum units are all intended to include the 21st century learning expectations, which are measured by eight school-wide rubrics of essential skills that students should master during their time at Quinebaug Middle College (QMC). Each learning expectation is monitored by an academic subject, but is for use by all subjects as appropriate. For example, the "effective writing" rubric is monitored by the English, social studies, world languages, and First-Year Experience courses; the "problem-solving" rubric is monitored by the math, robotics, and computer sciences courses. It is evident that students are practicing skills required from the learning expectations in some of the activities observed from the unit plans and student work. For example, several courses use the effective writing rubric to write papers, and the problem-solving rubric is referenced in labs performed in biology classes. The senior capstone project includes an independent projects rubric and is a culminating project requiring skills in planning, communication, analysis, and writing. Results from the Endicott survey indicate a 86.8 percent of students are familiar with the school's learning expectations, however when asked about learning expectations, many students were unfamiliar and/or referred to classroom expectations. Further prompting of the learning expectations as connections with the school-wide rubrics helped several students understand the question. Work on student portfolios began in the 2016-2017 school year and will incorporate consistent use of these rubrics. Purposeful design in the curriculum will ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- students
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The curriculum is sometimes written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, skills; the school's 21st century learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics. The Endicott survey indicates that 64 percent of the staff agrees there is a common, formal curriculum template used in all subject areas, and 77 percent of parents responded they are informed about the school-wide learning expectations in each of their students' classes. QMC has implemented a common format for the curriculum across the school that incorporates the school's 21st century learning expectations. The unit plan template, based on the *Understanding By Design* (*UbD*) format, includes essential questions, course-specific learning goals, students' knowledge and skills, instructional strategies, summative and formative assessments, and 21st century learning expectations. Faculty may request a template through the QMC Curriculum Google Site so that all curricula are standardized and viewable by all faculty members. The 21st century learning expectations are measured in the eight school-wide rubrics in the QMC program of studies and have been specifically, but not uniquely, identified for certain courses of study. Teachers often develop course-specific and activity-specific rubrics, but neither these nor the school-wide rubrics are included or attached with the unit plans. Many, but not all, of the unit plans include the 21st century learning expectations. Additionally, some units refer to learning expectations which are not a part of the eight school-wide rubrics which are used to measure the 21st century learning expectations. There are also Magnet Themed Units (MTUs), created as a result of a Magnet Schools of America Grant, which developed courses under a STEM initiative. These MTUs follow a different template as requested by those administering the grant and do not include 21st century learning expectations. The capstone handbook does not follow the unit plan template, however it is part of the senior year curriculum and specifically identifies the steps students must take to plan, implement, and report on this project. When all of the curriculum is written following a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, skills; the school's 21st century learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics, students and teachers will have a clear path to learning and mastering the school's expectations for student learning.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The curriculum contains evidence of depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, and cross-disciplinary learning; there are specific areas of authentic learning opportunities in and out of school, and students are well-informed of the ethical use of technology.

Staff response to the Endicott survey indicates 27.3 percent strongly agrees and 60.6 percent agrees the curriculum in their department/content area emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge. Also, 21.2 percent strongly agrees and 54.5 percent agrees the curriculum emphasizes cross-disciplinary learning; 27.3 percent strongly agrees and 51.5 percent agrees the curriculum emphasizes the informed and ethical use of technology; and 6.1 percent strongly agrees and 72.7 percent agrees the curriculum emphasizes authentic application of knowledge and skills. An example of the curriculum being intellectually challenging and providing opportunities for students to authentically apply knowledge and skills is found in the course Electronic Music where students learn how to use the music software (REAPER) to inspire, record, refine, and publish their musical ideas. Some courses provide students with rigorous and challenging learning experiences which require them to apply, analyze, synthesize, compare/contrast, and evaluate. One example of this is the student completion of a NEASC self-study of their own to determine how well their school was adhering to the standards. Another primary example is the student CAPTSTONE project. Students are heterogeneously grouped in courses at QMC as faculty believe it is counter to the democratic learning community's assertion that all students learn best when working with others from all backgrounds and abilities. The program of studies offers some evidence of challenging coursework for all students. QMC is undertaking implementation of a formal portfolio system beginning in the 2016-2017 school year.

Students are regularly called upon to demonstrate their growing body of knowledge, skills, ideas, and concepts and to apply them to real life situations. As a part of its mission of civic engagement, QMC encourages students to be active in their community. In the spring of 2016, funding for magnet schools was being debated by the Connecticut state legislature. Some students wrote letters to their representatives, others created a video letter that they sent to the capital, and still others attended the opening hearings and spoke before the Commission on Education. These are indications that students are writing for audiences beyond the classroom and using skills and knowledge from across the disciplines. As of now, some project work replaces teacher-directed learning but few lead to formal public presentations to audiences of parents, community people, university-based educators, or scientific organizations. QMC has been successful in implementing this work in the senior capstone project. Seniors present their year-long service project and reflection to a panel of representatives from the school, the attached college, the community, and parents.

Cross-disciplinary learning was used by teachers in classes such as physical education and history to connect archery with the study of medieval times. Another example is history and English classes using a theater play to discuss the content of the play and its current relevance in history and invite actors as guest speakers to discuss the art of theater with students.

Service learning is another learning opportunity outside of the classroom which is built into the schedule weekly on Fridays. Students use this time for their capstone or may choose an activity which is relevant or interesting to them, such as maintaining the hiking trails and gardens on site, or volunteering at an animal shelter. Additionally, some classes give students opportunities to extend their learning through problem solving and hands-on experiences. The library media specialist teaches a digital citizenship unit in the First Year Experience course which informs students about personal and professional/academic use of online sources. The content in this course is kept relevant by using current topics. The library media specialist also continues this instruction throughout the year for all students, or subsets of students, by visiting classes to assist with media use in their capstone projects and also requiring the digital citizenship class to present at town meetings about guidelines of use of outside media. Students also are given information on online usage at school in the student and parent handbook in the section on "Internet/Computer Network Usage."

While QMC has created opportunities in it's curriculum that emphasizes depth of understanding and for all students to apply 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, when more formal structures are in place all students will be assured access to these opportunities.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The alignment between the written and taught curriculum is unclear. According to the Endicott survey, almost 70 percent of the staff agrees or strongly agrees the written and taught curricula are aligned. Review of curriculum units shows evidence of learning expectations and specific purpose for instruction aligned with content standards, however, visits to classrooms and discussion with students reveal that expectations for student learning and a general purpose for instruction based on written curriculum is not clearly communicated either verbally or visually. For the 2017-2018 school year, representatives from EASTCONN's two magnet schools (QMC and the Arts at the Capitol Theatre [ACT]) for the establishment of a formal curriculum oversight process. On a smaller scale, alignment between the written and taught curriculum is formally reviewed by TEAM mentors and mentees for first year teachers. For tenured staff, the principal performs yearly observations of teaching staff; he visits each classroom teacher after meeting with the teacher to discuss the lesson, and discusses the lesson after the observation. As indicated in the self-study, school personnel recognize that there is informal alignment due to the fact that most courses are taught by a single instructor who most likely wrote the curriculum. Within departments, some teachers indicated they assess each other's unit plans, however it was unclear how. The curriculum coordinator oversees curriculum development and receives all curriculum materials created by the teachers for the courses, however there is no evidence of feedback on the curriculum units returned to faculty. Under the Magnet Schools of America Grant, which was used to develop courses under a STEM initiative, there were several Magnet Themed Units (MTUs) created using a different template, and instructors using these units were observed by members affiliated with the grant. Teachers indicated that informal review occurred during a summer professional development to pinpoint and discuss gaps in the curriculum. Teachers, the principal, and the curriculum coordinator all indicated that next steps would include determining a system for regular review and revision. When the written and taught curriculum align, students can be assured of a coherent curricular experience will achieve at high levels.

Sources of Evidence
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Curricular coordination and vertical articulation is addressed by departments who share courses. Many of the QMC courses are considered "singleton's" meaning only one teacher is assigned to the course. The faculty have begun a process led by Dr. Ryan to enhance all curriculum in the school and increase alignment to the NEASC and state standards. In addition, the MSA grant allowed QMC to offer additional courses necessitating continued professional development with curriculum development.   Because of the number of sending schools and districts, it is not possible for QMC to articulate curriculum with sending schools. Most courses are designated within a sequence which can be found in the four-year course planner in the program of studies.

Faculty meet during weekly collaboration time every Tuesday after school to engage in activities within content areas, as well as across content areas. Summer professional development opportunities to analyze curriculum offerings and cross-disciplinary connections are optional. Some departments have formally written the skill and knowledge alignment for their courses, while others have informal discussions with guidance regarding skill sets required for academic success. Collaboration with QMC's library media specialist (LMS) ensures the library media center's resources, programs, and services are coordinated with and are supportive of the curriculum.

As a regional magnet school with 28 sending districts, QMC does not have an established process for curricular coordination and vertical articulation with sending schools. EASTCONN is working to create district curriculum guides that will provide a continuum of student learning expectations as well as curriculum guides K-12. Dr. Ryan has begun the process of creating regular formal meetings of curriculum leaders/teachers to be held between sending schools and the high school to ensure curriculum articulation. For the 2017-2018 academic year, the district curriculum oversight committee intends to establish a written curriculum review cycle, which will include time devoted to develop, review, and evaluate the curriculum and set a timetable for regular meetings of school instructional leaders and teachers for the purpose of ensuring that all student learning expectations are addressed consistently throughout the school. While curricular coordination efforts have been initiated vertical articulation structures will assist teachers with ensuring a continuum of learning expectations throughout the curriculum.

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

The school's expenditures over the most recent three-year period for instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and library/media resources has been sufficient to implement the curriculum. EASTCONN's governing body ensures funding for school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, and ongoing professional development. According to the Endicott survey, 86.8 percent of students agree, "My school provides me with the instructional materials (textbooks, computers, equipment, and supplies) I need for each of my courses"; 84.8 percent of the staff agrees, "The school has sufficient instructional materials to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities"; and 95 percent of parents agree, "My son/daughter has been provided with the materials needed for each class (textbooks, computers, equipment, and supplies)." Student and parent groups said that the resources available to them and their children are sufficient for accessing the curriculum. In addition to supporting student learning, EASTCONN provides a full variety of technology equipment, and instructional materials and supplies. Beginning with the ability to take college courses at no expense to students and families, to the new gymnasium, an additional workout area, a Mobile STEM laboratory, and a host of technological supports, QMC provides the students and faculty with a host of supports. The funding for the school is derived from a formula based on per pupil expenditures from each Local Education Agency (LEA) and the state education budget. In the past nine years, QMC has had a zero increase to its budget seven times. It has had one increase, and one year of budget cuts. This funding is sufficient to support the few established co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities including virtual programs, music, drama, leadership opportunities, and various service learning opportunities.

According to the Endicott survey, 81.8 percent of staff agrees, "The facilities fully support the implementation of the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities"; and 100 percent of parents agree, "The school's facility adequately supports its programs and services (e.g., classrooms, science labs, computer labs, the library/media center, guidance office, gym, auditorium, and cafeteria)." The school has a total of 120 Chromebooks for a student population of 180, and laptops available for student use. Most classrooms are provided with a projector. The library/media center is equipped with computers and printers, and the library/media specialist is readily available and proficient in implementing and assisting with current and new technology. Two vans are available for transporting students to service learning opportunities and for capstone projects and other community projects, with three van-licensed drivers from the school. Students have organized student activities to attract fellow students to after school programs and evening events. This has been challenging given the distances that some students travel. Students are encouraged to make use the facility for their coffee houses, concerts and talent shows.

The sufficient staffing and provision of instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and resources of the library/media center to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities enhance the students' learning experiences.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- teachers

- students
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The professional staff are provided sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources by the district for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. According to the expenditures over a three-year period for curriculum development, evaluation, and revision indicates sufficient funding from the curriculum office of EASTCONN. All curriculum writing occurs under the direct supervision of EASTCONN's curriculum coordinator, who oversees summer writing of curriculum and to whom the curriculum is delivered when it is completed. The next step in QMC's plan is to identify a formal process for teachers to review assessment data which specifically measure student performance of the 21st century learning expectations and use the results of the review to inform their decisions regarding curriculum revisions. For the 2017-2018 academic year, the district curriculum oversight committee will be comprised of faculty members from various disciplines, student support service personnel, and will be under the direction of the district curriculum coordinator who will establish plans for the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum which will include assessment data and current research. The evidence indicates Quinebaug Middle College is sufficiently funded for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation and revision of curriculum, but it does not have a formal process established. Because professional staff are provided with ample personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, students and staff have the appropriate support to achieve at high levels.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The template for writing curriculum units created by the faculty

Commendation

The service learning opportunities and senior capstone project that offer students engaging problem-solving experiences outside of the classroom

Commendation

The staff, materials, resources, and technology that are readily available for students to be able to access the curriculum

Commendation

Administrative leadership for the curriculum development and revision process led by the EASTCONN Director of Curriculum

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a timeline and process to monitor, review, and revise curriculum

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to establish formal coordination of curriculum within and across departments

Recommendation

Develop a system to ensure curriculum is implemented with fidelity

Recommendation

Develop curriculum maps of courses within academic disciplines to track standards progression and overlap

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices are occasionally examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. According to the Endicott survey, 72.6 percent of teachers continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, although evidence shows that is occasionally the case. Faculty formally examine their own instructional practices twice during the school year with respect to student growth and development goals, as well as teacher performance and yearly SMART goals. According to the self-study, there is no formal process for peer review; however, teachers sporadically engage in peer observation and reflection. Most teaching practices support the core values and beliefs about learning, and are informally examined by peers through a new process of instructional rounds in order to ensure teachers are modeling the expectations for students. Teachers access Frontline Education's *My Learning Plan* and self-assess twice a year. These goals, and the progress toward them, are then discussed with administration at the middle and end of the school year. The principal works with faculty to assure work is connected to QMC's mission and core values and that their professional goals are connected to that mission. Additionally, recent faculty hires with Initial Certification within the state of Connecticut are assigned a mentor through TEAM, the Teacher Education and Mentoring program. As part of the program, educators are required to formally self-assess their previous practices in terms of classroom management, instruction, and assessment. New faculty members and their mentors research a variety of best practice strategies to improve learning, implement those strategies, and then assess and reflect on them. When teachers regularly examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations, all students can be assured instruction that supports their achievement of the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Most teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction, engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, and integrating technology. However, teachers' instructional practices sporadically support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by engaging students as active and self-directed learners, emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, and engaging students in self-assessment and reflection.

Ninety-three percent of the students report that their teachers at QMC provide personalized instruction to support the achievement of the school's learning expectations according to the Endicott Survey as reported by students. Additionally, QMC students indicated that several teachers would often take small groups of students aside to address individual learning needs. During a classroom observation, an English teacher was observed providing personalized learning instruction to a student who was having difficulty completing an assignment. In this same English classroom, the assignment provided various topic choices for the students based on interest. Students are also able to access Odyssey Ware, an online course system, to choose additional courses based on interest. The computer science teacher monitors students in this program during the summer, or during the school year as a credit recovery program or to earn additional credits for early graduation or due to a gap in their schedule.

Many of the Magnet Themed Units (MTU's) are interdisciplinary combining science content with music, mathematics, drawing and design and manufacturing. Social studies and physical education classes combined in a cross-disciplinary scavenger hunt activity in the nature trails at the school. Science and Latin classes combined in a study of the human skeleton. In Italian and media classes, students worked collaboratively to constructed a catapult. In English 12, during a Frankenstein unit of study, students investigated a variety of scientific topics such as cloning, reanimation, and bioethics. In Algebra 2, students are introduced to manufacturing and engineering concepts of absolute value and tolerance by gathering and examining data. The magnet themed units run anywhere from 6 to 30 hours depending on the course and topics covered.

In the area of applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, students are often highly engaged. In a manufacturing class, students are partnering with a local manufacturing firm in a district competition relating to the evolution of manufacturing. Also in this class, students are completing real-world challenges such as designing cable cars. Students in the Robotics class are programming robots to engage in tasks in the classroom. Financial Math class engages students in aspects of financial literacy such as balancing a checkbook and investing in the stock market. In chemistry, students create a Periodic Table of Elements that shows the use of elements in science and the everyday world. Students in Introduction to Health Careers were observed in a lab taking vital signs of fellow students. Numerous students report sharing their work with teachers and friends and creating multiple, meaningful projects for most classes. Freshmen participate in Teen Outreach Program and seniors participate in a capstone project which highlights internships, externships, and school-to-career opportunities. Moreover, many teachers integrate technology to enhance instruction. Numerous students report the regular use of Chromebooks in the classroom. Teachers often use Google Classroom and Google Apps for Education. Additionally, students in computer science classes learn how to program robots and other electronic devices and design mobile apps. The library/media specialist regularly collaborates with teachers regarding opportunities to integrate technology and teaching digital citizenship in order to enhance instruction. Students routinely create PowerPoints and videos as project options.

In the area of engaging students as active and self-directed learners, evidence shows inconsistencies. There were many examples of students involved in self-directed learning; although alignment to standards and quality of work production is unclear. In science classes, students were completing a cell project. In an observation during a social studies class, students were given an end of unit assignment based on the essential questions from the curriculum. Students often work in cooperative groups. The process for student self-assessment has recently been introduced. They will be reflecting and self-assessing using the portfolio folders set up in the student's Google Drive account. Seniors in particular use self-reflective journals while creating their own community service project.

Further, teachers occasionally support learning expectations by emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking, self-assessment, and reflection. A Critical Thinking class emphasizes these skills with project-based learning. Additionally, in an English classroom students were writing essays based on annotated notes. There are key themes, concepts and essential questions found in curricular documents; however, in observations, many students were unclear of objectives and essential questions related to specific assignments they were completing. Additionally, some teachers ask students to routinely engage in self-assessment and reflection as evidenced by self-grading and reflections found in student work. Further, some evidence was found of teachers leading students in reflection activities. The classroom visits did not yield a great deal of evidence of higher order thinking.

Integrating technology is a strength seen throughout QMC. Many teachers purport to be "paperless" with the communication and learning manifesting technologically. The Library Media Specialist works to enhance each student's technological acumen to support their ability to access all information and resources. All students have Google Drive accounts and area regularly educated and tutored on the use of the Google education platform.

When teachers' instructional practices combine personalized instruction, cross-disciplinary learning, application of knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, and technology integration with consistently engaging students as active and self-directed learners, emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking, and engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, all students will successfully achieve 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Teachers inconsistently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student. They frequently provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom and purposely organize group learning activities; however, teachers rarely use formative assessment, or strategically differentiate to meet the instructional needs of each student.

Numerous teachers provide individual support to students. In English class, a teacher was observed assisting students with writing assignments. In biology and chemistry classes teachers were actively working with groups of students completing projects and labs. Additionally, instructional assistants have also reported that they provide support for students within the regular classroom. Sometimes this support is teacher-directed, other times the instructional assistant will notice the student struggling and offer to help. There are also several sources of supports for students such as Chromebooks, audiobooks and graphic novels, to aid with instruction. In addition, according to the self-study, teachers frequently utilize a Friday afternoon support time to provide additional individual assistance. This is a two-hour block of time during which there is one STEM teacher and one humanities teacher available for any student recommended for that time. Students can be recommended for the entire two-hour block or a one-hour block.

There are many examples and numerous observations of students completing group projects. In Manufacturing, students showcased a group project where they worked with a community business in developing a video for a contest. In a math class, students were working together on solving two-step equations. In an Italian class, students worked in pairs to solidify conversation then shared with the entire group. Within the Democratic Learning Community students are expected to work and on organized group learning activities. Students are continually endorsed to have an opinion and to connect with the group. The Democratic Learning Community by definition relies on the group process for input and collaboration. In a manufacturing class, students worked as a group to connect with a local manufacturing executive, interview the individual and produce a video about the business. This group of students divided up the tasks and presented their product in a local contest. The Social and Civic Expectations list working collaboratively and contributing to the community and the Success Skills learning expectation highlights an individual's proficiency working within a learning community as 21st century learning expectations.

In numerous interviews, teachers describe the need for using formative assessment to adjust instructional practices. Teachers report little professional development in this area. Further, in numerous observations and discussions, teachers are unclear about using differentiated instruction. Teachers rarely use data to inform instructional practices and differentiate instruction. Teachers often report "knowing where their students are"; however, there is little evidence of formative assessment to adjust instructional practices. In addition, with the variance in the use of rubrics, there is little calibration of what is necessary to address. There is evidence, in multiple classroom observations, of teachers using multiple means of instruction. Teachers will often use visuals and hands-on projects to present instructional material in various ways. Evidence shows that few teachers are using data to strategically group students for re-teaching or enrichment activities to strategically differentiate instruction.

As teachers couple consistent use of data from formative assessments to strategically differentiate instruction, with purposeful group learning and additional support, all students' instructional needs will be met and they will successfully achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study

- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Most teachers, use feedback from a variety of sources including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parent to improve their instructional practices however, there is limited use of student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, limited opportunity to examine student work, and to engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

Parents report that they are encouraged to communicate with teachers regarding feedback on instructional practices. Most parents noted that teachers will call them often to discuss their children's achievements and challenges. Some teachers also noted that they use information gained from parent communication to help students and to adjust assignments. One English teacher commented that she checks in with parents within the first week after starting a new instructional unit to see if students are having any difficulties. She then adjusts her instruction accordingly. The special education teacher checks in with teachers on her students' progress daily. Students also report that they are comfortable giving most teachers feedback on their progress including highlighting challenges. Instructional assistants also report that many students will freely advocate for additional help with assignments. Instructional assistants communicate to teachers often to inform them of student needs. During the 2016-2017 school year, teachers were trained and participated in instructional rounds with the goal of improving instructional practices. Furthermore, students say that some teachers ask for feedback at the end of the term and use that feedback to make the class better the following year. The democratic learning community created by the school, as evidenced by town meeting every Friday, is a place where students can provide feedback.

According to the Endicott survey, 75 percent of teachers use data from a variety of formative and summative assessments to improve instructional practices, however, multiple teachers in interviews said few teachers use STAR data one or more times during the year for placement. There is data from PSAT and SAT testing, but there is no formal process for reviewing this data. Further, teachers were not sure how to access the PSAT and SAT data. There is also no process for regularly reviewing data collaboratively to improve instructional practices. According to the self-study, teachers regularly examine student work and provide feedback through written comments on paper or digitally through Google Docs or Schoology; however, evidence shows teachers inconsistently use achievement data or examine student work to improve instructional practices. The self-study also states that teachers regularly refer students back to either the school-wide rubric or assignment-specific rubric when providing this feedback. It should be noted that student success team meetings (SST) are held each Friday to support student needs. The team examines data in developing learning plans or strategies for specific students. Teachers review student work in their Student Success Teams (SST) meetings which are attended every other week. Teachers share student work with the team to determine which students are in need of adjustments through seating preferences, student groupings, or differentiated strategies.

Teachers report infrequently examining current research. According to school leaders, teachers have conducted an examination of current research on grading reform, standards based grading, and instructional rounds. Teachers informally engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practices. According to the School Climate Survey, 6 out of 13 staff respondents agreed or strongly agreed that, "Teachers in this school communicate with each other to make student learning consistent across grades." Teachers report engaging in collaborative practices and professional development based on current research in improving instructional practices. Teachers have also been offered professional development time with a choice of topics during a district-wide professional development day in November, and teachers commented in numerous interviews that professional development opportunities outside of the district are encouraged. The principal urges faculty to share their professional development "wisdom" to the entire faculty in the faculty meetings. Teachers are encouraged to seek out relevant professional development activities that may enhance their instructional repertoire and promote professional exploration of that within the school community.   Collaborative Time has been added to the after-school meeting schedule. Teachers are encouraged to use this time to review practices and engage in a healthy dialogue about instructional expectations and practices. The principal shared that part of the professional development plan is to provide increased time and opportunity for professional discourse

specific to instructional practices.

When teachers are able to consistently use student achievement data, current research, examine student work, engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, and feedback from a variety of sources, individually and collaboratively, to improve instructional practices, all students will benefit.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The vast majority of teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices by attending a variety of local and national conferences and programs, reading content-specific literature and studies of best practices, subscribing to professional journals, maintaining professional association memberships, and by engaging in conversations with colleagues. Faculty members frequently participate in a wide variety of professional development opportunities. The MSAP STEM grant provide educators with a wide variety of professional development opportunities. Professional development opportunities include Project Lead the Way, the DaVinci Project at UCONN, Mobile CS Principles at Trinity College, Schoology Conference, EdTechTeam Summits (featuring Google Apps for Education), Magnet Schools of America, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT), Early College Experience (ECE), Standards Based Grading, Grading Reform, UConn workshops, and Jackson Laboratory Workshops (Genome Generation Project). According to the Endicott survey, staff members report 81 percent of teachers report maintaining expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, which is consistent with parent and student feedback. Faculty members integrate concepts discussed at these summits into their regular course curriculum, either as integrated (magnet-themed) units of study or as innovative teaching methods. Faculty are able to focus on best practices in their content area by developing student growth SMART goals and investigating instructional strategies to help students achieve these goals. All educators are members of professional organizations that provide content-specific literature designed to help them improve instruction specific to their subject area, however, some educators are not aware of these resources. Because teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, they support students in achieving 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The teaching practices that support the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Commendation

The piloting of instructional rounds to foster peer review

Commendation

The extensive use of technology in the classroom to engage students in hands-on learning experiences

Commendation

The focus on personalized learning which emphasize student choice and student voice

Commendation

The extensive opportunities for students to participate in authentic tasks which contributes to high student engagement

Commendation

The variety of instructional support available to all students

Commendation

The use of the town hall meeting that provides the school community a voice and a forum for providing feedback to educators

Commendation

The significant amount of time and resources dedicated to professional development

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Expand instructional rounds to all in the learning community to ensure consistency 💬

Recommendation

Provide professional development regarding rigorous standards-based instruction

Recommendation

Provide professional development for teachers about student self-assessment and reflection

Recommendation

Establish a system of reviewing data and using that data to drive instruction

Recommendation

Dedicate time to examine current research on instructional practices and implementing findings

Recommendation

Provide professional development in the use of data to inform and implement differentiated instruction

Recommendation

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Many teachers use the school-wide analytic rubrics to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations; however, the school does not yet have a formal process to extensively employ these rubrics to assess all students' individual progress or school-wide progress in achieving all of the school's learning expectations. The school's eight 21st century learning expectation rubrics were created in the summer of 2015 and were revised most recently in the fall of 2016 to include "I can" statements giving more clarity and explanation to staff and students on learning expectations to be assessed within the rubrics. After these revisions, the school put forth a plan for teachers to implement these rubrics uniformly, but use of specific and measurable criteria to assess individual students in classroom lessons and assignments is inconsistent; some teachers are using rubrics in their classrooms to assess individual student achievement on specific assignments, but a number of teachers report that it is "inconsistent across the school." Students have a difficult time explaining what is expected of them when referring to the eight 21st century learning expectation rubrics and why they are used in classrooms throughout the school. When asked, a number of students reported that they did not know what the formal process for communication of the standards was, but that they knew "what [their] teachers wanted [them] to know." Because of this inconsistency in school-wide rubric use, the school does not have a formal way to monitor and disseminate individual student progress of the school's 21st century learning expectations because they are lacking consistent data in this regard.

QMC also does not have a formal process to assess and aggregate school-wide progress on achieving 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success. The school has built in a portfolio assessment, in which students are expected to map their growth toward the learning expectations through various forms of assessment during their time at QMC. This process is new, and designed in part to cement student understanding of criteria for success in courses at QMC.

When teachers employ a formal process based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations can be accurately assessed.

Sources of Evidence
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school's professional staff sometimes communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families; however, the professional staff does not currently communicate the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community. According to staff, students receive communication regarding their general student achievement through progress reports and report cards; both of these systems of reporting are issued once a semester.   In a more informal capacity, teachers and students cite that they frequently meet during and after classes to disseminate information about an individual's performance toward the learning expectations.

There is no formal system of communication that the school employs to communicate the school's progress toward mastery of 21st century learning expectations. The self-study noted that "the practice of assessing and communicating progress associated with the school's 21st century learning expectations is not uniform at QMC." In teacher interviews and classroom observations, this statement still holds true. Because the use of rubrics is so inconsistent across the school, the staff does not have any reliable data to determine whole-school progress. Additionally, the school has not identified a formal time within which to communicate conclusions that could be drawn from that data, and thus the structures for formalized processes to disaggregate this information are not in place. Consistent communication on progress and achievement of 21st century learning expectations among professional staff, students, families and the school community regarding individual student and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations allows for true collaborative learning.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- teachers
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Professional staff inconsistently collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. According to the Endicott survey, 60.7 percent of teachers agree or strongly agree that the "faculty regularly identifies and responds to inequities in student achievement by collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing a range and variety of data, including both formative and summative assessments." However, the school leadership team says they have no system for disaggregating key data from the state PSAT, SAT, and STAR testing, or using that system to drive instruction and thereby improve inequities in student achievement. Science teachers continue to use CAPT-aligned assessments and exemplars to identify inequities in achievement in science classes. Math and English teachers use data from standardized assessments to inform instruction. Standardized test data have indicated that there are students who are many years behind grade level in math and English skills, yet those students are not formally provided remedial support; some teachers individually try to differentiate instruction for a wide range of grade-level abilities. Instructional assistants are provided in some classes and help implement differentiation strategies.

Educators have time set aside for collaboration on Tuesdays after school, but that time is used at teacher's' discretion. This time can be used for discussing curriculum, assessments, and student achievement, but also it can be used for discussions about technology, mentoring, or other topics of teacher interest. This process is mostly informal; there is no standardized process or common planning time for teachers to share and analyze student work, discuss lessons, or identify inequities in student achievement. Minutes from those meetings reveal a vague description of what was discussed and lists those teachers present.

Most teachers teach classes that contain students at multiple grade levels, and it is not possible for teachers to meet with their grade-level colleagues during prep periods. Informal conversations occur among same subject teachers and all teachers in general. Every Friday, various teachers meet formally with the student success team (SST) to discuss problems in the classroom, but these meetings are focused mainly on behavioral expectations in classrooms, attendance concerns, and code of ethics violations. A student's academic progress is also reviewed in these meetings, but does not seem to be the focus. Here, the discussions around student performance in terms of assessment are still informal.

Teachers can recommend a student attend academic support on Friday afternoons to complete assignments, but there is no formal system in place to monitor if those students attend nor if work is fully completed. The school has eight school-wide rubrics, but a review of student work revealed inconsistency in how those rubrics are applied, and data from the use of these rubrics has not been formally coordinated or analyzed by professional staff. When professional staff develops a formal process to collect quality data and analyze it objectively in order to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement, students will have the resources and supports needed to meet 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Some teachers communicate to students the 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed, but whether or not this happens prior to beginning the unit of study is unclear. Students in a number of different contexts have cited the strong personal relationships that they have built with teachers at QMC as a major reason why they understand the school's 21st century learning expectations and how they relate to the curriculum. Students report that teachers frequently explain the criteria for success as projects and assessments arise, and that they are not afraid to ask for clarification as they need it. The Endicott survey corroborates this, as 80.5 percent of students claim that they receive adequate communication of unit-specific learning goals from their teacher. In many classrooms, this culture is evident; teachers are frequently checking in with students to ensure that they have a strong understanding of what they consider mastery for a particular assignment, and in some cases, teachers were making appointments with students to further clarify criteria for success. Students also reported that this collaboration with their teachers led to a "high personal payoff." Students also demonstrate a considerable degree of familiarity with the rubrics, although they could not articulate how those rubrics directly corresponded to the school's 21st century learning expectations; in one student conversation, the student said that he couldn't "remember them all, but [he has] seen them all in his classes." Overall, students feel that the assessments that they are completing within each unit of study are "definitely the most accurate" measure of what they have learned. In some cases, students were able to articulate how the assessments they were completing aligned to the learning expectations for the course.

Explicit connections between assessment and the 21st century learning expectations do not seem to be consistent across the school. In the Endicott survey, 24.2 percent of teachers feel unsure as to whether or not learning expectations are effectively communicated to students prior to a unit of study. Teachers also identified that the explicit communication of the 21st century learning expectations only happens "some of the time," but that it is "not always consistent in the school."

In short, some teachers and some students alike seem to have a general understanding of the 21st century learning expectations, but the inconsistency of this general knowledge complicates the school's proficiency in this regard. Frequently, learning expectations are introduced as assessments were unfolding rather than prior to an assessment beginning; this is helpful to some students, but does not allow all students to have an understanding of the criteria for assessment with respect to the school's 21st century learning expectations. When students are aware of the expectations prior to each unit of study, their path to achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations will be clearer.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

While some teachers may provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success prior to summative assessments, mainly in the form of rubrics, the rubrics used are inconsistent and therefore complicate the levels of achievement being assessed. Quinebaug Middle College currently utilizes eight school-wide rubrics that are designed to target the 21st century learning expectations that the school has begun to incorporate into their learning expectations for students. Each rubric is ascribed to a particular department with the expectation that teachers within each department will utilize their specific rubric at least once per student per semester. Students report that they feel comfortable with the school-wide rubrics, and cite familiarity with a number of them in a variety of contexts. In a math class, a student was able to explain why the problem-solving rubric would be used in that course, and in a follow-up question, was able to explain which courses the writing rubric would be used. In a world language class, a student was able to discuss the communication rubric and possible teacher assignments for it. However, teachers state that rubrics are disseminated with some degree of regularity, but it is not always consistent throughout classrooms at QMC. To address this issue, the school has built in a portfolio assignment, in which students are expected to map their growth toward the learning expectations through various forms of assessment during their time at QMC.

While 83 percent of students at QMC reported through the Endicott survey that they feel they understand the work that is asked of them in advance, it is unclear as to whether or not student familiarity with criteria for success is more clearly tied to the contents of the school-wide rubrics or to teacher explanation. It is clear, however, that students feel comfortable asking teachers for clarification on assessments before, during, and after the assessment process. Many teachers report that they create and utilize their own class-specific rubrics in lieu of the school-wide rubrics; other teachers report that they are unsure of how to best use these rubrics. Across similar content areas and between grade levels, the implementation of different kinds of rubrics complicates student understanding of what they are expected to do in terms of levels of achievement. This uncertainty in rubrics and inconsistency in rubric use was evident in a number of classroom observations; many teachers were unable to produce the rubrics they were using for what they cited as a formative assessment. Others still were able to produce the rubrics, but could not explain how these rubrics would inform student success toward the 21st century learning expectations. In one teacher interview, a teacher stated that he did not use the school-wide rubrics, and instead made his own to assess the standards that he chose.

Because of this inconsistent use of rubrics across classrooms, content areas, and grade levels, the communication of high expectations with specific and measurable criteria for success is uncertain. When students are presented with the structural support to demonstrate academic success, academic progress will increase significantly.

Sources of Evidence
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

While some teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, most teachers regularly utilize formative and summative assessments. Most teachers within QMC can identify a wide range of assessments and how they utilize these assessments in their classrooms, although only some QMC teachers demonstrate regular use of them. Formative assessments include individual and small group check-ins, classroom observations, "do now" activities, and exit tickets. Teachers also identified the prevalence of summative assessments, and how the school's turn toward project-based learning (PBL) informs use of summative assessments to monitor student learning; among these PBL summative assessments are writing assignments and document-based questions, as well as presentations and research projects. These PBL summative assessments are used alongside more traditional summative assessments, such as tests and quizzes, to monitor student growth toward mastery of course content.

Students corroborated this saying that projects are the main form of summative assessment at QMC. Most students seemed to feel that this allowed them an equitable opportunity to demonstrate knowledge. In a math course, an English course, a science course, and a world language course, different students stated that they feel comfortable with this form of assessment. It is important to note, however, that students were not able to explain how teachers utilized other forms of assessment in the classroom. Additionally, a number of teachers interviewed were unable to explain the difference between formative and summative assessments, as well as the difference between classwork and formative assessments.

The presence of any assessments, whether formal or informal, beyond the aforementioned varieties is unclear. While it is true that most teachers can identify these different assessment strategies, only some teachers utilize a true variety of assessment in classroom instruction. Although revision is encouraged by the school's core values, teachers report that they encourage students to rework and revise their work based upon the student's needs, as teachers are motivated to meet students where they are, and do not "want to frustrate" them unnecessarily. Some teachers provide exemplars to students in order to prepare them to be successful on both formative and summative assessments, but this is not a consistent practice. When students are able to present their mastery through a variety of assessment strategies, teachers will have a clear picture of each student's progress.

When teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, in each unit of study, teachers are able to monitor progress, adjust for the learning needs of students, and provide students with a range of strategies to demonstrate mastery.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Teachers do not collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. In the self-study, 69.7 percent of staff agree or strongly agree that they collaborate in formal ways to have discussions and to improve upon assessment strategies. In the same self-study, QMC reported that the evidence to support the staff's claim of having formal meetings did not exist. QMC faculty elaborated upon this saying that informal meetings between and among staff members appears to happen on an as-needed basis regarding formative and summative assessments.

School-wide, there is no set schedule for regular formal meetings to collaborate on assessment practices specifically pertaining to the creation, analysis, and revision of both formative and summative assessments. For the past several years, during set collaboration time, once every other week, QMC had a STEM grant that allowed for common time for discussion of STEM implementation and related matters. Assessment practices were occasionally discussed during these meetings, but the STEM grant has since ended, and teachers no longer take advantage of this time to discuss school-wide assessment practices. Staff reports that these meeting times are now used to improve individual student success relating to their class subjects, but teachers do not formally create assessments and therefore, do not have assessments to analyze nor revise. There are only two course offerings that are taught by two different teachers. In these math and science courses, teachers claim to have common assessments. Math and science are in contrast to the majority of subjects and courses that do not have common assessments due to the fact that enrollment dictates a low course offering and minimal staff.

Teachers often review students' formative assessment results to make serious modifications to instruction, curriculum, and assessment practices throughout the school year on an individual basis for many of their students. Revision to curriculum and assessment practices include multiple teachers using summative project-based learning catered to individual students to replace written final exams, as well as limiting work for students in formative assessments throughout a unit. A formal process of using, analyzing, or revising assessments, including school-wide rubrics, is not currently in place. In the fall of 2016, teachers began the process of implementing a formal procedure of revising rubrics used for assessments. QMC set a goal for teachers to upload at least one graded rubric for each student in every class into a staff accessible Google folder. Students report that this task is often done by the students themselves by taking a photo of a graded rubric with their phone and uploading it for the teacher. It is also reported that compliance of this goal is based on individual teachers as knowledge of this process among QMC staff and students varies widely.

For the teachers who do upload rubrics, there is no formal collaboration on the creation, analysis, and revision of assessment practices. Although the English and social studies departments pride themselves on their frequent use of the effective writing rubric throughout units, they are not collaborating on assessment practices to calibrate their individual grading practices when using the school-wide effective writing rubric.   When teachers regularly collaborate about their assessment practices, students will have a clearer understanding of their progress with the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Some teachers provide timely and corrective feedback to ensure that students improve their work, but the degree of specificity and the connection between teacher feedback and student revision is is not well established. Teachers utilize a number of formal and informal formative assessments, including but not limited to, questioning, class discussion, small group work, and independent work to assess students' work in a short-term capacity. In these contexts, teachers are able to support students as needed in revising their thinking around a concept. Students feel that teachers effectively communicate expectations for success in both formative and summative assessments, although the role that teacher-directed revision plays in this is unclear. Students are encouraged to use teacher feedback to revise work in order to achieve competency, and teachers report an open-ended deadline policy for that revision. Some students credit this policy with their success. Teachers provide oral and written feedback, however, a review of student work revealed few teachers provide actionable feedback that would move students toward mastery of the standard.

Overall, student performance is communicated in a timely manner through informal teacher check-ins with students, teacher outreach to parents, and the continual updating of PowerSchool. Most teachers return feedback to students within two days for formative assessments, and within a week for summative assessments. During a meeting, some parents reiterated their contentment with teacher grading practices, saying that they usually see the results of their students' work on PowerSchool within two days. The majority of the information gleaned from student assignments that end up on PowerSchool are driven by attempted uses of the school-wide rubrics. Teachers will use this information to work with students in preparation for final summative assessments.

While teachers are occasionally using these assessments to solicit student revision, this practice is not uniform throughout the school. Teachers frequently return student work with little to no feedback evident, beyond the grade the student earned for the assignment. Most teachers did not report reviewing results of summative assessments with students prior to beginning a unit of study. The school allows students to work on an individualized timeline to revise and submit work; this timeline can range from the end of the semester to the student's final year at QMC. In the 2015-2016 school year, multiple staff members have reported that anywhere from one to four students opted to complete the online folder assessment for competency outside of the bounds of the course; "although teachers no longer have [those] students, they [were] still expected to…help students complete the course." Teachers and students report that they are unsure of how exactly teacher feedback should function in light of rubric-assessed assignments.

When teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work, students will flourish.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- students
- parents
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers <mark>occasionally</mark> use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of student learning. Many teachers use formative assessment to drive instruction, mainly in the form of understanding gaps in student knowledge and for determining how to best address them. Teachers were observed using entrance and exit tickets, examining student work in progress, whiteboards, and peer/self assessments as examples of formative assessments. Teachers use this information to work with a student individually or, if the need is significant enough, to re-teach a standard or concept to the whole class prior to the summative assessment. Students believe that teachers use assessments effectively to teach or re-teach concepts that they may have missed, and they feel confident in asking teachers for help with concepts that they have missed based upon formal and informal assessment feedback. Some teachers report that the school is very supportive in providing them with professional development opportunities that include assessment strategies. Additionally, administration frequently examines student performance and demonstrates this by regularly speaking to students on their progress in classes as the academic year unfolds.

When teachers regularly use formative assessment data to inform instruction, student learning will improve.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

While teachers and administrators often examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice individually, only 54% of teachers agreed that "the staff engages in the process of collaboratively working to examine evidence of student learning". Teachers report wanting increased time to collaborate. The school attempts to use the bi-weekly, choice-based staff collaboration meetings to address this issue, but both the school's collaboration tracker and staff commentary suggests that this is limited.

The habit of utilizing many different sources of student learning appears to be a normal practice at Quinebaug Middle College, and the professional development record suggests that these conclusions are a regular topic of conversation amongst the professional staff. In the summer of 2016, the school's professional development record shows that the QMC teaching staff worked on curriculum development and revision based upon assessment conclusions. In two particular cases, history and math, this revision led to common assessments. These are the only courses that are taught by more than one faculty member. Additionally, teachers revise content and curriculum year to year based on prior assessments to better meet student needs. Teachers occasionally meet in similar content teams to develop curriculum that will reinforce concepts to yield increased student outcomes as assessed by the school-wide rubrics. The majority of the communication that takes place regarding assessment and curriculum occurs informally. This sentiment is echoed in QMC's School Climate report that is administered to staff, students, and parents each year to gain "insight [on] what all stakeholders view as QMC's strengths and weaknesses." With respect to assessment and curriculum, staff reported that it is a major strength of the school that teachers can individualize instruction, but that communication needs to be improved to make this practice more successful.

The school-wide rubrics at QMC were revised in the summer of 2015 during professional development. At the onset of the 2016 school year, faculty continued to work on implementing a formal process for the use of the school-wide rubrics throughout the school and to examine that information as part of the continued revision process and to inform instruction and to revise curriculum.

Teachers regularly examine student work individually to inform their instruction and impact curriculum development. QMC has initiated a Professional Learning Community (PLC) model for collaboration that is in the early phases of implementation. It is the plan to increase the amount of collaborative time available for teams to meet and to use that time to examine assessment data collaboratively. Faculty have received professional development on Project Based Learning as a student centered approach to learning. PBL addresses curriculum by aligning practices to standards, instruction through personalization and assessment through highlighting each student's skills and abilities and incorporating the school's learning expectations. The senior Capstone project is an additional example of assessing student progress on the 21st century learning expectations. QMC is working on a structure to examine SAT and PSAT data for all students on a school-wide basis. Advisory teachers meet with their students to discuss the results. The plan for the coming school year is to share the data with teachers to assist them in supporting student progress on these assessments, informing their instruction and contributing to curriculum development and revision. Currently each incoming student presents middle school standardized testing results to inform faculty regarding previous performance. All students who wish to take courses at QVCC take the placement test. Those results are examined and have assisted the schools in determining which students have been successful and who has struggled.

QMC has worked consistently to elicit feedback from parents and stakeholders. Students, parents, teachers and administrators are asked to complete an annual climate survey. This feedback is used to provide insight into how stakeholders see the school and for QMC to examine its relative strengths and areas for improvement. The Endicott Survey revealed significant feedback specifically regarding instructional practices and curriculum. The school is responding to that feedback with their current efforts to increase and expand stakeholder feedback. QMC recently started the first "alumni" group and is working to expand that groups participation in school improvement. QMC does closely monitor student progress in all courses at QVCC. That data is used to impact

instruction to support students who may be struggling while taking a course and to look at the overall process of student success at the community college level.

Overall, due to the lack of common planning time and formalized structure for interpersonal and interdepartmental collaboration, the school's ability to fully utilize formative assessment to improve student learning is challenged. While efforts have been initiated to provide increased time for examining a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, when this practice if formally embedded in the QMC structure student learning will increase.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are intermittently reviewed and revised in an attempt to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning; however, at present, alignment between grading policy and beliefs about learning are vague. Overall, the school's professional staff seems to have a basic understanding of grading policy and how that should manifest in their classrooms, but most staff struggled to articulate how that grading policy directly tied into the school's core values and beliefs about learning. A major cornerstone of the school's grading policy, eliminating the zero grade for missed or absent work in favor of a 49 percent and moving toward standards-based grading, aligns with the school's core values insofaras attempting to foster student success and meeting the student at his/her present level.

This grading initiative was first articulated to the staff in the spring of 2014, and was first implemented in the spring of 2015. From the date of its implementation, a number of staff members attended professional development on standards-based grading, including seminars by Scott Brown of LEARN to explore the merits of standards-based grading. The information garnered from this opportunity included researched-based best practices for standards-based grading, and was shared with staff at the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic school year. However, a number of staff still report that this transition toward standards-based grading seems to often create more problems than it solves, given that it creates an "inflated sense of success" rather than "creating real results" for students. The school has not yet effectively aligned the concepts from the professional development on standards based grading into practice. Teachers report wanting increased time to collaborate. The school attempts to use the bi-weekly, choice-based staff collaboration meetings to address this issue, but both the school's collaboration tracker and staff commentary suggests that this is limited; this discrepancy is directly tied to the fact that the majority of the staff seems to be unclear about how their basic understanding of the grading policy should translate into practical classroom assessment.

QMC introduced Standards Based Grading and Mastery Based Learning through professional development. Although professional development centered around the implementation of standards-based grading is planned for the future, records of staff meeting minutes suggest that this professional development is not being utilized by the majority of the staff. Currently at QMC, grading is an ongoing topic of conversation and professional development. When grading and reporting practices align with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, all stakeholders will understand how student success is reported.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The range of formative and summative assessments used by teachers to monitor student progress toward achievement of 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

QMC's introduction of Mastery Based Learning and Project Based Learning initiatives

Commendation

The teacher-student partnership in utilizing teacher feedback to enhance understanding

Commendation

The staff's support of students to achieve mastery of standards to a very high degree

Commendation

The staff's willingness to take initiative in exploring grading options to better service students

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's academic, social and civic expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success

Recommendation

Determine and implement a formal process to continually review and reflect upon grading practices

Recommendation

Develop a more fully articulated expectation for use of rubrics in classrooms

Recommendation

Purposefully design and develop formal opportunities for staff members to work collaboratively to understand and to draw conclusions from assessments that drive classroom instruction and to revise curriculum

Recommendation

Develop a clearer, more formal system to promote use of a variety of assessments to achieve a particular purpose

Recommendation

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that results in shared ownership and pride for all. The school community sometimes fosters student responsibility for learning and promotes high expectations for all. The Quinebaug Middle College community builds a safe culture and climate through the establishment of adult connections to all students and commitment to its core values and beliefs. All students participate in an adviser/advisee program which takes place for 30 minutes every morning except Friday. On Fridays, QMC holds a weekly town meeting, which is dedicated to improving the school climate and to fostering a sense of pride and ownership in the school. The school's core values and beliefs are read aloud at every meeting. This one hour meeting is attended by all students and staff; if any student or staff member wishes to propose a new idea to improve any facet of the school, this meeting creates a venue for such suggestions. In addition, the "citizen showcase" section gives students an opportunity to display talents or school work of which they are proud. A "citizens of the week" section allows students and staff to recognize acts of kindness, inspiration, or respect in the school community. QMC's school handbook and program of studies outline discipline and attendance policies as well as formal, ongoing programs embedded in the school culture.

The student handbook reflects high expectations for all students, and there is some evidence that the policies and procedures are enforced; however, teachers shared concern that the policy around attendance communicates confusion about expectations to students. For example, when students do not pass a class, depending on the individual situation, some students are asked to retake the course and others are given a folder (physical or virtual) of work necessary to complete the course. Students may complete the folder of work at any time (even several years later) to earn credit in the course. Therefore, student attendance during the semester has no impact on their ability to earn credit, which means that students need not receive any real, face-to-face instruction to pass. No written data exists on the percentage of students who receive folders and of those who complete folders.

QMC uses a school-wide intervention and support (SWIS) system for gathering behavioral data on all students. The dean of students reviews the accumulated data and oversees discipline. Individual conferences are held with students and parents when a student exhibits a pattern of misbehavior. Comparative SWIS data demonstrate a slight decrease in common infractions such as cell phone use and truancy. The principal shared that the school will need to improve attendance tracking; school leaders are not pleased with the slightly less than 90 percent attendance. The student attendance review board (SARB) is one of the entities which addresses special cases with chronic absenteeism by providing out-of-school supports and, when necessary, recommending relocating the student to an alternate placement to better meet the student's needs.

Students frequently demonstrate pride and ownership in the school culture, as well as high expectations of themselves by participating on one of several committees. The students organize the meeting agendas and committee objectives with little teacher help. When a few students in the leadership committee felt that the student body had a serious problem with cell phone overuse, they worked closely with the teachers to survey students about the problem, to develop a solution, and to present the solution to the student body. Several students actively participate in school recruitment efforts by giving testimonies to prospective students and families. QMC uses PowerSchool to store grades for all students. Students are able to log into PowerSchool to check their grades at any time, which enables students to take responsibility for their learning. The three-day orientation at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year included a workshop to ensure that all students are familiar with the site. Respect is one of the school's three core values, and it is discussed often at QMC. However, despite this, Endicott survey results reflect that only 27.7 percent of students feel that students respect teachers, and 30.2 percent of students feel that students respect one another. According to the Endicott survey, 72 percent of students feel safe at QMC. While QMC has consciously and continually worked to create a positive, safe, respectful, and supportive culture that results in shared ownership and pride for all, the school community fosters student responsibility for learning, once all stakeholders align with high expectations, all students will succeed at high levels.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school is always equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Students at QMC are heterogeneously grouped in all classes with the exception of certain math classes which require specific prior knowledge. A review of student transcripts illustrates that students are able to take heterogeneously grouped courses in core academic areas. The program of studies does not identify which courses are heterogeneously grouped as all courses are open to students and supports are in place to assist students. Courses such as the First Year Experience prepares students for the rigor of college courses at QVCC by building students' time management, studying, and college-level writing skills. Freshmen who have not yet acquired the tools needed to successfully complete First Year Experience are given the necessary academic support in order to enroll in college courses the following year. All students also have access to the college career pathway courses and are enrolled in these courses based on their interest, their progress, and teacher recommendation. Those that are not recommended can appeal the decision by meeting with the teacher, administrator, and the parent. The counseling department meets with groups of teachers in reviewing the necessary grouping patterns prior to finalizing student schedules. Students with IEPs and 504s participate in all classes with the assistance of instructional assistants. As all courses are open to all students, there is diversity of enrollment. Through the STEM-infused curriculum and the opportunity to take courses at Quinebaug Valley Community College, QMC students are positioned to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. By remaining equitable and inclusive, QMC ensures access to challenging academic experiences for all students and supports the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There is a deliberate formal, ongoing program and process 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.

Students at QMC connect with adults during their initial orientation and continue with this connection daily as teachers and staff personally greet students every morning as evidenced by the daily post assignment schedule. As students enter the building, teachers assess any concerns and issues with students and immediately alert administrators as well as the counselor. Each student is assigned to an adviser/advocate/mentor who is charged with supporting every aspect of the student's educational experience. Depending on the grade level of the student, advisers work closely with students on the themes of the advisory course: academic habits, goal setting, financial literacy, post-secondary planning, and civic participation. Advisory meets every morning for 30 minutes with the exception of Friday when all students and staff meet in the auditorium for the town meeting. In two senior advisory classes, students were working on finding an apartment, budgeting for the rent and utilities, and presenting the information to the group. Teachers report that the advisory curriculum is "a work in progress" and is posted online for easy collaboration. In addition to advisory, teachers serve as advisers to students in programs such as the teen outreach, service learning, and senior capstone. Students taking courses at QVCC are mentored by the library media specialist. Students check in and seek academic help as needed. By establishing a formal and ongoing process through which each student has an adult in the school who knows the student well, in addition to the school counselor, QMC helps students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff regularly engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and at times 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.

Teachers consistently avail themselves of professional development opportunities which is fully funded by the school. Teachers reported attending EASTCONN's Teacher Leader program along with the principal to explore the effective use of after school meeting time. This led to a formal presentation to staff with proposed changes. During the school year 2015-2016, time on Tuesday was established for teachers to collaborate at their discretion on curriculum and cross-content connections; teachers also established committees to explore topics such as school climate, curriculum, governance, student success team (SST) and school culture. Each teacher submits notes on how Tuesday collaboration was spent. These records are kept with the principal in his office as well as electronically on the Google Curriculum site. While the principal reviews all collaboration notes, there is no plan in place to oversee this collaboration time and to find commonalities among teachers.

The principal has been an advocate for teachers across all content areas participating in professional development opportunities (e.g., Magnet PD, Systemic PD, Systemic Reform). During an interview with the principal, he stated that he welcomes new ideas from teachers; they have to present the idea and need for professional development, and it is approved with the understanding that a sharing session will follow their experience. There is a space reserved during the whole-staff meeting for teachers to present what was learned at the conference and if and how that new learning can be infused into specific courses or can be introduced as a new school initiative. The library media specialist (LMS) attended a Google summit as well as Schoology conference and introduced a new online platform for the school, Google Apps For Education (GAFE). The entire staff uses Google Apps For Education which has served to facilitate professional collaboration. The school now has a usable intranet resource (Google Curriculum Site) for curriculum, standards, rubrics, student interventions, calendars, schedules, and collaborative units.

During the 2014-2015 school year, two QMC teachers attended a grading reform conference. The presentation of this information to all staff generated a discussion on how QMC could improve its grading practices. The primary focus of the discussion was the purpose of the zero in grading and how it can disproportionately impact student grades. This discussion resulted in revising the school's grading system to eliminate the zero and to establish the creation of a 5-point grade scale. Engagement in timely and targeted professional development, professional discourse and reflection, and inquiry by teachers and the principal helps QMC improve student learning.

Because the principal and professional staff engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning, use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices, dedicate formal time to implement professional development, and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment, teachers are able to improve student learning.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel

- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. QMC has had nine staff members successfully complete Connecticut's beginning teachers program, TEAM. Four QMC staff members are certified TEAM mentors. Beginning teachers and their mentors are encouraged to participate in professional development related to the various modules such as classroom environment, planning, instruction, assessment, and professionalism. QMC staff take the opportunity to conduct peer observations and have discussion regarding teaching and learning.

QMC also utilizes the MyLearningPlan platform to support its evaluation process. The MyLearningPlan design is centered around formal observations of teachers in the classroom. Teachers schedule a meeting with administration prior to the observation to discuss short-term and long-term goals, the specifics of the lesson about to be observed, objectives of the lesson, structure of the classroom, goals for student engagement, project-based learning, student-centered learning, STEM inclusion in the classroom, differentiation, and overall areas of success and potential areas for improvement. Following this pre-observation meeting, the teacher invites the administrator to the class highlighting the planned lesson. Typically the administrator will stay for 45-60 minutes of a 75-minute lesson. Following the observation, the teacher and administrator meet once again to discuss how the lesson went, if and how the previously mentioned topics were introduced or implemented, if the objectives were met, student engagement, and teacher rapport with students. The administrator discusses positives from the lesson in addition to areas for improvement. The principal shared sample documents which demonstrate constructive feedback to teachers in order to improve their practice. Teachers who are tenured and have had a rating of "proficient" or higher are required to have one formal observation with an administrator and all other teachers are required to have three formal observations.

QMC's principal is the primary administrator who supervises and evaluates teachers. He has attended conferences in recent years such as The Greater Good Science Center Summer Institute, the National Coalition on School Diversity National Conference, the Magnet Schools of America National Conference, bi-monthly Principal Roundtable, a meeting of principals in Eastern Connecticut, EASTCONN Teacher Evaluation Training, and two conferences of the New England Secondary Schools Consortium to learn about grading reform. He has also hosted the William Glasser Institute North Eastern Regional Conference at QMC every October for four years. Through the consistent use of a research-based evaluation and supervision processes, QMC focuses on improved student learning.

Sources of Evidence
* self-study
* teacher interview
* teachers
* department leaders
* central office personnel

- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time effectively supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.

All high school students at QMC are able to start their day with a subsidized free breakfast in the cafeteria. They are allowed 20 minutes to eat breakfast. A 30-minute advisory period follows, and students are separated by grade. Advisory teachers follow written curricula specific to their grade level. It also features academic advising, school-wide culture issues such as positivity, code of ethics, special announcements and capstone announcements. Advisories are expected to run a town meeting during the year. Students plan the agenda with the help of the adviser and are responsible for presenting the various items at the meeting. Students also take part in designing the advisory curriculum based on advisory interests. The students then follow a 75-minute block schedule for four blocks. These long blocks allow for depth of study in each subject area. The added benefit to the longer block is the opportunity to plan for cross-curricular group activities that could not be accomplished in a shorter block of time. Lunch is 35 minutes long.

Friday's schedule allows for an hour-long town meeting. The Friday schedule has no advisory, the four blocks are shortened to 40 minutes each, and lunch is 25 minutes long. After lunch, a 120-minute block called "service learning" is scheduled; in this class students learn a skill while providing a service to the community. At the beginning of the year, sophomore and junior students select a service learning group to join, such as music makers, community garden, and cultural investigations. Most freshmen participate in the First Year Experience and Teen Outreach Program (TOP) and all seniors are enrolled in capstone. This schedule is designed to allow students to take advantage of attending the adjacent Quinebaug Valley Community College. Some QMC students take classes at QVCC and the schedule is aligned with QVCC's in such a way as to minimize overlap between college classes and scheduled high school blocks. By organizing time effectively, QMC supports research-based instruction and professional collaboration which results in meeting the learning needs of all students.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Student load and class size across the disciplines enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Quinebaug Middle College strives for small teacher loads and class sizes that allow for effective instruction and individualized learning. The majority of classes average 13 students per teacher. A small number of courses range in size from 7 (Financial Math) to 19 (Italian 1). The breakdown for student enrollment by department is as follows: social studies - 90, math - 105, language arts - 87, science - 88, world languages - 76, art - 26, music - 21, life skills - 48, and physical education - 48. The school values the interests of students who seek learning in specialized areas outside of mainstream courses; these classes are available despite low enrollments.   Examples include Public Speaking - 21, Philosophy - 22, Teen Outreach Program - 34, Community Garden - 17, Classics for STEM - 13, STEM/Robotics - 10, Music Makers - 13, Recording Studio - 3, Electronic Music - 6, Manufacturing Math - 9, Innovation of Manufacturing - 6, and First Year Experience - 29. QMC is currently adding more computer workstations to the music room to allow increased enrollment in electronic music and recording studio classes.

The school's adjacency withQuinebaug Valley Community College facilitates student enrollment in college courses. During fall 2015, 22 students completed 33 courses, and in spring 2016, 30 students completed 33 courses. During parent meetings, parents expressed their enthusiasm for these opportunities. The service learning program, with a small group setting designed for community service, features an average of 12 students per teacher. Advisory class, designed to make the overall education experience for every student more personalized, meets every day, with teachers serving as academic advisers for 9 to 16 students. In a biology class with 12 students, the teacher was able to have students work in small groups on a cell project and helped each group research and complete much of the work in class. He circulated and provided feedback for improvement. Quinebaug Middle College endeavors to meet the learning needs of students through reasonable class sizes and teacher loads.

Because of the low student load and generally small class sizes, teachers are able to meet the learning needs of individual students.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal, working extensively with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal models the core values found in the school's mission by working with the dean of students and the curriculum coordinator to make instructional decisions at QMC. The dean of students served as the school's STEM coordinator, helping the school to manage the funds from an MSAP STEM grant and has created courses and units to integrate STEM instruction into the curriculum. The principal personifies the school's core values and beliefs. Everyday the principal offers teachers a morning message with an inspirational quote, a personal reflection which includes how the quote can be applied to the student body and can help them become successful, as well as any necessary information that teachers may need to know for that day.

In her previous position as STEM coordinator, the present dean of students helped teachers to create several new discrete courses (courses that specifically address one of the magnets and would not be found at a typical high school) and Magnet-Themed Units. (MTUs). Discrete courses include First Year Experience, Electronic Music, Mobile Computer Science Principles, Introduction to STEM/Robotics, and Classics for STEM. MTUs include Making Sense of the Heavens, Roman Architecture and Engineering, Acoustics and Choral Performance, and Frankenstein-Bioethics. The present dean and the curriculum coordinator have also worked to implement a variety of systemic reforms at QMC, such as project-based learning (PBL), Common Core State Standards integration, sustaining democratic learning communities, and evidence-based classroom management. The curriculum coordinator has provided professional learning to staff around topics such as integration of Magnet Standards, instructional rounds, and social and emotional learning. Through collaborative leadership, the principal embodies the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Because the principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, the result is that students achieve the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

While teachers and students are regularly involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership, parent involvement is limited. Students and teachers are often and deliberately involved in meaningful roles in the decision-making process at QMC. Evidence of this begins early in the school year. During the summer professional development and early in the school year, teachers sign up to run bi-weekly staff meetings for the entire school year. In that role staff members use the QMC curriculum site to create an agenda template and solicit agenda items from other teachers; the same teacher runs the meeting on the specified date(s). Each staff member will run the meeting once during the school year.

Students, with guidance from teachers, sign up on a Google Doc as an advisory to run town meetings throughout the school year. During advisory time, the students fill in the agenda template, taking on roles that include chairperson, technology/minutes/vote counter, microphone holder, and timekeeper. Students seek out a member of the parliamentary committee to be the parliamentarian to ask questions as needed during the meeting. QMC town meeting occurs every Friday for one hour. During this time, all students read the pledge of allegiance and review the QMC core values statement. The previous meetings minutes are read and approved, and old business is reviewed. Standing committee reports are given. The meeting then moves onto regular business which consists of educational presentations, examples of which include, but are not limited to, students sharing good news or promoting an event that is part of his or her senior capstone project. Educational presentations could also include presentation of awards to students who have earned them, or an exciting and meaningful event that happened during a class. The meeting then progresses to "new business." During new business, motions are placed on the floor, seconded, then discussed before they are put to a vote. During this part of the meeting, teachers and students are involved in making additions and/or changes within the school day or after school activities at QMC. After new business, announcements and major world events of the week are read.

The meeting ends with "citizens of the week" which includes three categories: kindness, inspiration and respect. Individual students and teachers are highlighted by others during this time. According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of students feel that, "Students have input in important decisions made at my school." Before the end of the school year, students and teachers are invited to take part in a school climate survey. Some of the following student-led committees were created by students: spirit wear committee, parliamentary committee, leadership committee, events committee, and library book selection committee. Students and teachers from the parliamentary committee have been actively involved in town meetings. Students from the leadership committee have been part of school recruitment visits; students from the events committee planned a Halloween costume contest and a Halloween dance. The book selection committee has been reviewing ideas for new young adult books for the library collection. During a student meeting, one student shared that he had just proposed a sports committee and it will be presented at town meeting.

Parent involvement at QMC is mostly evident during open house, the Thanksgiving dinner, The College Credit Celebration pasta dinner, as well as through participation at the governance committee which meets once per month after school. Parents are invited to coffee houses, choral concerts, field day, Teen Outreach Program (TOP), service learning projects, and events that are often hosted by students such as capstone projects, talent shows, musical concerts, and field trips. Parents are also invited to take part in the school climate survey which happens annually toward the end of the school year. When the PTO and the governance committees increase their outreach to parents and design and invite parents to additional activities, the parental involvement at QMC will effectively increase, ensuring an increased role in decision making.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers regularly exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. New teachers take part in the beginning teacher training program, TEAM. Initially, beginning teachers and TEAM mentors focus on the following areas: classroom environment, student engagement, and commitment to learning. Each beginning teacher is paired with a mentor from the school and classroom observations are encouraged in order to provide and receive feedback on classroom engagement and ways to improve. QMC has also begun an instructional rounds program in which teachers travel to each classroom to measure student engagement and will present to the staff on their findings after the third rounds process (early spring 2017) takes place. The group is presently focusing on student engagement; this committee will then plan professional development dedicated to making any improvements possible based on observations from the rounds committee. A focus has also been placed on project-based learning and several staff members have attended professional development opportunities and shared information with other faculty members. The overall democratic culture of the school is embodied in the town meeting and bi-weekly staff meetings during which teachers have the ability to take a leadership role in the school community and to make recommendations for instructional improvements. The principal shared that he welcomes new initiatives from his staff and is ready and willing to find resources to support these new initiatives. As a result of the teacher initiative and leadership at QMC, student engagement in learning has increased.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal are consistently collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. QMC does not have a superintendent, since it is a member of EASTCONN, a regional educational service center. The executive director and the director of educational services at EASTCONN, support the work of the school. The director and QMC's principal, meet every week to discuss all aspects of the school, including the core values, beliefs, 21st century learning expectations, school-wide rubrics, and grading. The principal also participates in the governance council, which is comprised of leaders at QMC, EASTCONN, and Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC). This council meets quarterly to discuss budget, programming, personnel, QMC's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, student progress, and college opportunities for QMC students. The leadership team looks forward to continued conversations and collaboration with QVCC in order to benefit all students. The ongoing collaboration among the district, central office, and the QMC principal results in the school's achievement of the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal of QMC shared that he works closely with the district administrators and takes every opportunity to advocate for the school. The administrative team, which consists of the principal and the dean of students, have the final word on special events, scheduling, budgeting, hiring of staff, curriculum needs, professional development needs, report cards, student discipline, building maintenance, threat assessment and crisis team. The administrative team meets once per week to collaborate with the director of educational services about all components of the school program. The QMC administrative team also meets with the governance board quarterly. This governance board consists of the president of QVCC who is the chairperson, the partner superintendents or their designee, and the director of educational services for EASTCONN. During this meeting the QMC principal and the director of educational services for EASTCONN contribute ideas but do not vote.

The QMC principal and administrative team along with the curriculum director help review and revise the handbook and program of studies each year. They also plan professional development activities based on teacher initiatives and ideas. According to the Endicott survey 75 percent of the staff agrees 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 sufficient decision-making authority awarded by the board and the "superintendent" (Executive Director) to the administrative team empowers the principal to lead QMC in an effective manner.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The positive, supportive, and respectful school culture evident throughout the building

Commendation

The access to challenging college-level classes for all students

Commendation

The daily connection with all students ensuring students feel connected to their school

Commendation

The multiple opportunities in the schedule to provide academic help to students

Commendation

The principal's consistent and effective leadership

Commendation

The school's promotion of a democratic community which fosters leadership and engagement among students and staff

Commendation

The teacher leadership that helps the school community work effectively with the diverse population

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Design a program or process to monitor and increase student attendance

Recommendation

Design and implement additional outreach activities to increase the parent participation at QMC

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Quinebaug Middle College (QMC) has structures in place for 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. QMC has several coordinated intervention strategies in place that meet in a timely manner. All supports and interventions are coordinated by the school counselor, special education teacher, principal, school psychologist, and social worker. The student success team (SST) meets weekly to review students who are of academic and/or behavioral concern. Students are referred to the SST by QMC faculty using an electronic form. The SST utilizes weekly collaboration time to collect and review individual student data in preparation for the SST meeting. A flowchart and/or process for implementing and delivering SRBI tiered interventions has not yet been developed as part of the SST process. The student academic review board (SARB) meets four times a year to review students with excessive absences. Throughout the school year the school social worker and dean of students informally reach out to families of students with five or more absences prior to a potential referral to SARB . Directive intervention strategies are provided for students who require additional academic interventions through academic support classes. This includes students with 504 Plans, students who have an IEP which require service hours, and regular education at-risk students. Students can also access academic support on a drop-in basis or at the suggestion of a teacher. The special education teacher works collaboratively with the faculty and regularly delivers direct services in classrooms. Instructional assistants (IA) are assigned to classrooms to deliver service hours in students' IEPs as well as to assist other students in the classroom in need of support. There are six IAs available to support teachers and students in classes. The intervention specialist assists with student behavioral issues at the request of classroom teachers and in collaboration with the school psychologist and school social worker. The Endicott survey results indicate that 75.7 percent of parents believe their students' needs are being met. Because of the structures put into place to deliver timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for students who are identified and at-risk, students and their families can be assured that all students' academic and behavioral difficulties will be addressed to assist all students in meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Both formally and informally, Quinebaug Middle College provides information to families, especially those in most need, about available student support services. Because of the small school size and strong community bond, support staff personnel and teachers report that it is easy to communicate regularly with all parents and families through direct phone contact and email regarding individual student concerns and needs. Student support personnel also communicate with families via regular mail, PowerSchool, and School Messenger (phone and text). Phone and email parental contact is recorded in PowerSchool using the log feature. US Mail is used for legal notifications for IEP and 504 meetings. Mass mailings are used for new student orientation, open house, progress reports, report cards, health forms, the monthly newsletter, and special event notifications. The student support personnel deliberately deliver program information and ask for parent feedback at popular school-wide events, such as the Thanksgiving dinner, in an attempt to maximize participation to better provide services that families may need. The Endicott survey indicates that 77.5 percent of parents agree that, "The school provides information about available student support services to all families."

QMC also supplies parents with the technological information requisite for them to access their children's daily classroom progress. The PowerSchool program can be used by parents to view a student's overall academic performance, attendance, class grades, and individual assignment information. Communications about student attendance are further carried out by the SARB to ensure that students with attendance deficiencies are properly serviced. The SARB works with students and their families to provide the outside supports required to facilitate a student's attendance at school.

QMC's school social worker, school psychologist, school counselor, and school nurse have a Windham County Resource Book which can be provided to parents. This book details the regional community resources available to students and their families. Frequently student support personnel direct parents/guardians to the appropriate resources. To ensure that all families are aware of the services the student support personnel provides, QMC supplies information in a variety of formats about academic and community programs, including specialized materials for those in most need.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Support services staff extensively use technology to coordinate and deliver an effective range of services for each student. The QMC staff website is a portal to several referral forms that staff can use to share academic and behavioral concerns about individual students. Staff can submit student success team referrals to plan for intervention and school-wide information system (SWIS) referrals to document disciplinary infractions. The College Board and Khan Academy websites are introduced to all students. Students create and link accounts in College Board and Khan Academy to assist them in analyzing their PSAT and SAT results and in creating a personalized study plan; however,the QMC staff are not formally analyzing PSAT and SAT data since College Board moved to only reporting scores online. PowerSchool is used to electronically create students' schedules, monitor academic performance, and track attendance. The school nurse utilizes Standard Network Access Protocol (SNAP) Health Center to monitor health issues and attendance, and the SARB monitors attendance through PowerSchool. An interface exists between PowerSchool with SNAP. The school counselor and advisors utilize Naviance to assist all students in completing components of their student success plans (SSP), which includes setting SMART goals, exploring careers and colleges, completing interest inventories and personality assessments, creating resumes, and administering school-wide surveys. The library media specialist is one of the Google Apps for Education (GAFE) administrators and creates a variety of Google forms for disseminating information to staff and students, including town meeting agendas, staff meeting agendas, and the online referral forms. All support services personnel utilize email to communicate with students and faculty regarding individual student information, updates, and concerns, when appropriate. Support services personnel uses a diverse range of technology to formally coordinate services for students in need and informally communicate and plan for all students' future successes.

Because support services personnel uses a diverse range of technology to formally coordinate services for students in need and informally communicate and plan for all students' future successes, students have the support they need to meet the school's expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- school support staff
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Collectively, Quinebaug Middle College 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; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Personnel and support staff at QMC includes a full-time school counselor, a full-time school social worker, a full-time school psychologist, a full-time school nurse, a full-time special education teacher, a full-time intervention specialist, and six instructional assistants.

The developmental guidance program is documented in the student success plan (SSP) and is delivered by QMC faculty in advisory in collaboration with the school counselor. The advisory curriculum, implemented in 2016, has been formalized and is differentiated by grade level to support all students in developing their individual SSPs.

The school counselor meets regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career and college counseling, seeing each student roughly four times a year, depending on individual student needs. However, the Endicott survey indicates that only 20.1 percent of the students and 30.3 percent of the staff state that students "meet regularly with their counselor." The role and duties of the school counselor has evolved over time, as more personnel has been hired at QMC to support students' needs. The addition of the school psychologist and school social worker have provided more opportunities and support for students to get personal/social emotional counseling; the hiring of a QMC library/media specialist assisted with ensuring that the academic support needs of students attending courses at QVCC are met; and the role of the dean of students has allowed for the school counselor to spend less time doing recruiting and intake interviews during the school day. School-wide tasks, such as test coordination and 504 coordination, can impact the school counselor's availability to meet with students during the school day. All students can schedule an appointment to see the school counselor at any time using the appointment board located in the main office. Generally, upperclassmen meet with the school counselor more frequently, as they need more guidance with post-secondary planning. The school counselor also meets with grade-level groups of students weekly during their advisory. At full-enrollment of QMC, the student-to-counselor ratio is 180:1.

The school psychologist and the school social worker meet regularly with students who have required counseling hours in their 504s or IEPs. In addition, students can request to talk to the psychologist and/or social worker when they need personal counseling on an as-needed basis. Students can request a meeting by writing their name on a sign-up sheet or they can have their classroom teacher call and request a meeting. The school psychologist also administers testing for special education students. The school psychologist and school social worker coordinate and deliver targeted group counseling. In the 2016-2017 school year, a group for students with anxiety ran in the fall and a social skills group ran in the spring. The school psychologist and school social worker collaborate to target areas of need for group counseling and plan for effective delivery.

Members of the student support services team make referral literature available to students, parents, and guardians. Some pamphlets are displayed in the QMC main office. These include Local Resource Guide for the Greater Windham County Area, Care Coordination brochure, CHRO referral form, Natchaug Hospital Joshua Center flyer, United Service, Inc., brochure, EASTCONN Alternative Education brochure, DIAL 211 brochure, and a Generations Agency Services brochure. During counseling sessions with students, support services personnel may determine a referral to an outside agency or service is required. When making a referral for a specific student, insurance and location are elements considered as part of the referral. When students are in crisis, 211 is a resource used to ensure the health and well-being of a student. As follow-up to a 211 crisis, support staff attempt to obtain the necessary parental release forms in order to follow-up with an outside agency.

If release forms are received, support staff can follow-up with the outside agency to ensure students are getting the care they need both in and outside of school. The SARB also works with parents and guardians to get families any necessary outside support. The school social worker revises community outreach materials, as needed, to remain accurate and up-to-date.

The school counselor and advisors use career assessments in Naviance to assist students in career and college exploration and post-secondary planning. Feedback regarding student support services is collected in the school climate survey and senior exit survey. QMC would like to collect more targeted information in its senior exit survey to better inform their services and are planning to revise the senior exit survey and administer it through Google. Standardized testing results (CAPT Science, PSAT 8/9, PSAT, and SAT) are available to staff and shared with students and parents electronically or by mail. Data is not regularly analyzed in order to improve/add services or guide instruction. Starting in 2016-2017, all students created a College Board account and linked their standardized test results to Khan Academy in advisory to give all students access to free, personalized SAT preparation tools. QMC students wanting to enroll in Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) courses are required to take the Basic Skills Assessment (BSA) and the College Board Accuplacer to ensure that they are socially and academically ready to take a college course.

Quinebaug Middle College efficiently utilizes the certified/licensed personnel and support staff they currently have to support the needs of all students by delivering a developmental curriculum through advisory; taking a team-approach to meet individual and group academic, personal, and career/college counseling needs; coordinating and informing families about outreach and community referral agencies; and collecting data and feedback to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Formally and procedurally, QMC's health services has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel who provide preventative health and direct intervention services to the school community, use appropriate referral processes, conduct ongoing student health assessments, and use ongoing, relevant assessment data to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Preventive care provided by the school nurse includes evaluation of required health assessments and yearly updates, postural screening for freshmen, monitoring attendance and illness trends, illness and injury prevention, field trip planning, and appropriate and organized first aid training by EASTCONN personnel. Direct intervention includes emergency response, illness/injury assessments and time sensitive care, referrals requiring outside supports, pain management, medication administration, reassurance and supportive care for emotional needs. Ongoing care includes individualized health care planning for students with complex or goal-oriented health care needs, emergency care planning for students with a known history of alterable conditions, staff education in regards to medical conditions, treatments, and emergency response annually and as needed, participation in 504/IEP meetings and planning, and continuous assessment of student needs.

Emergency preparedness and response plans are written, known and accessible to all staff. Individual and specific emergency care plans are shared with all staff having direct contact with a particular student. The school nurse utilizes community resources/agencies for student referrals such as Planned Parenthood, Dept. of Public Health, Poison Control, 211, primary care physicians, dental care providers, eye specialists, local emergency departments, mental health coordinators, bereavement groups, and medical transportation.

Due to the relatively small student population and staff-to-student ratio at QMC, concerned staff are able to easily contact the school nurse when they feel a referral is necessary. The nurse logs all of these contacts in PowerSchool. Communication is sent home to families by means of an initial enrollment package, yearly student health, demographics, contact updates, and a quarterly newsletter highlighting a variety of topics. The school nurse utilizes the Standard Network Access Protocol (SNAP) to log daily health visits, medication administrations, illness tracking, schedule follow-up care, create health care plans, initiate and maintain flow charts, track immunizations, document screening information and alert staff of critical health issues.

With the school nurse being a full-time position, QMC has adequate health services which provide preventative methods and direct intervention services through the use of appropriate referral processes where student health assessments are ongoing and community feedback is used to ensure students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Library/media services are extensively 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; and 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.

The QMC library/media center (LMC) is a shared space with QVCC. QMC has access to all the same LMC materials that are available to QVCC. There is one full-time library media specialist employed by QMC to provide direct services to the QMC staff and student body. Additionally, there are four full-time college library faculty and staff that work harmoniously with the QMC library media specialist to provide high-quality resources for QMC students and staff. With this amount of staffing, the library is open and available to QMC students and staff from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Friday.

Library/media services are frequently integrated into units of study in advisory, First Year Experience, world languages, as well as other content areas. The library media specialist works collaboratively with classroom teachers, particularly English and social studies, and will put materials aside in the LMC that align with and support units of study. The library media specialist is an active member of the QMC curriculum committee to stay ahead of what curriculum needs QMC may have. The library media specialist supervises and advises QMC students who are taking courses at QVCC to ensure they are not only academically successful in their college coursework, but are also successfully managing the transition from QMC to QVCC. In 2016-2017, the library media specialist oversaw 30 students taking 48 college courses. The library media specialist organizes school-wide activities, such as "Drop Everything and Read" days to encourage and challenge students to read independently. The library media specialist collects data using exit surveys on Google after LMC organized events to get student feedback and plan for future events.

The LMC has over 28,000 volumes of print materials available for circulation, 3,000 DVD titles, and over a million electronic books. Audiobooks are also being introduced to support the needs of struggling readers. Subscriptions to electronic databases are available to students and staff on and off campus and an inter-library loan system with the other state colleges for use by the QMC community. The library/media specialist has been integral in making sure that classrooms have the technology needed to support their curriculum as well as student interests. Recent examples of technology purchased to enhance the curriculum at QMC were 120 Chromebooks for student use and sphero-style robots for the robotics course. School community members are able to participate on the book selection committee through which they can provide feedback regarding the purchase of new library materials; student and staff input about areas of reading interest and book titles are always welcome.

The accessibility, collaboration, and dedication of the library/media specialist in combination with the resources of QVCC ensure that the LMC for the QMC school community has the necessary resources, hours, and materials to support 21st century learning expectations for all students.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview

- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

In most areas, support services for identified students including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who often collaborate with 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; and 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.

For most of the 2015-2016 academic year, QMC had a special education teacher who managed all students who required services hours, ran the annual IEP meetings, and completed quarterly ratings. This teacher changed positions during the spring 2016. The open position was filled with a long-term substitute to support students in academic classes and a certified special education teacher from another EASTCONN program ran the annual IEP meetings and developed the IEPs. A new certified special education teacher started mid-November 2016. Prior to November 2016 while QMC did not have a certified special education teacher on staff, the dean of students, support counselors, and teachers met bi-weekly in SST meetings to provide tiered intervention strategies to further support students who require additional services. The addition of a new full-time special education teacher has been an invaluable resource to students, families, and staff in support of students' achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. QMC has four full-time and two part-time IAs who support identified students in their classes. As the need arises, IAs also support and assist other students in the classes they are in. The teaching staff, administration, and counseling staff work collaboratively to provide students with the supports they need and identify strategies to help students succeed academically. All QMC academic classes are inclusive and interventions are done both push-in and pull-out, as needed. Students are encouraged to work toward taking college-level courses. In order to participate in QVCC college classes, students must meet the preliminary Accuplacer performance requirements established with the college. Any student who has a 504 Plan and is taking courses in the college, must meet with QVCC student services to have their accommodations on file with QVCC. QMC has a small number of students who are first generation fluent English language speakers. There are a number of teachers and instructors who speak languages other than English to provide support in the classroom for students who have language barriers. QMC does not have presently have students in need of ELL services or supports.

With the formal structures in place and the QMC staff's ability to appropriately challenge and support all students' individual needs in an inclusive model, there are an adequate number of support services personnel for identified special education and 504 students.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff

- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The structure of weekly SST meetings and regular SARB meetings to review at-risk students

Commendation

The full-time special education support partnering with teachers and paraprofessionals

Commendation

The frequent, staff-initiated communication with parents, students, and families, especially for families with students who are identified or at-risk across all student support personnel

Commendation

The addition of student support personnel (school counselor, school psychologist, and school social worker) to support the school community and to broaden the range of services that can be offered to address students' needs

Commendation

The variety of resource guides and informational guides about outreach and community services available for students and families

Commendation

The hiring of full-time school nurse to more adequately meet the needs of students and families

Commendation

The shared library/media center with QVCC and the myriad resources and technology for QMC students and staff to enhance the curriculum

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Analyze PSAT and SAT data to identify learning gaps and provide interventions to improve student learning

Recommendation

Ensure that all students understand the guidance services provided and ensure that all students access those services on a regular basis

Recommendation

Develop a mechanism in which to gather feedback from the school community in the areas of school counseling, school health services, library media services, and support services for students

Recommendation

Recommendation

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and the district'sgoverning body provides 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, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

Quinebaug Middle College houses its school in a state-of-the-art facility directly attached to Quinebaug Valley Community College. This building, along with the partnership with QVCC completed and occupied in 2014, provides a wide range of programs and services. QMC offers students numerous options for courses such as three levels of Italian, Mobile Apps/Computer Science, STEM courses including CADD, Innovations in STEM, as well as Recording Studio electives with an electronic music room and studios with four MacIntosh workstations, Reaper software, Komplete software, and soundboards for music mixing and synthesizing. Students are afforded the opportunity to take college courses at QVCC as well as online options such as OdysseyWare. At least three full classrooms are equipped with sufficient computers so that each student can independently work. There are two laptop carts that have the ability to travel throughout the school to augment the computers in the classrooms. The school also has Chromebooks available for each student. QMC has a fully equipped fitness room with elliptical machines, treadmills, stationary bicycles and weight equipment open to students for use in their physical education classes. QMC offers a host of additional "Discrete Magnet Theme" courses (First Year Experience, Manufacturing Math, Robotics, Drawing and Design, Investigations in Health Careers) for all students. The library media center is available to QMC students from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. when QVCC closes the library for the evening.

Students are able to directly enroll in college courses during the school day or evenings, once they pass the Accuplacer test, at no additional cost. Students are supported in those classes with the requisite supplies and materials paid for by QMC. A full range of technology support is provided by a technician hired by EASTCONN who supports the day-to-day technology needs of the QMC students and staff as well as supporting technology needs at QVCC. Ongoing professional development and curriculum revision has been funded and supported with regular opportunities throughout the year. Faculty have received training in Lead Management from the Glasser Institute, standards-based grading from Rick Wormeli, metacognition, instructional rounds, standards-based teaching and assessment and a Google summit. Teachers, students, and parents commented that the school provides sufficient equipment and instructional materials and supplies to meet the needs of the school community. The entire staff participated fully in a curriculum writing process throughout the summer and were able to update and create curriculum for most, if not all of the classes that are offered at QMC. Each teacher is given $500 to spend on classroom supplies per year.

The Endicott survey indicates that 77.4 percent of students are in agreement that the school's physical plant and site supports the delivery of high quality programs and services (move to 7.5). As the QMC student population has grown, so has its professional and support staff to accommodate that increase. Additional teachers, paraprofessionals and support personnel have increased in the past several years. This year, due to a merger of one EASTCONN's site's, the school was able to increase the part-time school nurse to a full-time role at QMC.

Because EASTCONN provides dependable funding for the 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 materials and supplies, the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs and services is fully supported.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study

- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Quinebaug Valley Community College sufficiently 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. QVCC is responsible for taking care of the facility and all of the maintenance and repair needs of QMC. When a repair or cleaning need arises, QMC faculty can contact maintenance personnel or complete an online work order for the maintenance department to address. According to the Endicott survey, 95 percent of parents indicate that the school is clean and well-maintained. Additionally, 88.7 percent of students are in total agreement that their furniture and equipment in their classrooms are in good condition.

Three members of the full-time staff share the cleaning duties in the QMC wing. Approximately 30 hours per week are devoted to this effort. Priority areas such as restrooms, entrances, and hallways are cleaned daily. Other sections of the QMC wing such as classrooms, offices, and the gymnasium are cleaned on a schedule ranging from once per week to three times per week. An additional 17.5 hours of custodial time per week are devoted to cleaning the common areas that QMC and QVCC share, such as the library, cafeteria, auditorium, and the fireside lounge. Additional custodial hours are allocated as needed for such things as spill clean-ups and other unplanned needs on first shift, or for QMC special events. Regular maintenance of the facility is accomplished through a combination of in-house technicians and third party providers. QVCC in-house staff consists of the building maintenance supervisor, one general trades worker, two skilled maintainers, one maintainer, and a stores/inventory clerk. The QVCC in-house staff is responsible for equipment and systems inspections, preventative maintenance, equipment repair, lighting replacement and repairs, painting and interior renovations, lawn care and other upkeep of the grounds, snow removal, and regulatory compliance monitoring. QVCC holds sole responsibility for regular maintenance and development, planning, and funding for maintenance and repair of the building and school plant. Proper maintenance and cleaning is performed on a scheduled basis. Given that QVCC has developed, planned, and funded programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the facility, and to keep the facility clean, the facility is able to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs and services for QMC students to achieve the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The community adequately funds and the school implements a long-range plan addressing programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology and capital improvements. QVCC receives bond money each year from the state of Connecticut to replace equipment and to keep the facilities infrastructure code compliant. QVCC annually assesses the status of its existing equipment and infrastructure and identifies priorities for upgrades based on the needs of the college and QMC. All of the representatives of QVCC, EASTCONN and QMC highlight funding concerns that exist in the state of Connecticut budget, which has instilled a level of uncertainty regarding continued funding confidence. As a result of funding challenges, some opportunities for the students at QMC have been decreased. QVCC lost significant amounts of their Perkins Grant. As a result of this funding change, all concurrent classes (9 total) were eliminated in the fall of 2016. This was a significant setback to the QMC school community as they had planned and prepared for their students to have those college class opportunities. For the past two years, QVCC has been able to purchase equipment for QMC-related projects with funds leftover from the QMC wing building project. In FY16, QVCC utilized $479,633 of building project dollars for equipment and infrastructure support for QMC. As enrollment has increased over the years at QMC, the level of support services and staff has increased accordingly. Over the past three years, QMC added a full-time school psychologist, a full-time school social worker and increased its school counseling staff from 0.6 FTE to 1.0 FTE, and the nurse from part-time to full-time.

QMC operates with an annual budget determined by October 1st of the current school year. Following the determination of the census and budget amount, the principal meets with the governance board and EASTCONN administration quarterly to monitor the annual budget. In addition to the LEA and state of Connecticut tuition, QMC and EASTCONN seek out other sources of grant funding to support the programs and services. A large Magnet Schools of America grant helped fund a number of programs and initiatives for the school (i.e., Mobile STEM Lab, several new courses, and professional development). Given that the majority of the QMC budget is directly tied to staffing, significant changes in funding will result in changes in faculty/staff levels. As a result of the current levels of funding and the long-range planning to address programs and services, facility needs, technology and capital improvements, students and staff have the resources necessary to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- facility tour
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. The administrative staff consult with teaching staff to determine departmental neede. Although a proposed budget is created and developed well in advance of the school year, the budget amount is set by the number of students who are enrolled in the school on October 1st of each school year. The funding for the school is derived from a formula based on per pupil expenditures from each Local Education Agency (LEA) and the state education budget. In the past nine years, QMC has had a zero increase to its budget seven times. It has had one increase, and one year of budget cuts. In addition to the tuition reimbursement that QMC/EASTCONN receives from the LEA's and the state of Connecticut, QMC and EASTCONN readily seeks out additional sources of financial support through grants. To assist with the potential volatility of state reimbursement, EASTCONN which had traditionally passed on a small percentage surcharge for administrative costs, suspended that rate to absorb the fluctuation in funding. EASTCONN is currently pursuing an additional Magnet School of America grant to support social and emotional learning and leadership for QMC. Now that QMC is at full capacity, its funding should remain "stable" for continued operation.

EASTCONN and QMC administration work closely with area superintendents to communicate the challenges with funding and have a mutual understanding and support of the rates and reimbursement arrangements. The state of Connecticut funding and reimbursement schedules have added further challenge to QMC to predict when or if the reimbursement will remain the same as expected in the current year of operation. The principal had allocated $1,000 each year for each teacher for supplies and has changed the amount to $500 currently. Teachers are assured that if they have a supply/PD need, "we will find the money" is the mantra shared by the administrative team. Teachers can informally discuss budget needs for their "department" with administration on an as-needed basis

While building administrators are involved in the development of the budget, when faculty are also actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget, all building stakeholders will be united in supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The vast majority of the school site and plant supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. Students at QMC have a state-of-the-art building which supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. Classrooms are large and substantially equipped with technology. QMC is a "Google School" where students regularly and consistently utilize technology in their coursework, access their assignments and communicate with teachers. Science labs are equipped with updated equipment that students will need for college coursework. A gymnasium and fitness center is available for students and faculty for a host of purposes. The QVCC library/media center is shared in common with the college along with the cafeteria which provide the QMC students the opportunity to assimilate and participate in the college environment. There are computer labs and computer stations available in classrooms as well as additional laptop carts and Chromebooks for the school community to access. A recording studio is available for students who participate in the music courses at QMC. The Endicott survey indicated that 77.4 percent of students are in agreement that the school's physical plant and site supports the delivery of high quality programs and services. In addition, 81.8 percent of staff feels that the school's physical plant and site supports the delivery of high quality programs and services. A need that has arisen over the past few years as a result of QMC's growth is additional confidential meeting space for their support staff. The clinical support staff is comprised of a school psychologist, a school social worker, a school nurse and a school counselor. The school nurse shares an office with the special education teacher due to limited space in the building. QMC students are supported in their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations because the school site and plant supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

QVCC maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meets all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations. QVCC maintains all of this responsibility for QMC and EASTCONN. Most of the documentation concerning regulatory compliance is maintained by the building maintenance supervisor, including sprinkler test results, fire alarm test results, emergency generator test results, underground storage tank compliance reports, and hazardous waste removal records. Some QMC specific compliance documents are maintained by QMC/EASTCONN, including fire drill reports, and asbestos inspection reports. Food service safety and health inspections are also maintained by EASTCONN, in their capacity as a third party food service provider for the QVCC cafeteria. Other basic documents and permits governing the construction and operation of QVCC buildings are maintained by the facilities group at the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system office and/or the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services, Division of Construction Services. QVCC's well-organized and updated records indicate that the school facility is compliant with all laws, and ensures students and staff have a safe learning environment.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

All professional staff work collectively to actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected to the school. The principal reports that a school-wide goal for the current school year is having "more positive communication with parents." It is a school-wide expectation that each staff member reach out and make contact with parents. Teachers are expected to make contact with parents of students enrolled in their advisory groups and courses. Teachers, support personnel, and school administration all report the difficulty with getting increased parent participation at QMC. Throughout the development of the school, increased numbers of parents have participated in the school program. Faculty note that there are many meetings that happen individually with students and their families when students are struggling. QMC faculty indicate that the large geographical area where their students travel from, the number of single parent families, and transportation all impede parents from participating. Many parents spoke of their gratitude for QMC and the connection the school has made with their children. Parents reported that their children like coming to school at QMC. Many parents indicated that their children had experienced difficulty socially in their previous school (K-8 or high school) and that their children do not experience those same challenges at QMC. Communication is made via telephone, email, PowerSchool comments, School Messenger, Schoology, progress reports and report cards. This statement is supported by the Endicott survey which indicates 77.5 percent of parents agree. Early in the school year, QMC hosts an open house for families to meet with their children's teachers and other support staff and administration at the school. This event was a direct result of data reported on the most recent climate survey, a questionnaire completed by 11 parents/guardians in June 2016. In the survey parents/guardians requested more opportunities to meet with teachers at the school.

The leadership committee publishes a parent newsletter every six weeks called the *Quin-E-Blog*, which shares community information to the QMC families. Teachers will also encounter parents while they are visiting the school (i.e., drop-off or pick-up) and this affords the opportunity to foster teacher-parent communication. Phone and email parent contact is recorded in PowerSchool through the log feature. US Mail is used for legal notifications for PPT and 504 meetings. Mass mailings are used for new student orientation, open house, progress reports, report cards, health forms, monthly newsletter publications and notifications of special events such as school-wide field trip notifications, PTO Italian dinner, monthly celebrations and College Credit Celebrations. All QMC faculty and staff indicate that although parental participation has gradually increased over time, this is a critical area for continued creative effort. Faculty have worked to provide meals and possible activities for younger siblings to accommodate families in order to attend school events. The QMC school community is united in its efforts to actively engage parent and families as partners in each student's education and tirelessly seek to connect all families to the school.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

QMC continues to seek productive parent, community, business and higher education partnerships that support student learning. The unique partnership with QVCC is the primary partnership impacting the school community. Being attached to the QVCC facility, sharing space, staff and services accentuates this relationship. Students at QMC strive to become members of the QVCC community, taking courses and building an academic portfolio for advanced schooling. All staff at QMC work to connect parents as partners in the school community. This school-wide goal is embraced by the entire faculty. The majority of parents (76.9 percent), agree that the school has effective partnerships with parents, community organizations, businesses, and higher education to support student learning according to the Endicott survey. Programs and partnerships include, but are not limited to, parent-teacher organization (PTO), and the school governance committee, and climate committee. Students have access to partnerships with QVCC and QVCC's Advanced Manufacturing Program, EASTCONN work study programs such as Careers of Our Lives (COOL) and through the "Food For Thought" Cafe, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and Level-Up. Students work with Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group, which is a small social service agency helping to meet the needs of Northeastern Connecticut residents (TEEG), and Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) Animal Shelters for partnerships through service learning opportunities. Other partnerships are formed as students develop new service learning groups. QMC looks to expand partnerships with local manufacturing businesses such as Westminster Tool, EAMA, and Unicorr (Nutmeg Container Corporation). Families are also given information about partnership programs with sending town school districts and their sports programs. Additionally, United Services and Day Kimball Hospital run support groups and informational programs throughout the year which are available to students and families in the area.

QMC and EASTCONN have pursued higher education partnerships with the University of Connecticut Early College Experience program. QMC and EASTCONN has partnered with Central Connecticut State University to offer an educational leadership cohort for an 092, School Administration program. In addition, there is a plan to host a CCSU master's degree program in teacher leadership at QMC in the evenings for both of these initiatives. There is a partnership with the University of California at Berkeley to provide training and professional development through the Greater Good Science Center which reports on groundbreaking research into the roots of compassion, happiness, and altruism. The administrators at QMC and leadership at EASTCONN regularly connect with the sending superintendents regarding additional partnerships and initiatives for QMC and/or EASTCONN. The number and availability of productive parent, community, business and higher education partnerships support the learning opportunities for QMC students to be successful.

Because the school has developed productive parent, community, business and higher educations partnerships, students have access to higher education and other opportunities that prepare them for a productive future.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The creative partnerships in the sharing of resources between QMC/EASTCONN and QVCC including the library/media center and specialists, information technology, food service, and course offerings to support all students

Commendation

The school site, plant and facility which fully supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services

Commendation

The continued pursuit and acquisition of additional funding to support the high quality school programs and services

Commendation

The very clean and well-maintained facility

Commendation

The many efforts on the part of the faculty to reach out to and communicate with parents and families

Commendation

The responsiveness of the administration to increase student supports (school counseling, school psychologist, school social worker, intervention specialist and nurse) in response to student need

Commendation

The partnerships with area colleges and universities to support students and teacher development and training

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop a working agreement with QVCC specifically around the details of QMC students' increased access to college courses critical to the magnet school theme

Recommendation

Develop a structure to allow faculty to have input into the budget process

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

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

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

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

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

The visiting committee would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed an exemplary self-study that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the self-study and preparation for the visit ensured a successful accreditation visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES
Commission on Public Secondary Schools

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: E. Michael Regan - Adams Middle School

Assistant Chair: Jaya Vijayasekar - Eastern Connecticut State University

Team Members

Michelle Catucci - Cheshire High School

Lori Dunn - Sharon High School

Jonathan Trumbull Foster - Connecticut River Academy

Cheryl Luginsland - Montville High School

Laura McGuigan - Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School

Jessica Skoog - Atlantis Charter School

Marcus Walker - Excel High School