

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for Hill Regional Career Magnet High School

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

Leadership and Organization

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning.

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Commission's visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Commission in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that

the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Hill Regional Career Magnet High School, a committee of twelve members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Hill Regional Career Magnet High School extended over a period of 22 school months from March 2008 to June 2010.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

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

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

- review of the school's self-study materials

- 37 hours shadowing 15 students for a half day
- a total of 23 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 30 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

Overview of Findings

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

Hill Regional Career Magnet High School (commonly known as Career High School) used the self-study process as a means of examining all programs and services as well as its fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning. The school prepared a well-written and complete self-study. Each aspect of the self-study reflected a serious effort to evaluate the school's accomplishments and needs. The self-study aided the visiting committee in its deliberations and in preparing the final report. The identification of strengths and needs developed by the school's stakeholders and the recommendations of the visiting committee will form the basis for continued school improvement and the enhancement of programs and services at Career High School.

Teaching and Learning at Hill Regional Career Magnet High School

The Career High School Mission Statement contains realistic standards for student success and reflects the values and beliefs of the New Haven community. However, with its accompanying expectations for student learning, the mission is an evolving document. The mission is not the cornerstone or the guiding instrument for the development of most policies, procedures, and decisions at this school. Moreover, teachers do not relate classroom lessons and tasks to the school's academic expectations. Although departments have been assigned responsibility for particular academic expectations, the school-wide rubrics are not being used to monitor school or individual student progress in achieving the expectations, and teachers are currently administering the school-wide rubrics at various levels of compliance. Moreover, the school is in the initial stages of collecting and analyzing a variety of data to assess achievement of the civic and social expectations.

Career High School is directing efforts toward the development, revision, and/or alignment of the curriculum. The concentration in health/science and business/technology magnet strands and their accompanying courses and internships inspire students to attend this school. The district has created curriculum, instruction, and assessment teams (CIAs) and data teams to meet regularly to review student performance data in efforts to inform the curriculum. However, since the district focuses on its quarterly assessments and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) results to gather data and monitor student growth over time, most of these team meetings are not used to tailor curriculum so that it aligns with school-wide academic expectations. Thus, the curriculum does not ensure consistent and equal opportunities for all students to practice and achieve the expectations. The vast business, community, and higher education partnerships and co-curricular opportunities are indicative of the school's outreach and efforts to meet students' needs and interests by extending their learning beyond the school day and school walls. The library media center and the library media specialist provide ongoing support to the delivery of the curriculum. Career High School does have instructional materials, equipment, and adequate staffing to implement the curriculum, but the school does not have sufficient up-to-date technology to support student mastery of 21st century curricular demands.

There are teachers at Career High School who are zealous about teaching and learning and employ instructional strategies and techniques that are consistent with the expectations for student learning. Many teachers go to great lengths to personalize instruction and meet informally with students to assist them with their learning. Those courses that focus on the Career High School magnet concentrations do promote the use of authentic learning and infuse technology into instruction. However, examination of student work, class observations, and student shadowing provide evidence of many instructional strategies that are not focused on best practice and are not consistent with the school's mission and expectations for learning. The 82-minute block schedule has the potential to enhance delivery of the curriculum, but it is not fully utilized to maximize learning. Although "rigor" is included in the Career High School Mission Statement, many teachers do not engage students as active learners and do not focus on promoting depth of understanding over breath of knowledge, on student self-reflection, on self-assessment, or on the application of knowledge and skills. For the most part, these classes follow a traditional teacher-

centered approach to instruction with an emphasis on simple recall and not on problem-solving or higher order thinking. Many students spend their time passively in those classes and are not wholly engaged in the lesson. Teachers at all levels need to re-examine the level of rigor and student engagement in their classes.

Many teachers employ traditional assessment strategies such as tests, quizzes, essays, short-answer questions, multiple-choice questions, and homework assignments to document student learning. However, teachers in the career strands of health/science and business/technology employ a variety of non-traditional assessment options with an emphasis on authentic assessment and student performance proficiencies in their courses. Student work provided to the visiting team indicates that many teachers use teacher-constructed, course-specific, departmental rubrics, or assessment checklists as evaluative instruments. Use of the school-wide rubrics is limited since they are not embedded into the school culture at this time. Even though teachers are directed to use an appropriate school-wide rubric at least once a marking period, many teachers are not comfortable using the school-wide rubrics for formative assessment or to assess student achievement of the academic expectations. In addition, the emphasis placed on the district's quarterly assessments and CAPT data limits the ability of many teachers at the high school to use a broad range of authentic performance assessment strategies to inform instruction.

Support of Teaching and Learning at Hill Regional Career Magnet High School

The principal of Career High School has the autonomy to effectively lead the school and is a highly visible presence in the school. He is supportive of the school programs and activities, and his involvement in all aspects of the school has gained the respect and admiration of all members of the school community. He has also been instrumental in working with both staff and students to appreciate the diversity at Career High School.

The number of certified staff members and qualified support staff members meets the need of the educational program with most class sizes remaining at commendable levels. The school's block schedule is appropriate for implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment and does allow students to benefit from varied courses and special program opportunities in either their health/science or business/technology concentration. Unfortunately, the lack of teacher utilization of the common planning time provided in the school schedule hinders teachers' opportunities to collaborate and share instructional and assessment strategies within their departments.

Student grouping patterns do foster heterogeneity and reflect current research on best practice. Even though there is no formal mentoring program at Career High School, most students report that there is at least one adult in the school who personalizes their educational experience. In addition, the clerical staff and paraprofessionals help to foster a positive climate for the teaching-learning process.

Teachers as well as administrators provide leadership essential to the management of the high school, but parents and students offer primarily informal feedback and do not have a formal

role in school decision-making. Most formal teacher collaboration takes place through district-level settings rather than in school-directed meetings. However, the culture at Career High School is positive, nurturing, and upbeat. Students are respectful of their teachers, peers, and the school building and grounds. In addition, student achievement and success both in the classroom and on the athletic field are regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed throughout the building.

Student support services staff members contribute to a collegial environment and a shared concern for student success and welfare. For the most part, the number of student support services personnel is sufficient to assist all students with their educational, emotional, and social needs. The various departments that constitute student services collaborate to provide ongoing health, library media, school counseling, social work, school psychology, English language learner (ELL), sign-language, and special education services. A significant range of comprehensive guidance services is provided for students by school counselors. The part-time nurse and a part-time nurse practitioner are available to support the provision of a comprehensive health service program for Career High School students. The school-based health clinic, operated by Yale New Haven Hospital, significantly increases student accessibility to critical health services. The library media center is the heart of the school and supports implementation of the curriculum. In addition, the library media specialist and the information technology coordinator play integral roles in the instructional program. Career High School complies with local, state, and federal laws related to special education.

The school-community-business partnerships and Career High School's efforts to encourage parent involvement in their children's education and school programs are admirable. In addition to state magnet school funding, the New Haven community and school board provide the funding and support to give this magnet high school a facility and resources that foster and support the teaching and learning process. However, there are some issues with the facility in terms of ongoing and routine maintenance. Technology is available and is infused into teaching and learning in various classes, but there is a need for more 21st century technological tools. Although school personnel meet in different settings to plan for future needs, there should be a more comprehensive long-range plan for determining future needs for teaching and learning as well as those for facility and equipment. Looming budgetary constraints in New Haven may impact future program requirements. It is hoped that the city's governing body and community will continue to support and fund the school's programs and activities at an acceptable level.

Career High School can make additional improvements and enhancements to its educational programs and services for students if the entire school community is willing to call upon its collective energies, talents, creativity, and resourcefulness to make a meaningful difference. Career High School is a good school with the potential to become an excellent one. It is our most sincere desire that the conclusions and recommendations in this report will have value and serve as a blueprint as the high school faces what could be a very exciting future.

School and Community Profile

The Community

The city of New Haven, with a population of about 123,600 in 19-square-miles, is ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse. Located on Long Island Sound, it is approximately 1.5 hours north of New York City and 2 hours south of Boston via I-95. New Haven, first planned in 1638, is home to Yale University, one of the greatest academic institutions in the world, with its attendant cultural attractions, such as museums, galleries, theatres, sports, and speakers. Hill Regional Career Magnet High School (more commonly referred to as “Career”) is located slightly southwest of downtown, in the “Hill” neighborhood, within walking distance of Yale University Medical School, the Yale New-Haven Hospital Campus, the new Smilow Cancer Center, St. Raphael’s Hospital, and the Pfizer Clinical Research Unit. It is accessible by public transportation including city buses and is only a short cab ride from Union Station.

The per capita income is \$16,393 and the median household income is \$29,604. The median value of an owner-occupied housing unit is \$166,900. Currently the unemployment rate is 10.3 %. The nation-wide collapse of the housing market as well as recent budget shortfalls, both at the local level and throughout the state, have had deleterious effects on the local economy. According to the 2000 census, 45% of New Haven residents are Caucasian, 39% African-American, 4% Asian, and 22 % Hispanic/Latino, with 11% who respond as “other.” The median household income is \$29,604.

Historically, New Haven is the birthplace of the cotton gin, vulcanized rubber, model trains, and erector sets and has been home to manufacturing giants such as Olin Matheson and Winchester Rifle. There are approximately 6000 businesses employing 80,000 people, 100 of which employ more than 100 people. Major employers include the Knights of Columbus World Headquarters, IKEA, Bic, Yale University, and Yale-New Haven Hospital. Today, New Haven is the location of 39 of the 52 Biotech firms in Connecticut, 20 of which are in the downtown area. The recently opened Smilow Cancer Center and associated businesses, located only blocks from the school, will bring 650 new jobs to New Haven. In addition to Yale University, New Haven is home to Southern Connecticut State University, University of New Haven, and Gateway Community College. New Haven is also the home to the Shubert Theatre, the Yale Repertory Theatre, and the Long Wharf Theatre.

The New Haven Public School District, which includes 36 elementary, 13 secondary, and one vocational high school, serves a student population of approximately 19,700, as reported to the state on October 1, 2008. The New Haven Public School District does not track the percentage of families below the poverty level. However, 73% of the students in the New Haven school district is eligible for free or reduced lunch. There are a number of private/parochial schools located within the boundaries of the district: approximately five high schools and fifteen or so other schools that serve a mainly pre-kindergarten through elementary population. The percentage of high school age students who attend non-public schools is unknown. Per pupil

expenditure for Career High School in 2008-2009 was \$14,431, compared with a Connecticut state average of \$13,130.

The School and the Students

Career High School's student body in 2009-2010 consisted of 242 male students and 440 female students in grades 9-12, for a total enrollment of 682 students. The school's enrollment varies slightly from year to year, due mostly to transfers to other schools within the district or to adult education. However, the size of each incoming ninth grade class remains extremely stable at approximately 220, and the total maximum enrollment for the school is predicted to remain set at 730. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition of the school has changed slightly in the past decade. The percentage of Hispanic students has increased from 22.3% (150) in 2000-2001 to 28.5% (202) in 2008-09, while the percentage of Black students has decreased from 61.2% (412) to 51.9% (368). The Asian American population has increased slightly, from 1.5% (10) in 2000-2001 to 2.8% (20) currently. The Caucasian population has also increased slightly from 15% (101) to 16.8% (119).

Students at Career High School speak 22 languages and dialects, including English, Spanish (including Central and South American dialects, and Creole), various dialects of Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Pakistani, Turkish, Afghani and Iraqi. Twenty-six percent of the students in school speaks a language other than English at home. In addition to coming from New Haven proper, students come to Career High School from approximately 22 towns surrounding New Haven.

Students enter Career High School via lottery. Those who leave most often are not meeting the stringent academic requirements, or the course offerings in business and health are not meeting their interests. Occasionally, students leave for health or other related personal reasons. The dropout rate for the school in 2006-2007 was 1.7%; this decreased slightly to 1.5% in 2007-2008. Average daily attendance for students in 2008-2009 was 92%; in 2009-2010 this increased slightly to 93%. Teachers' average daily attendance has been a stable 95% from 2006-2007 to 2008-2009.

There were approximately 60 classroom teachers at Career High School in 2009-2010, creating a student-teacher ratio of 11.4 to 1. Individual teachers carry an average load of 80 students and an average class size of 19. Provision for common planning time is available through the school's operation of an alternating block schedule (four of the schedule's eight 82 minute blocks meet on alternating A and B days). Each teacher has five teaching blocks, and three preparation blocks over two consecutive days. In addition, all faculty members are provided common planning time during several early release days per year. Students attend school for 182 days, and for a minimum of 988 hours.

The required number of credits for graduation is 28 compared to 23 for the state and 23 for our district reference group (DRG). Of the required 28 credits, 25.5 are required and 2.5 are elected. All subjects are taught at the college level and the honors level. In addition there are ten

AP level classes. Three percent of Career High School students receives special education services, and three percent receives English Language Learner (ELL) support.

All freshmen are placed in either a college preparatory or honors level in four core academic subjects including English, mathematics, social studies, and science. At the end of freshman year, students are required to choose a concentration in health/science or business/technology. Health/science students must complete at least 6 science credits and 2 years of Latin, whereas business/technology students must complete 4 business-technology credits, 3 science credits, and 1 credit in Latin. Furthermore, students entering the business/technology field have three options. Students may apply to the Academy of Finance or to the Academy of Information Technology, or they may become non-affiliated business/technology students. Students enrolled in the academies are required to complete a series of specific courses over their sophomore, junior, and senior years. In addition, all students are required to complete 20 community service hours.

Parents and students are required to attend an orientation session at the beginning of each school year. Parents are invited to “Meet the Teacher” night at the beginning of the school year and 40-50% attends. There are two report card nights, at the end of the first and second marking periods, when parents are invited to pick up their children’s report cards and have a brief meeting with teachers. A more in-depth meeting can be scheduled during or after the school day. Approximately 50% of parents comes to collect the report cards, but not all stay to conference with teachers. The remaining report cards are mailed home. Parent sign-in sheets are collected and tabulated by the school’s full-time parent liaison.

Career High School regularly celebrates and displays student success in academics, athletics, the arts, and other areas of student life. Yearly awards for high achievement and improvement are distributed to students in every course. The principal, other administrators, coaches, and teachers attend student events and report the achievements of the student body through e-mails and announcements. Bulletin boards throughout the school display student work. Display cases on the first floor highlight student and teacher work, trophies, and other accolades. A monthly newsletter, the on-line school newspaper, and the school’s website are all utilized to communicate success and achievements. There are assemblies each year to celebrate those students who receive honors, as well as a variety of other awards ceremonies, including Senior Awards Night, Underclassmen Awards Night, and the World Language Honor Society Inductions and Awards Ceremony. Teachers and administrators are always well-represented at these events.

Career High School offers a variety of co-curricular activities for its students including athletic programs in tennis, soccer, golf, baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, cross-country, and track as well as more than twenty different clubs and student organizations. Each class also has student government opportunities.

Career High School partners with industry and business through employment activities, college career pathways program, guest speakers, and internships. The school has employment opportunities with Yale New Haven Hospital, Youth at Work, and LEAP. The directors of the

Academy of Information Technology and the Academy of Finance place students in internships during their junior and senior years. Recently, students have been placed at The Taft Apartments, The Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce, United Shoreline Federal Credit Union, and Wepawaug-Flagg Federal Credit Union. Students also have had opportunities to participate in the Sikorsky Future Engineers Program, the Science Collaborative Hands-On Learning and Research (SCHOLAR) summer program at Yale, and the Cooperative International Studies Program in partnership with other New Haven high schools, Amity High, Ansonia High, East Haven High, and Seymour High.

The National Academy Foundation (NAF) partners with the school through the NAF advisory board. The advisory board currently has members that represent non-profits, post-secondary institutions, the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce, United Shoreline Federal Credit Union, Verizon Wireless, and Schuster-Driscoll. Additionally, the school partners with the Yale University School of Medicine to augment our program of study in Human Anatomy and Physiology.

The mean Scholastic Assessment (SAT) scores of Career High School students in 2009 did not compare favorably with state and national means. The school's mean scores for critical reading, mathematics and writing were respectively 426, 418, and 439, compared to the state means of 509, 513, and 512, and to the national means of 501, 515, and 493. Despite the poor showing on the SAT, Career High School students have continued to show improvement on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). Results for 2010 showed an increase over the previous year's results in 7 of 8 critical areas. Particularly noteworthy are the double digit growth in percentages of students reaching goal and proficiency in science, and the solid growth in writing as well. Mathematics and reading scores continue to show growth, albeit at a slightly slower pace.

Sixty-four percent of graduates from the class of 2009 attended four-year colleges, with twenty-six percent enrolling in two-year colleges, 2.9 percent enrolling in business and technical schools, 1.4 percent entering the workforce, and less than one percent entering the military. Graduates take advantage of the considerable educational opportunities available as they choose from such colleges and universities as Southern Connecticut State University, University of Connecticut, and Gateway Community College.

School Improvement Planning

The school is responsible for creating, implementing, and maintaining a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) that is broad-based (academic, behavioral, and social) and that covers a span of several years. The school's current plan covers the years 2008-2011 and is based upon data gathered from a variety of sources.

School improvement planning is focused on the four priorities listed in the school's data-based, three-year CSIP which is closely aligned with the district improvement plan, and which every staff member assists in compiling.

The plan's priorities are: Students will achieve math and literacy standards; the achievement gap will be reduced for defined subgroups; students will master the necessary social skills for success in school and life; and graduating seniors will be ready for college, other post secondary education, the military, or the workforce.

The administration generally has the responsibility for monitoring the plan's implementation. The school has a curriculum committee, the Educational Leadership Team comprised of representative faculty members across content areas who meet monthly to discuss modifications to the curriculum; a tiered data-team framework with departmental data teams that report to a school-wide data team for the purpose of identifying instructional needs and making appropriate recommendations for school-wide instructional adjustments, foci, and/or strategies; a student, staff, support team (SSST) that addresses students' social and emotional needs; and a cross-curricular lead teacher team that meets regularly to discuss, both generally and specifically as need indicates, the implementation of focus/plans from the above.

Through analysis of standardized test scores (CAPT, PSAT, SAT, AP and district exams) with the primary emphasis on CAPT scores, the following targets for improved performance for all standardized tests have been identified: reducing the achievement gap between ethnic groups and sub-groups (by gender) within each ethnic group; increasing the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on each sub-test of CAPT annually; increasing the number of students with average scores of 911 or above on the critical reading and mathematics sections of the SAT; and increasing the number of students in AP courses and simultaneously increasing the number of students scoring 3 or higher on AP exams. Other school improvement targets are: The reduction of student truancy as identified by data collected by the district's central office; and the reduction of suspensions (both in and out of school) as identified by data collected by the school and by the central office.

The CSIP aligns with the school's mission and expectations by focusing on the responsibility and actions of all the school's stakeholders and on the collection of data documenting improvement in learning outcomes as expressed in the school's mission and expectations. The groups responsible for planning and implementing school improvement include a wide variety of stakeholders, who are widely knowledgeable of and in agreement with the school's goals. Additionally, both the CSIP and the mission and expectations are in alignment with the district's improvement plan, which itself aligns with the district's mission and expectations. As the school has just recently (over the past three years) reviewed and revised the mission and expectations, the current expectations for student learning accurately reflect the stated goals for improved school performance as articulated in the CSIP.

Through efforts to improve student performance, the school is promoting critical and creative thinking, developing technological competence, and fostering respect for a diverse and changing world.

Hill Regional Career Magnet High School

Mission Statement Expectations for Student Learning

Mission Statement

The mission of Hill Regional Career High School is to prepare all of our students to become productive members of their own community and a global society by providing an educational environment that establishes rigorous standards of academic performance with a focus on health and business. We encourage students to maximize their potential by promoting critical and creative thinking, developing technological competence and fostering respect for a diverse and changing world. These goals are the shared responsibility and commitment of the staff, faculty, students, parents and community.

Academic Expectations

Students will:

1. Write using standard English for a variety of purposes.
2. Read actively and critically for a variety of purposes.
3. Effectively communicate using a variety of methods.
4. Use academic knowledge and information to think critically, problem solve, and make decisions.
5. Select and apply the tools of technology to improve personal and professional productivity.

Social and Civic Expectations

Students will:

1. Exhibit respect for themselves and others.
2. Develop an awareness of behavior that promotes a healthy and responsible lifestyle.
3. Provide service to the greater community.
4. Demonstrate an appreciation for diverse cultures.
5. Exhibit positive communication and collaboration within the school and regional community

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS
FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT
LEARNING

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

1

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

The Hill Regional Career Magnet High School Mission and Expectations for Student Learning were developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff and the school board. The school followed a two-year process of multi-level review and revision which involved the professional staff, the parent-teacher-student organization (PTSO), and the New Haven Board of Education. In the spring of 2007, the school established a committee to write a new mission statement. After a review and revision of the former mission, the draft was presented to PTSO for comments and suggestions. After that review, the draft was submitted to the school's planning and management team and then the entire faculty. The draft was then presented to the New Haven Board of Education which added the word "rigorous" to the mission. The revised draft was finally approved by faculty members and the board of education in February 2009. Thus, the Career High School Mission and Expectations for Student Learning are supported by all stakeholders in the school community. (parents, teachers, school board, self-study)

The school's mission statement represents the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning. By encouraging and including feedback on the mission's draft from all stakeholders, the Career High School Mission Statement clearly articulates the community's values and beliefs. The mission includes a focus "to prepare all of our students to become productive members of their own community and a global society by providing an educational environment that establishes rigorous standards of academic performance with a focus on health and business. By providing students the opportunity to choose a career track, the school is implementing steps to ensure that students can concentrate on the health/science or business/technology areas. In addition, students are provided with many courses that allow them to extend their learning in these two career areas beyond the regular school offerings within the community. For example, the school takes advantage of its partnership with Yale University to support and enhance student learning in the health field. The school also offers students a wide range of advanced placement (AP) courses and opportunities to take courses at various local colleges through the independent study and seminar program (ISSP). Additionally, the school offers various clubs and organizations which allow students to practice and demonstrate mastery of the civic and social expectations. Since the school's mission represents the school community's values and beliefs about student learning, students are provided with multiple learning opportunities that are aligned with those fundamental values and beliefs. (teachers, parents, school board, students, self-study, course selection guide)

The school has developed school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations which are observable and reflect the school's mission but which need to be more clearly defined and measurable. Career High School's academic expectations focus on writing, reading, critical thinking and problem-solving, and effective use of technology. The civic and social expectations focus on respect, living a healthy and responsible lifestyle, community service, appreciation for diversity, and communication and collaboration within a community. The school has identified acceptable levels of performance for the academic expectations and has defined some key words in the expectations such as "critical thinking", "healthy lifestyle", and "variety of audiences" but

teachers have not clearly defined each of the expectations as a whole. Moreover, the academic expectations are not consistently addressed by teachers in their instruction and/or assessments so students do not fully understand the link between their learning activities and the expectations. There are no reliable and consistent measurement data for the civic and social expectations nor clear definitions of the achievement of these expectations. Additionally, the school has not developed formal or reliable measures of the school-wide and individual achievement of these expectations. Since teachers have not clearly defined each of the expectations for learning, students do not have a clear understanding of the role of the academic, civic, and social learning expectations as listed in the mission statement. (mission committee, teachers, students, observations, self-study)

For each academic expectation in the mission, the school has identified a targeted level of successful achievement. Career High School's faculty members established three measurement levels for each of the academic rubrics: exceeds expectations, meets expectations, and does not meet expectations. Under each level, there are different descriptors which elaborate on the expectations for successful completion of an assignment. The descriptors for each expectation vary in clarity and complexity, leading to inconsistent application and varying interpretations of the degree to which students demonstrate their achievement of the expectation. Even though the school does include acceptable levels of achievement for each expectation, students have difficulty understanding what is expected of them because of the lack of clarity and the complexity of the descriptors. (teachers, students, mission and expectations documents, student work, mission committee)

The school does not have an extensive number of indicators to assess the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations. Members of the school's mission and expectations committee decided that integrity, compassion, respect, diplomacy, and listening would be qualities that teachers could look for in student behavior to assess the school's progress in achieving the expectations. Nonetheless, the school has not determined how teachers would assess school-wide achievement of the civic and social expectations by using these qualities for measurement. Currently, the school uses disciplinary records, attendance records, and community service hours to measure the students' achievement of the social and civic expectations. To date, there is inconsistent record-keeping for the graduation requirement of 20 service hours. Members of the mission and expectations self-study committee state that they are working with the city-wide director of technology to develop a process by which teachers will be able to evaluate and report student behavior as another means of determining student progress in meeting the social and civic expectations. However, the school has yet to develop and implement a systematic mechanism to assess the social and civic expectations and record results. Until student progress in meeting the civic and social expectations is quantified, monitored, and recorded, it is difficult to determine overall school progress in achieving these expectations. (self-study, teachers, students, mission committee)

The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning do not consistently and effectively guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school. While the mission and expectations are posted and visible throughout the school building and classrooms, they have not been embedded into the fabric of the school, and they do not drive any new initiatives to improve student learning at Career High School. Teachers do not consistently

target the academic expectations in their instruction and/or assessments and students' behaviors do not demonstrate a unified focus on the civic and social expectations. The school's culture of familiarity and high comfort level in interactions between students and staff members creates an environment emphasizing rapport over high standards for student achievement. Thus, overall, the mission does not guide the school's decisions, policies, and procedures and students are not held accountable in achieving the established academic, civic, and social expectations. (observations, students, parents, teachers, self-study)

The school has not established a formal process for the regular review of the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards. While the mission has been revised in the past five years, there is no formal policy or procedure for periodic review of the mission and expectations. Despite the fact that the Career High School Mission does reflect the district mission and community's values, viable data sources to measure students' needs and community expectations have not been identified. Currently, the school uses data from the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and district assessments to identify and assess student academic achievement and needs. There is no formal process that allows teachers to discuss the mission and expectations of the school, assess progress toward meeting those expectations, and engage in a discussion to refine, implement, and measure them. By establishing a mission and expectations review protocol, the school will be able to develop a useful mission and expectations document that meets the changing and varying academic and social needs of its student population. (teachers, school board, parents, self-study)

Commendations

1. The inclusion of all stakeholders in developing the mission and expectations
2. The inclusion of district goals and community values into mission and expectations

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a procedure for prioritizing, measuring, and assessing new initiatives related to the mission statement
2. Develop and implement a formal process to regularly review and revise the school's mission and expectations for student learning and include all stakeholders in that review
3. In a review of the mission statement, focus it more on the magnet purpose of the school
4. Institutionalize the use of the academic expectations
5. Develop indicators of student success in meeting the social and civic expectations and a formal method for tracking their performance

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

2

CURRICULUM

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

1. Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.
2. The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations.
3. The written curriculum shall:
 - prescribe content;
 - integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations;
 - identify course-specific learning goals;
 - suggest instructional strategies;
 - suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.
4. The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall:
 - be appropriately integrated;
 - emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.
7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusions

Each curriculum area at Hill Regional Career Magnet High School adequately identifies those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible. The school has developed a chart delineating departmental responsibility for the academic expectations in the mission, and each curriculum area identifies which academic expectation is embedded in each course in the Career High School 2010-2011 Course Selection Guide. In addition, during monthly curriculum instruction and assessment meetings (CIAs), each curriculum area discusses the particular academic expectations on which its courses will focus. Some teachers in each discipline have posted in their classrooms the academic expectations for which they are responsible. Teachers also state that there is a high degree of overlap between departments for these academic expectations. Because departments have identified their responsibility for relevant school-wide academic expectations, students know which courses will help them achieve specific expectations. (course selection guide, teachers, observations, self-study)

The curriculum is somewhat aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and offers some opportunities for all students to practice and achieve each of those expectations. In addition to school-specific courses, the district directive for curriculum development that requires that the school curriculum in major content areas must include 60% district curricula and 40% teacher-designed curricula results in having more classroom instructional time devoted to district objectives, rather than to the school's academic expectations. The majority of Career High School's curricula (English, math, history, science, world languages, physical education, and music) is developed and revised at the district level. Thus, only the curriculum in the career tracks is more closely aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and offers opportunities for students to practice and achieve the academic expectations. The curriculum of Career High School is also composed of curricula from a variety of outside agencies and partnerships including the National Emergency Medical Services Education Standards, the Red Cross, the Connecticut Judicial System, the National Academy Foundation, and the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Program. The curricula from these agencies are, for the most part, aligned with Career High School's academic expectations and generally provide a consistent focus on the school-wide expectations of proficiency in literacy, problem-solving, and the use of technology. Courses that have been developed by Career High School's faculty members for the career tracks of health/science and business/technology, such as Business Spanish, Medical Spanish, forensics, public health, and Medical Careers I, are more closely aligned with the school-wide academic expectations. Some curricula provide a listing of activities but lack essential questions or big ideas. With the district's addition of quarterly assessments to gather data and monitor student growth over time, less of the monthly meeting time is available to tailor curriculum so that it aligns with school-wide academic expectations. Because the curriculum is not completely aligned with the school-wide expectations, all students do not have consistent opportunities to develop the skills and understandings necessary to practice and achieve all of Career High School's academic expectations. (New Haven Public Schools Curriculum Guides, Career High School Curriculum Guides, curriculum guides from partner organizations, teachers, self-study)

The written curriculum for Career High School prescribes course content, identifies course-specific learning goals, suggests instructional and assessment strategies in most areas, and integrates relevant school-wide learning expectations, but most of the curricula do not use school-wide rubrics in the suggested assessments. Career High School uses some pre-packaged curriculum documents from a number of outside agencies and partnerships, and while those documents do thoroughly prescribe content, goals, instructional strategies, assessments, and address aspects of the school-wide learning expectations, they have not been adequately aligned with the use of school-wide rubrics. The curricula developed by teachers in the school and written specifically for Career High School do fulfill some of the required components for the written curriculum, but, at this point, several of the course curricula are still in draft phase. Some curricula are missing suggested instructional strategies and assessments. Some curricula do not integrate the use of school-wide rubrics; however, the teacher-designed curricula for forensics and environmental science do integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations and use school-wide rubrics for assessment. Overall, the lack of a clear and complete written curriculum for all content areas hinders teaching and learning. (curriculum guides, self-study, curriculum committee)

While most of the written curriculum does provide opportunities to engage students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills, the curriculum does not always include strategies that will engage all students. Sample student work and curriculum documents indicate that these learning strategies are used particularly at the AP and honors level. The curriculum documents from outside agencies and partnerships offer vital, hands-on learning opportunities from the trial scenarios of mock trial to the emergency situations of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Medical Response Team (MRT) courses. The significant tasks of the district-designed curricula and school-designed courses such as the Panther Prowl (school store) add opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. On the other hand, the curriculum does not specify a variety of instructional strategies to make these learning experiences available to all students. As a result of the lack of a variety of instructional strategies in all curricula at all levels, some students may be left out of these higher order thinking and authentic learning opportunities. (curriculum guides, student work, parents, teachers, students)

The curriculum does not contain an appropriate degree of integration between curricular areas nor does it clearly emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. Although curriculum offerings are departmentally focused, they offer some opportunities for integration; but the curriculum does not offer any interdisciplinary units, courses, or instructional strategies. Many of the curricula contain tasks or learning experiences that emphasize depth over breadth, but these tasks are not guaranteed to be implemented consistently in instructional practices. The importance placed on improving student performance on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and district assessments has led to an emphasis on breadth of coverage over depth of understanding. Without appropriate levels of integration and depth, students learn material in isolation without the benefit of connections among various fields of knowledge. (curriculum guides, teachers, observations, parents, students)

Opportunities for learning beyond normal course offerings and the school campus are strengths of Career High School. The United Shoreline Credit Union, Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA), Project Opening Doors, clubs, athletic teams, the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Cadet program, internships, and off-campus academic opportunities at Yale University, Southern Connecticut State University, the University of New Haven, and Gateway Community College expand and enhance student learning experiences. In addition, various departments offer opportunities for students to extend their learning beyond the normal course offerings. For example, the history department supports a mock trial team and the health/science department offers a forensics team and a physics team. The high school also offers a FIRST Robotics Team. The business/technology and health/science departments also provide a number of school-to-work opportunities, including internships, job shadowing, and apprenticeships. Parents and students value all of these experiences. Depending on their grade level and career track in health/science or business/technology, students have access to most of these learning opportunities. This wealth of offerings deepens student understanding of their normal course offerings, skills, and knowledge, and opens students' eyes to options beyond their high school career. (self-study, parents, students, community partnership members)

Curriculum is coordinated and articulated between Career High School and New Haven School District sending schools; curriculum among academic areas at Career High School is somewhat coordinated and articulated. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment (CIA) Monday meetings are set up for the purpose of curricular articulation for grades 7-12. During monthly in-school meetings, teacher leaders spend some time on curricular coordination. This year, the teacher schedules are beginning to accommodate common planning time for curricular coordination in addition to the monthly department meetings. The library media specialist is the main professional staff member who works with teachers across curriculum areas. Incoming freshmen go through a four-week summer program called Achieving Higher Expectations for Academics (AHEAD) to help them transition from sending schools to the high school. These levels of curricular coordination and articulation provide the beginnings of a foundation to ensure that student expectations are being addressed across grade levels and content areas. (self-study, district curriculum supervisors, teachers, parents)

Career High School does have instructional materials, equipment, and sufficient staffing to allow for implementation of the curriculum. However, the school does not contain sufficient 21st century technology to support all content areas. While there is an adequate number of staff members and classrooms to implement the curriculum, most classrooms do not have whiteboards, display space, or interactive whiteboards with operating software (some of the school's interactive whiteboards are dysfunctional and are not equipped with the necessary operational software). In addition, some teachers use personal laptops for instruction. The library media center was updated with 31 new computer stations and contains a large collection of print and audiovisual media, and the library media specialist works with teachers to assist in implementation of their curriculum. However, the school does not have a web-based grading and student information system. These somewhat limited resources restrict teachers' delivery of the curriculum, consequently limiting optimal student learning. (self-study, teachers, parents, administrators, observations)

While the professional staff members review and assess student performance, they are not productively involved in using assessment results for the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the school's curriculum based on assessment of student performance. While there are monthly CIA meetings intended to review curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the focus is on reviewing and monitoring district data. A significant portion of monthly department meetings is devoted to working in data teams to analyze the results of the city-wide quarterly assessments; however, the data results are not used to adjust and revise curriculum at Career High School. Teachers state that the final decision about major changes to district-wide curricula is ultimately made at the district level since there are nine high schools in New Haven; therefore, it is difficult for the professional staff in one high school to be involved in all district curriculum revisions. Pre-packaged curricula from some outside agencies are not part of the curriculum revision process. The limited involvement of professional staff members in ongoing school-specific curriculum revision keeps teachers from responding immediately to the changing needs of the student population and developing cutting-edge curriculum that would enhance achievement of the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals. (teachers, district curriculum coordinators, CIA binders, curriculum binders, self-study, administrators)

The school district commits time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. Monthly CIA and department meetings, as well as common planning time and summer curriculum workshops, offer time for the development, evaluation and revision of curriculum, primarily for curriculum in the district's core content areas. Over a five-year period, curriculum moves from pilot to implementation with yearly reviews in the spring/summer. The district supports curriculum development with sufficient financial resources, personnel, and out-of-district experts to aide in curriculum development. Teachers from some Career High School departments, particularly in the magnet theme areas, have been active in writing curriculum with district curriculum supervisors. Despite the resources that are available, there are still some curricular areas that have incomplete curricula. Currently, the world languages department is creating curriculum for its Medical Spanish courses. By committing resources to curriculum development, the district ensures that teachers have the opportunity to participate in the ongoing review of curriculum in the core content areas and that the written document will be a guide for instruction and assessment. (district curriculum supervisors, New Haven Public School Curriculum Review Plan, administrators, curriculum guides, curriculum committee, teachers)

Professional development activities do not completely support the development and implementation of the curriculum. There has been increased focus on district quarterly and state standardized assessments. Much of the professional development activities have centered around assessing data collected from student performance on these assessments. Data from these assessments have become the focal point of professional development. Some Career High School faculty members do participate in curriculum professional development. For example, last year six teachers from the English, history, science, and world languages departments participated in the Yale New Haven Institute, and each developed a curriculum unit relevant to his or her content area. Because professional development activities for curriculum development are limited, the school cannot ensure that teachers are prepared to successfully develop, update, and/or revise the curriculum, hindering students' opportunities to benefit from a "living"

curriculum. (teachers, district curriculum supervisors, self-study, curriculum guides, professional development, binders)

Commendations

1. The efforts of faculty members to create school-specific curricula to the school's magnet themes
2. The opportunities for learning beyond course offerings
3. The alignment of courses in the career tracks with the school's magnet themes
4. The incorporation of outside program curricula as part of magnet school specific programs
5. The variety of authentic learning experiences in many areas of the curriculum
6. The AHEAD program

Recommendations

1. Ensure that school-wide expectations and school-wide rubrics are integrated into all curriculum documents
2. Post all course-specific academic expectations in all classrooms
3. Make provisions for aligning all district core curricula more closely with school-wide academic expectations
4. Finish developing curricula for all courses in each curricular area
5. Add a wider variety of instructional strategies to the curriculum documents
6. Continue to develop and implement additional authentic learning opportunities in all content areas in the curriculum
7. Design and implement appropriate interdisciplinary units or courses
8. Revise curriculum to emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage
9. Research potential partnerships and learning opportunities to continue to expand learning beyond the normal course offerings
10. Implement formal strategies to facilitate the discussion of and planning for improvement of Career High School's curricular coordination and articulation

11. Provide technology that supports the implementation of the 21st century curriculum
12. Include all Career High School faculty members in the school-specific curriculum revision process
13. Provide professional development activities that promote the development and implementation of the curriculum

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

3

INSTRUCTION

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

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
 - personalize instruction;
 - make connections across disciplines;
 - engage students as active learners;
 - engage students as self-directed learners;
 - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
 - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
 - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection.
3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

Conclusions

Instructional strategies at Hill Regional Career Magnet High School are inconsistently aligned with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. There are some specific examples of success in this domain. In the science department, laboratory work in anatomy and physiology and forensic projects provides students opportunities to engage in critical and creative thinking. Similarly, in the business/technology department, the entrepreneurship program engages students to participate in authentic learning activity during which students build a business from concept to implementation. Students also develop technological competence by using podcasts, graphing calculators, and a variety of communication media. Despite these examples of alignment of instructional strategies with the mission statement and expectations for student learning, consistent and concrete reflection of the mission statement in instructional practices is not widespread. Whereas the block schedule affords teachers in all disciplines the opportunity to engage students in the pursuit of "critical and creative thinking" and authentic learning opportunities, and while the board of education added the word "rigorous" to the mission, instruction in many classes remains teacher-centered with students sitting passively at their desks. These students are often not actively engaged in lessons that may incorporate instructional strategies that are consistent with the mission and expectations. Overall, students in many classes are not challenged to reach their academic potential and do not benefit from a link between their daily work and the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (students, observations, self-study, instruction committee)

The instructional strategies employed by the teachers at Career High School offer opportunities for personalized instruction and self-assessment, but limited opportunities for engagement of students as active and self-directed learners and as critical thinkers across the disciplines. In some classes, instructional strategies promote the application of skill and knowledge. However, the majority of instructional strategies focus on recall and lower level thinking skills as evidenced by the prevalence of worksheets and questioning at the lower levels of *Bloom's Taxonomy*. Homework assignments in these classes are designed for practice but not for critical thinking as creative engagement, and they do not regularly emphasize depth of understanding. At times, teachers offer one-on-one conferencing and engage students in structured small-group work to promote active, self-reflective, and self-directed learning. However, these practices are used inconsistently across the disciplines. Consequently, while there are teachers who focus on creating opportunities for self-directed learning and the application of knowledge and skills, others are not as focused on regularly engaging students as active learners. (teachers, students, instruction committee, observations)

Many teachers work to personalize instruction through their selection of reading assignments, and students in some classes are invited to make connections between class content and concepts and their own experiences. This occurs in regular journaling in English classes and in some health/science and business/technology courses. Specifically, students in the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) class and anatomy and physiology course report high levels of engagement and an appreciation of practical guidance in skill acquisition and refinement. Many teachers have also built a strong rapport with students, and their interactions in the classroom,

hallways, and throughout the school help to inspire students to succeed. Teachers also personalize instruction by planning lessons to allow one-on-one and small group instruction to meet the needs of the students. For example, English language learner support helps to personalize instructions for ELL students. Students who participate in the Independent Study and Seminar Program (ISSP) meet with a mentor regularly in order to establish a curriculum that suits their needs. Students in world language classes are asked to write and to talk about themselves in the target language. Furthermore, students who do not reach an acceptable performance on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) take part in a school-based CAPT Academy in order to raise their scores. Overall, teacher use of strategies that personalize teaching and learning ensures that many students receive instruction that meets their individual needs. (teachers, students, instruction committee, observations)

There is little opportunity for formal interdisciplinary connections at Career High School. Teachers make instructional connections across disciplines only within the courses they teach. In the health/science and business/technology strands there is a concerted effort by teachers to link theme-based instruction with content in other subject areas. By contrast, interdisciplinary efforts between business and math, history and math, and history and English are born of CAPT imperatives, and students report that these CAPT embedded activities—and the attendant instruction—feel perfunctory to them. Beyond this, there is no evidence of substantial and sustained interdisciplinary instruction. Thus, while informal connections are made in discussions and assignments in many career track classes, most students are not able to connect knowledge across academic areas because more formalized opportunities for interdisciplinary learning do not exist at this time. (teachers, students, instruction committee, observations)

Some teachers at Career High School engage students as self-directed learners who are able to apply their knowledge and skills authentically, but this takes place primarily in the career track courses in health/science and business/technology. Students in forensics classes are given opportunities to take part in two different “CSI challenges” in which they apply what they have learned to solve a murder mystery. The medical careers course allows students to apply their learning while shadowing different health professionals in a 60-hour internship at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Business majors have the opportunity to create and implement their own business plans, and health/science students can earn Emergency Medical Technician or certified nursing assistant certification. Students on the robotics team design, construct, program, and operate their robot to accomplish a specific task. However, there are still many teacher-centered classes that do not focus on the application of knowledge, and students in these classes are not wholly engaged in the lesson of the day. Many of these students either do not pay attention to the lesson, spend their time passively taking notes, or are simply not on task. Overall, while there are some teachers who focus on creating opportunities for self-directed learning and the application of knowledge and skills, many students do not benefit from classrooms that engage them as active learners who can also apply their knowledge or skill authentically. (observations, self-study, teachers)

There are teachers who consistently employ instructional techniques that require students to critique and assess their own work and that of their peers. Some teachers require students to use course-specific rubrics to self-assess, particularly those in the English, science, and

mathematics departments. Others use peer assessment and feedback on a regular basis. These teachers use the results to inform instruction and make adjustments in their instructional strategies, but this is neither widespread nor consistent. In addition, many student work samples reflect a lack of “rigor” and do not show significant levels of expectations. Teacher-created, departmental rubrics or assessment checklists and, to a lesser degree, school-wide rubrics play a role in students’ self-assessment, but the practice is not uniform or systemic. As a result, not all students at Career High School are given ongoing opportunities to be evaluated by someone other than the classroom teacher. (teachers, students, student work, instruction committee, observations)

Teachers at Career High School have some formal processes in place for gathering feedback from a variety of sources. Building and district supervisors conduct in-class evaluations and offer feedback that, in turn, provides guidance for improving instruction. Some teachers also informally discuss instructional practice with their colleagues. English teachers use part of their monthly department meetings to examine student work, yielding some data used to inform instructional practice. Business management teachers use an online program entitled *Quintessential Instructional Archive (Quia)* to target areas of student strength and difficulty. Science and mathematics teachers use student self-evaluations on science laboratory and math project rubrics to guide instruction. The parent liaison helps channel parent feedback regarding instructional practice to the appropriate teacher by facilitating meetings among teacher, parent, and student, or, where appropriate, with the school counselor and/or administrator. However, only 39.7% of parents indicates that teachers ask for input regarding their child’s instruction while only 52.4% of students reports that teachers ask for input to improve class instruction. The school district is currently reconfiguring its formal evaluation protocol, and this may help teachers receive more uniform and consistent feedback from supervisors. Though some teachers garner feedback from a variety of sources, most teachers do not consistently demonstrate that they are using the feedback to vary and improve instruction. Consequently, instructional strategies are not sufficiently varied nor examined throughout the school. (instruction committee, observations, teachers, support staff, Endicott Survey)

Teachers at Career High School are conversant in current research on instructional practices, are informally reflective about instructional practice, and exhibit an appropriate level of content expertise. The Emergency Medical Response (EMR) instructor is a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) who utilizes her content expertise in combination with effective instruction for maximal learning impact. Likewise, the physics/chemistry (phy/chem) teacher works in conjunction with Yale medical professionals on fetal development research. Members of the English, science, and mathematics departments engage in grant-supported professional development to deepen their content knowledge. School administrators continually forward summaries of articles on best practices via e-mail and teachers report being reflective about their own practices. However, teacher use of the instructional block does not always reflect best practice as indicated by poor transitioning, ongoing teacher-centered instruction, and lack of student engagement in many classes. Furthermore, teachers are not capitalizing on the opportunity to emphasize depth over breadth of content. Teacher training and reflection are insufficiently applied in improvement of instructional practice. Although teachers pursue advanced studies in their content area and work towards developing knowledge of current

research on effective instructional approaches, classroom practice does not consistently demonstrate teacher reflection in designing appropriate and effective instructional activities. (teachers, instruction committee, observations, self-study)

Formal discussion of instructional strategies is not a significant part of the professional culture of the school. While 95.1% of teachers says they discuss instructional strategies with colleagues, teachers do not regularly use the specially designated common planning time for formal discussion of instructional strategies anchored by review of student work. There is no discernable evidence of adjustment to instruction based on the work of the data teams. Teachers have opportunities to formally discuss instructional practice during district-mandated curriculum, instruction, assessment (CIA) meetings, but these interchanges have a district focus. This does not allow teachers a formal forum to discuss school- and course-specific instructional needs. Lack of formal protocol regarding discussion of instructional practice during department meetings or common planning time prevents these practices from becoming an essential part of the professional culture. (instruction committee, teachers, administrators, self-study, Endicott Survey)

Integration of technology into instruction at Career High School varies significantly within and across the disciplines. Students in the business/technology track take a *Microsoft Office* course, have access to online textbooks, and complete activities through *Quia*. Students make presentations using *PowerPoint*, *iMovie*, and other technological media. Mathematics teachers have access to classroom sets of graphing calculators and *TI-ViewScreens*, but use of these technologies to inform instruction varies from teacher to teacher. Similarly, some teachers utilize the few document cameras available in their instruction. Students in the health/science track use online computer simulations to illustrate chemistry, biology, and physics concepts. Despite several specific examples of technology integration, there are still some barriers to greater use of technology. Computer laboratory access is limited because classes are scheduled in classrooms where these computers are located. Teachers must arrange with that classroom teacher to switch classrooms when they want to access the department computer laboratory. Some interactive whiteboards can be found in classrooms, but teachers report appropriate software and professional development have not been provided. Overall, only 68.3% of students reports that teachers use technology in the classroom, and some teachers evince a personal reluctance to embrace technology in the classroom. As a result of the paucity of instructional technology and insufficient professional development for teachers in its use and application, students do not have the opportunity to benefit from the full infusion of instructional technology into their learning. (teachers, students, observations, Endicott Survey)

Career High School's professional development program is limited in its ability to provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies. There are three half-days and two full-days related to professional development throughout the school year. However, the majority of professional development is initiated and executed at the district level. Therefore, professional development focusing on instructional strategies for use in the block schedule has not been offered. The majority of professional development has focused on data teams, instruction for the CAPT, and district formative assessments. Only 51.5% of teachers feels that professional development in the area of instructional strategies is based on identified instructional need. Several teachers have indicated that they would like professional

development in integrating new and emerging technology into the classroom. To counteract limitations in professional development offerings, several teachers have sought out individual learning opportunities including participation in the Yale New Haven Teachers Institute. Teachers can also request to use time allocated to district-wide CIA meetings to address identified needs, but it is not clear whether teachers are able to appropriately and accurately identify these needs. CIA meetings prioritize increasing student performance on district and state assessment measures as opposed to helping teachers meet the instructional needs of the diverse student body. Lack of professional development programs based on demonstrated individual, department, and school instructional needs negatively impacts the ability of the faculty members to address Career High School's expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, central office personnel, Endicott Survey)

The former district teacher supervision and evaluation processes were limited in promoting improvement in instructional practices for the purpose of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs. The New Haven School District has completed a top to bottom review and restructuring of the supervision and evaluation policies in conjunction with the teachers' union. Part of this restructuring is the placement of schools into tiers according to the level of intervention needed to improve student learning. Under the new system, top-tier schools will continue to enjoy the support of district-level administrative involvement, but will also benefit from increased autonomy. This new "Teval" system will improve supervision and evaluation procedures insofar as it has been structured to bring about increased accountability for improving instruction and learning by taking into account both teacher actions and student performance as part of the evaluation and supervision process. At the time of the visit, Career High School had not received its tier placement, and the new evaluation program was in its initial stages of implementation. Career High School teachers have mixed feelings about the effectiveness of supervision and evaluation processes because departmental supervision is handled by assistant principals who often miss parts of the observation cycle to address disciplinary or administrative matters. Thus, to date, the supervision and evaluation processes are inconsistently implemented resulting in teachers who do not receive adequate feedback to improve the quality of teaching and learning. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators)

Commendations

1. The teacher efforts to integrate authentic learning opportunities in the health/science and business/technology career strands
2. The district efforts to improve teaching and learning with the new "Teval" evaluation program

Recommendations

1. Provide professional development opportunities that focus on improving instructional strategies and effective teaching to meet the needs of all learners in a block schedule
2. Ensure that instruction in all classes regularly holds students accountable and actively engaged in academic work throughout the entire class period
3. Ensure that all teachers promote instructional strategies that require the student to use problem-solving, higher order thinking skills, and student self-assessment across all levels
4. Include additional instructional techniques that promote depth of understanding and utilize authentic applications of knowledge and skills in all classes
5. Further integrate technology into the delivery of instruction
6. Develop and carry out a formal process and provide a protocol for looking at student work for teachers to determine both instructional and student needs
7. Include faculty input regarding the amount and content of professional development as it relates to the delivery of instruction
8. Provide formal opportunities for teachers to plan interdisciplinary activities and integrate student learning
9. Develop a formal process for teachers to utilize feedback from a variety of sources, including parents and students, as a means of improving instruction

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

4

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

Hill Regional Career Magnet High School does not have a formal process in place to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission statement based on school-wide rubrics. A school-wide rubric is in place for each of the five academic expectations in the mission statement, and each department has assumed responsibility for at least two of the academic expectations, but use of school-wide rubrics to assess student performance is inconsistent among classroom teachers. Teachers are required to use a school-wide rubric at least once per marking period although they regularly develop their own rubrics based on individual projects or assignments both for formative and summative assessment. Departments also employ a variety of rubrics beyond the school-wide rubrics to assess the same academic areas, and some departments have standardized rubrics for particular assignments or tasks. Examination of student work further emphasizes the absence of the school-wide rubrics. Because school-wide rubric use is inconsistent and haphazard, data are not available to assess and make conclusions about school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations. (self-study, student work, teachers, observations, assessment committee)

The school currently uses limited data to assess student performance in the area of civic and social responsibility. Students are required to complete 20 hours of community service as a graduation requirement, and the school collects disciplinary and attendance data as a measurement of achievement of the civic and social expectations. However, faculty members do not have a clear understanding of the disciplinary data that is utilized. The school does celebrate diverse cultures with a variety of cultural activities and exposure to assess the school's success in achieving the expectation that states that students will "demonstrate an appreciation for diverse cultures". Prominently placed display cases also show citations for student achievement in academic and/or cultural activities. Though the teachers cite specific criteria used to assess student achievement, some faculty members report that classroom instruction and assessment do not correlate with the civic and social expectations. Moreover, there is no formal process for the collection of data related to the civic and social expectations and the analysis of that data. Without a formal process in place, and because students are unaware of the specific criteria used to measure each of the civic and social expectations, school-wide and individual student success in meeting the expectations can not be assessed. (teachers, self-study, students, facility tour)

Teachers do not clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learner expectations that will be assessed for each learning activity. The mission statement and accompanying expectations for student learning are posted in each classroom and disseminated to students through the student handbook and the course selection guide. They are also available on the school's website. Teachers also provide course-specific syllabi that outline assessment in each course in the beginning of the school year. However, specific references to the school's academic expectations are not routinely cited by teachers when presenting a new learning activity in daily lessons. While daily lesson objectives are displayed for students in some classes, these do not correlate with the school-wide academic expectations and student learner outcomes and the expected quality of work. Thus, students are not aware how a

particular assessment relates to achieving the academic expectations. Hence, because of the limited use of the academic school-wide rubrics and the absence of teacher references to the student expectations, the school can not ensure that each learning activity addresses the school-wide expectations nor does it provide consistency in assessing school and student progress in meeting the expectations across disciplines and levels. (observations, self-study, facility tour)

Teachers are at various stages of proficiency in basing assessment of student learning on school-wide rubrics. Each department has taken responsibility for at least two of the school-wide academic expectations and the use of the accompanying rubrics; however, fulfillment of this requirement is not monitored. Teachers use the school-wide rubrics inconsistently, and many rely on course-specific or departmental rubrics for class assessment. Many teachers are unsure how they will align the school-wide rubrics with their course-specific rubrics or how to use the school-wide rubrics for formative assessment. In addition, student work samples that have accompanying school-wide rubrics indicate that there is inconsistency in the application of school-wide rubrics in assessing student performance. The lack of clarity and fidelity in using the school-wide rubrics and their present usage by some teachers only for grading purposes negate the ability of teachers to use the rubrics for formative assessment. This lack of faculty consensus on the purpose and use of school-wide rubrics results in student ambiguity regarding both teacher purpose and school expectations. (self-study, student work, teachers)

Many teachers use varied but traditional assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time. These teachers employ assessment strategies such as tests, quizzes, essays, short-answer questions, multiple-choice questions, and homework assignments. Teachers in the career strands of health/science and business/technology courses offer a wider variety of non-traditional assessment options in courses that have a laboratory or practicum format. Assessments in the health/science strand are based on authentic learning tasks, such as performing first aid on a patient, and or “creating a business” in the business/technology strand. Students in these courses are often able to demonstrate proficiency in a way best suited to their learning styles. However, authentic, varied assessment strategies are not being used on a regular basis at all levels throughout the school. An examination of student work further emphasizes the use of paper and pencil tasks that require memorization and recall above those that stress critical thinking and problem-solving. Furthermore, teachers are not creating assessment tasks that would enable students to use the technology that is available to them. Outside of practicum-based assessments, student knowledge and growth is typically assessed using a single assessment strategy, creating a situation where students may be unable to showcase their true growth over time. (observations, student work, teachers, students)

The school district provides time for teachers to meet collaboratively for the purposes of discussing and sharing student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies. Teachers meet at monthly data team and curriculum, instruction, and assessment team (CIA) meetings where data related to district-wide quarterly and state assessment results are reviewed, but since curriculum content in core areas is mandated by the district, changes are not implemented in a timely fashion. Curriculum revision and changes in instructional practices in the health/science and

business/technology career tracks take place on an ongoing basis because there is no district-mandated curriculum in those areas. The school's schedule provides common planning time for teachers to share student work and assessment results yet most departments do not take advantage of this opportunity. The inconsistent use of school-wide rubrics hinders teachers' ability to collect and analyze data related to the expectations for student learning for the purposes of revising curriculum and instruction. Moreover, while the high school does have a student support team in place, team meetings do not discuss data related to school-wide and individual student progress on achieving the learning expectations. Despite the district opportunities for collaboration, students at Career High School do not benefit from efficient and effective formal teacher collaboration within the school. (teachers, school administrators, self-study)

The district provides professional development opportunities that are more aligned with district initiatives than school-based student assessment. There is limited opportunity for professional development for Career High School faculty members in utilizing the school-wide rubrics or to learn alternative assessment strategies. Most professional development that is offered in assessment strategies is mandated by the district and related to standardized assessment. Teachers report that the weight placed on professional development opportunities related to preparing students for the district's quarterly assessments, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), and other standardized exams limits their ability to expand their knowledge and skills in developing authentic, performance-based, and varied assessments. Overall, the professional development program does not assist teachers to develop a broad range of student assessment strategies, ultimately guiding curriculum design and instruction. (teachers, assessment committee, school administrators)

The professional staff regularly communicates individual student progress to students and their families in a variety of ways. For the most part, the measures that teachers utilize to communicate academic progress are traditional in nature and don't communicate individual student progress toward achieving the school-wide academic expectations. Parents must come to the high school to receive students' first and second marking period report cards. Parents can use these opportunities to informally confer with teachers or to set up more formal meetings. In addition, communication with parents and students takes place via e-mail, parent conferences, telephone calls, and progress and grade reports. Some teachers also use an online grading program such as *Engrade* to keep students and parents informed of individual student progress in their class. At the end of each school year, data collected and compiled by the data teams are displayed at a city-wide data fair where teachers and the public can view not only their own school's data but charts and reports from all the district's schools. In special education, individual progress reports are mailed home to indicate progress on achieving a child's individualized education plan (IEP) goals. However, there is no process to gather and report data on the school's progress in achieving the school-wide expectations. As a result, students, families, and the school community are unaware of individual student and school progress toward achieving the school-wide expectations. (teachers, assessment committee, self-study)

Commendation

1. The opportunities in the business/technology and health/science strand classes for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in authentic environments

Recommendations

1. Ensure that all teachers utilize appropriate and current school-wide rubrics
2. Establish a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic learning expectations based on the school-wide rubrics
3. Develop indicators for those civic and social expectations that don't have any means of measurement at this time and then assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving all of the civic and social expectations
4. Ensure all teachers delineate and clarify student academic and course-specific learning goals linked to learning activities
5. Utilize the school-wide rubrics for formative and summative assessment
6. Increase the opportunity for student use of technology in the presentation or completion of assessment tasks
7. Increase the variety of authentic assessments that are performance-based and incorporate critical thinking and problem-solving
8. Utilize the ample planning time currently provided in the schedule for teachers to share assessment strategies and outcomes
9. Use the common planning time to collaboratively review student work and gather data to inform adjustments in curriculum and instruction
10. Ensure that professional development activities provided by the school include training in alternative assessment strategies, use of school-wide rubrics, and data review
11. Implement a process to report individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school expectations to the school community

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD

5

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

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

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

Conclusions

The principal of Hill Regional Career Magnet High School has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. All New Haven high schools have the discretion to develop their own mission statement as long as it is aligned with the district mission statement. The principal has authority for the allocation of funds from both district and magnet funding sources, as well as the authority to interview and select new faculty members for the school. Faculty members, in collaboration with the principal, have the autonomy to recommend and develop new magnet theme-focused course offerings. Because the principal has this degree of autonomy, he is able to direct the school's efforts toward meeting the needs of students in both career clusters through allocation of funds, staffing, and development of career-focused classes. (self-study, central office administrators, teachers, school leadership team, district curriculum supervisors)

The principal provides leadership for teachers and maintains a sense of vision, direction, and focus for student learning. His focus on improving student achievement through a positive school culture ensures that the high school is on a course that promotes the school's two magnet strands. He shares his vision regularly through weekly faculty/staff e-mails and formal and informal conversations. In addition, the principal and respective assistant principals review minutes from all data team meetings and offer feedback. The principal is visible in the corridors and greets students as they enter the school in the morning and as they walk in the halls. Members of the faculty are able to articulate the principal's vision for the school, but they do not demonstrate consistent understanding or implementation of his vision. For the most part, the principal's focus on his vision for the school guides faculty members' efforts and promotes a focus on the magnet themes for student learning. (self-study, organizational chart, teachers, administrators, mission statement)

Teachers and administrators other than the principal provide leadership for the improvement of the school. Lead teachers serve as representatives for their department at school-level lead teacher meetings and district-level subject-area meetings, coordinate data team meetings, and facilitate activities at curriculum, instruction, and assessment (CIA) meetings. The two assistant principals provide leadership by sharing in school policy decision-making and in their supervision of teachers. Central office administrators and district curriculum supervisors report that Career High School teachers take part in district-level curriculum revision projects, mentioning that they value the input of the school's faculty members. Teachers and administrators serve on the educational leadership team, the school planning and management team, and data teams to participate in decision-making on new and revised courses, instructional practices, and the organization of the school. Faculty members also serve as leaders by serving as activity advisors and by promoting projects and activities within and outside the school. Because teachers and assistant principals have an active role in the leadership of the school, they are able to address school and student needs and interests. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators, district curriculum supervisors, organizational chart, governance framework)

The organization of the school and its educational programs are not designed to fully promote the mission and expectations for student learning, but rather to promote the school's two magnet themes and the board of education's concept of "rigor" as high expectations for students. Career High School's 700 students are divided into two smaller learning communities within the larger school (business/technology or health/science) at the beginning of their sophomore year. Teachers report that this division aligns with the school's mission to establish "high standards of academic performance with a focus on health and business". The graduation requirement of 28 credits for graduation, which exceeds the state requirement of 23, reflects the school's focus on high expectations for students. The principal focuses on high expectations and student engagement in instruction, but does not direct the teachers to focus on the mission and accompanying expectations for student learning in their classes. Although rubrics are used in classes, there are many different types used, including some that are really checklists, and there is confusion regarding the use of the school-wide rubrics that derive from the academic expectations. In addition, many faculty members and students are unable to summarize the mission statement or discuss it in any detail although the same faculty members and students were able to discuss their magnet programs in detail. Because of the absence of a real focus on the mission and expectations for student learning, and the limited use or understanding of rubric use for informing instruction, educational programs focus student instruction on the health and business magnet themes but not on the overall mission. (observations, administrators, teachers, students, parents)

Student grouping patterns reflect the racial and cultural diversity of the student body and there are examples of both homogeneity and heterogeneity in grouping for instruction. As an interdistrict magnet school in a state program that seeks to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation by offering a variety of educational opportunities to students, Career High School serves an ethnically and racially diverse student body. Student grouping is based on the two magnet themes, and within each theme, classes are offered in college preparatory, honors, and advanced placement levels. Students are frequently enrolled in courses in more than one academic level. The school's grouping practices give students the opportunity to interact in a diverse learning environment that supports the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (elementary principals, observations, teachers, students, self-study, course selection guide)

The school's schedule is appropriate for implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and also for supporting the attainment of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Teachers report that they like teaching in the 82-minute block, and students report that after a brief adjustment period, they also prefer this format. Teachers and students both prefer the block schedule because of the more relaxed pace of the school day, the opportunity to delve deeply into topics, and the variety of having different classes every day. The block schedule also allows longer labs in science and extended time to work on projects in the magnet theme courses. However, parents and students also note the need for students to learn organizational skills to be successful in this schedule. Survey results indicate that a majority of teachers (84%) and students (75%) feels that the schedule supports their needs. Teaching schedules are arranged to provide common departmental planning time for most teachers although teachers are not utilizing this opportunity. Additionally, the overall organization of the

school and its educational programs are not designed to promote the mission and expectations for student learning but rather to promote the school's magnet themes and the concept of "rigor". Because of this lack of focus on the mission and expectations, students are missing the opportunity this schedule could provide to achieve the expectations for student learning in class activities. (self-study, parents, students, teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, Endicott Survey)

The school staff has ample formal and informal opportunities for decision-making roles in the school, but while parents and students have ample opportunities to provide feedback, they have a more limited role in actual school decision-making. Formal mechanisms for teacher decision-making roles include membership on school governance committees including the school planning and management team (SPMT), the educational leadership team (ELT), the student, staff, support team (SSST), data teams, and the district-level curriculum, instruction, and assessment teams (CIA). Each high school content area also has a lead teacher who participates in bi-weekly meetings with the school administrators. Teachers and administrators also report an "open door policy" for informal access to the principal. Avenues for parent and student input include student government and the Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO), but these primarily offer feedback and do not have a formal role in school decision-making. However, both parents and students report strong support for the principal's leadership. Overall, the meaningful roles for teacher leadership in decision-making have fostered a positive and supportive atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. (self-study, parents, students, administrators, teachers)

Each teacher's student load and teaching schedule permit ample time for teachers to meet the individual learning needs of students. All teachers have between 82 and 164 minutes of non-teaching time each school day, and teachers are not required to perform supervisory duties during this time. Individual teachers carry an average load of 80 students, and the average class size is nineteen students. The teachers' contract allows a maximum of 27 students per class and an overall limit of 125 students per teacher per year. Survey results indicate that slightly more than half of the faculty members (55.7%) feels they have sufficient time to address students' individual needs, and roughly half of the students (52.6%) feels that their teachers are aware of their individual learning needs. Nonetheless, there are teachers who do not make good use of instructional time provided by the block schedule to meet individual student needs. Overall, due to the commitment of the administration to maintain small class sizes, teachers have ample time to plan for the learning needs of all students and to address their professional responsibilities related to student learning. (self-study, Endicott Survey, observations, administrators, master schedule)

There is no formal, ongoing program to connect each student with an adult member of the school community in addition to the guidance counselors who personalize each student's educational experience, but both students and faculty members report that there are ample opportunities for informal mentoring relationships between students and adults in the school. Examples of these opportunities include classroom connections among students and teachers, activities that take place with club advisors, team coaches, and class advisors, and the positive regard students have for the school's administrators. In addition, in all but one case, there are

currently two faculty members assigned to each homeroom. Students do have the same administrator and two class advisors for their four years of high school, allowing administrators and class advisors to get to know students and their parents personally. Sixty-five percent of students and 83.9% of their parents feel that there is at least one adult at the school besides their guidance counselor to whom students can talk if they have a problem. However, because of the lack of a formal, ongoing program, the social/emotional and academic needs of some students may not be adequately identified and addressed by school staff members. (self-study, Endicott Survey, students, teachers, leadership and organization committee)

Teachers participate primarily in district-level collaboration initiatives within their departments but do not voluntarily make consistent use of time provided for in-school collaboration. Teachers participate in data team and CIA team meetings at the district and school level, and lead teachers are often the presenters at CIA team meetings. The school's administration makes an effort to provide as many teachers in each department as possible with a common planning period. However, teachers are not required to use this time for common planning or collaboration, and the teachers' union has resisted the administration's attempt to mandate this in the past. There is also no plan to provide formal interdepartmental common planning time because of the many constraints imposed on the master schedule by the variety of courses offered. Moreover, the inconsistent use of scheduled department common planning time, a valuable resource to enhance student learning, disregards a great potential aid to improve teaching and learning. As a result, students do not benefit from ongoing and formal in-school collaboration which could support learning for all students. (master schedule, school leadership team, teachers, central office administrators, district curriculum supervisors)

All Career High School staff members are involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students. In addition to faculty members, students identify the health clinic, cafeteria, and security staff as adults who have a positive impact on their well-being. Support staff and security staff members maintain safety in the hallways. The services provided by the school nurse's office and the school-based health clinic provide health and wellness services including wellness groups, anger management, and basic health services; 61% of the students reports feeling comfortable seeking support from the health personnel. The paraprofessional staff members work cooperatively with teachers, and secretarial staff members are dedicated to the well-being and needs of the students. Cafeteria employees are pleasant and responsive to students and, in turn, are appreciated by the students. Students at Career High School gain and benefit from the role models and examples set by a caring and dedicated school staff. Because of the efforts of school staff members, the social/emotional needs of students are met, resulting in a positive school climate that is conducive to student learning. (observations, Endicott Survey, self-study, students, support staff, parents)

Student success is regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed. The school hosts underclass and senior awards ceremonies, notes student accomplishments on the morning announcements, and reports student accomplishments and successes in the e-mailed school newsletter. Students make the morning announcements and regularly note and announce the achievements of students and teams. Teachers exhibit student work in display cases and on bulletin boards in classrooms and hallways. Students' work is published in *Spectrum* (student

literary magazine) and *Scope: Career's Online Newspaper*. As a result, students are able to learn in a school culture that acknowledges, celebrates, and displays student achievements. (facility tour, students, self-study, evidence materials, administrators, school newsletters)

Many students and faculty members demonstrate a sense of pride and ownership in their school, and Career High has a generally safe, positive, respectful, and supportive school climate. All students are given a handbook at the beginning of the year. The handbook outlines all discipline and attendance policies that students must follow. The school also has a crisis manual that teachers review annually with students. There is a written code of conduct that is provided to parents and students and that addresses topics including attendance, the use of profanity, the dress code, and general behavioral expectations. Students generally adhere to its expectations. The school employs four security guards to supervise the school's common areas, and the administrative team is also highly visible in the school's common areas in the morning, during passing times, and in the cafeteria during lunch time. Student-led activities such as the student store, the credit union, and the blood drive all help contribute to the positive school climate. Overall, students benefit from a school climate that is safe, positive, and supportive. (observations, students, parents, teachers, administrators, self-study)

The school board supports the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning and provides a budget that is supportive of staffing and material acquisition and that promotes the principal's vision for the school. Teachers at Career High School also have the opportunity to present information about the school's programs at board of education meetings. The school board played a role in the review and revision of the mission and expectations for student learning, making a minor change to the mission prior to approving it to ensure that the Career High School Mission Statement is in alignment with the district-wide mission statement. The school board's support helps ensure that the school implements further educational practices that are in alignment with the goals of the rest of the school district. This also ensures that students who stay in the New Haven school system but who transfer into or out of Career High School during their high school experience are not negatively impacted. Overall, the school board values the beliefs set forth in the school's mission and supports the teaching-learning process. (self-study, central office administrators, school leadership team, school board members)

Commendations

1. The focus on magnet school themes by all members of the school community
2. The grouping patterns that are racially and culturally diverse
3. The avenues that are available for all teachers to take a meaningful role in decision-making related to the daily operation of the school
4. The principal's accessibility for constituents who wish to offer feedback

5. The small class sizes that support the personalization of instruction in the classroom
6. The principal's efforts to provide all teachers with a departmental common planning period
7. The board of education's support of Career High School
8. The school's and community's frequent recognition of student success in both academic and co-curricular activities
9. The dedication of non-certified staff members in addressing the needs of students
10. The positive school climate that encourages informal mentoring relationships
11. The vibrant, friendly, and supportive school atmosphere described by students, teachers, and support staff members
12. The ongoing support of student-led activities such as the credit union and the blood drive

Recommendations

1. Expand the principal's vision for the school to encompass the mission and expectations for student learning in alignment with the school's magnet themes
2. Focus teacher and assistant principal leadership on accomplishment of the mission and expectations for student learning in alignment with the school's magnet themes
3. Direct efforts towards focusing educational programs on achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning in alignment with the school's magnet themes
4. Implement a formal mentoring program
5. Ensure that departmental common planning time will be used for teachers to collaborate on meeting the school's mission and expectations for student learning
6. Expand formal opportunities for parent and student participation in school decision-making
7. Utilize and expand teacher collaboration time across departments in support of learning for all students

SUPPORT STANDARD

6

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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

All Student Support Services

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.

6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.
7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

Guidance Services

8. The school shall provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:
 - individual and group meetings with counseling personnel;
 - personal, career, and college counseling;
 - student course selection assistance;
 - collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers;
 - appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

Health Services

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

SUPPORT STANDARD

6

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Library Information Services

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

Special Education Services

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

Conclusions

For the most part, student support services at Hill Regional Career High School are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Guidance, health, library and special education staff have all had an opportunity to participate in the Career High School community development of the school's mission and expectations. Each school counselor is assigned an appropriate student-counselor ratio, as defined by the Connecticut School Counselor Association (CSCA). The guidance staff meets with students and assists them in making informed decisions regarding future course selections and post-graduate plans. However, school counselors must create student transcripts and calculate grade point averages by hand as there is no technology provided to support this and only one part-time clerk is assigned to the guidance suite. This impacts the opportunities for all students to access guidance resources as clerical duties use counselor time. The school social worker chairs the student assistance referral process in which teachers and staff can identify students they believe are in danger of not meeting with academic success. Health support personnel promote the overall health and welfare of the student body. Additional medical support is provided at a school-based health clinic staffed and funded by Yale New Haven Hospital. The library media specialist collaborates with classroom teachers to enhance instruction and to communicate to students the services and materials in the library. A daily, morning broadcast informs students of Career High School events and news and reinforces the school's mission and expectations for learning at the beginning of every week. Media center student aides are trained by the library media specialist to perform basic duties that assist other students in utilizing the programs and services of the library during the school day. English language learner (ELL) support is provided to students who do not utilize English as their primary language. The special education staff provides identified students with assistance and skills that are important to their learning. Co-curricular clubs and activities are available to students, allowing them an opportunity to meet and work with additional students and staff members above and beyond the normal school day. Generally, as a result of the support given by these various services, students are better able to actualize the school mission and expectations. (students, teachers, student support service personnel)

Generally, resources, programs, and services provide sufficient opportunities for all students to achieve the academic, social and civic expectations for student learning. Resources, programs, and services provided by guidance, health, library media, and special education staff are sufficient to enable equal opportunity for student achievement of the expectations. The guidance department meets with students throughout their high school tenure to discuss scheduling as well as opportunities and programs at Career High School. Counseling is provided in a more individualized format, while a few whole group lessons are provided, primarily during English classes. The health facilities offer comprehensive care to the entire student population. The school nurse manages the routine health concerns of the students, while an additional health clinic operated by Yale New Haven Hospital and staffed by a nurse practitioner and social worker offers additional medical/consultation services. The actual operating hours of these facilities is not clear although health facility staff report that they work with an overlapping schedule. The Career High School social worker collaborates with school counselors and faculty members on addressing mental and emotional health needs of the students. Library resources

include materials at various reading levels, in addition to books in Spanish, to meet the varied abilities of the students. However, opportunities are limited for all students to utilize the library media center, because study halls are not built into the master schedule and because the library media specialist is often busy teaching collaborative lessons with teachers who sign up to use the library media center during the school day. Additionally, the library media center is open for student use after regular school hours on only two days, and the library media specialist does not have a library clerk to assist her with the myriad tasks in the center. Special education staff members differentiate materials and instruction for their identified students. A resource lab is available for students with an individualized education plan (IEP) to work in during the school day. Overall, there are programs and services in place to support student achievement of the school's expectations for student learning. (facility tour, self-study, student support service personnel)

Academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of Career High School students are addressed by support personnel who work collaboratively with colleagues and community resources. During the school day, support staff members meet with and discuss students and their needs with parents, colleagues, and other school personnel. School support personnel coordinate activities and programs that connect students with community resources. These include both on-site and off-site programs. School counselors, the social worker, and the nurse have direct access to medical/emotional services provided at Career High School by Yale New Haven Hospital medical staff (social worker, nurse practitioner). The library media specialist meets routinely with academic departments within the school to apprise them of student activities, events, and news pertinent to fostering academic success. Applications for New Haven's Public Library system cards are available in the library media center as well. Additionally, support staff members create and send e-mails and newsletters to Career High School stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, and students) apprising them of opportunities both at Career High School and within the community. School counselors coordinate programs and activities with members of the New Haven community. These include both in-house and out-of-school programs (visits from college representatives, college visits, guest speakers, etc.). A full-time independent study school partnership (ISSP) coordinator fosters relationships with community resources by programming independent study and internship experiences for Career students throughout the New Haven community. Overall, community resources that address students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs and that enhance student well-being and learning are available and utilized regularly and consistently at Career High School. (self-study, student support service personnel, materials posted in guidance suite)

Student support services are not evaluated by school administrators, but rather by district personnel. Since school administrators are not involved with these program assessments, they are not able to clarify how the program assessments affect student learning at the high school. The absence of an ongoing in-school evaluation process for current school resource programs hinders school support personnel's ability to determine if they effectively support student learning at Career High School. Student support personnel indicate that they are evaluated yearly by administrators as individuals but feedback from stakeholders regarding student support services is not utilized to determine their impact on student learning. Thus, support services

personnel are not able to determine the efficacy of the programs and services that they offer. Without ongoing evaluations of programs provided by in-school student support services, it is difficult to effectively determine their impact on student learning. (self-study, student support service personnel, teachers, students)

A system to communicate with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel regarding available student support services and the identification of student needs exists at Career High School. The school utilizes a variety of forms of communication. Newsletters, e-mails, website announcements, conferences, and telephone calls are some of the forms of communication consistently employed with all stakeholders. The school also employs the use of an automated messaging service through which a message is disseminated to all students at Career High School via their home phones. Students report, however, that some communications are not well-timed, citing a college fair communication that some students received after the event. A parent and student orientation session held at the beginning of the year provides information about the high school's programs and activities. Additional evening programs are offered throughout the year. There also is a full-time parent liaison who provides outreach to parents. The library media specialist and a team of students provide students with a daily broadcast that informs them of Career High School news and activities. For the most part, students, parents/guardians, and school personnel are provided with a wide range of communication sources to keep them informed about student support services and identified student needs, thereby encouraging parent/guardian involvement in the school's programs and activities. (students, teachers, self-study, bulletin board postings)

All confidential student records are maintained in locked storage facilities to ensure confidentiality and security. Student records are stored in locked storage facilities, with access available to school personnel as needed, with the exception of medical records. Medical records are locked in the nurse's office, with access to these records available to the nurse only. Some records are not protected from fire or flood, and are in danger of being destroyed in the event of either. Students' long-term academic files are appropriately stored in the main office vault which is fire- and flood-proof. Student records are stored in confidential, secure storage facilities; however, due to the lack of fireproof storage units, some are at risk of being damaged in the event of a fire or flood. (facility tour, administrators, school nurse, school counselors)

For the most part, the number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff seems sufficient to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services. Counselors have a student-to-counselor ratio of 240:1, which aligns with state standards for school counselors although much of their time is taken by manual record-keeping. There is also a full-time school social worker and a part-time psychologist. An additional part-time social worker, employed by Yale New Haven Hospital, works in the health suite. Two full-time special educators share a caseload of 32 identified special education students. An additional special education teacher works one-on-one with a student who is deaf. A part-time school nurse and an additional part-time nurse practitioner, employed by Yale New Haven Hospital, work in the school-based health clinic. The times of operation of the health services center are not clear nor are they posted. A full-time library media specialist assists teachers with lessons and activities but is often unavailable to effectively work with students who come to the library media center

during the school day because of other responsibilities. Moreover, the library media specialist does not have a library clerk to help with the clerical tasks that she must perform in the center. Students are limited in their opportunities to use the library media center to its full extent because there is no time provided in the block schedule, there are often classes in the center, and the center is only open after school hours on two days. As a result, support services staffing is sufficient to maintain student access to current services in counseling and special education, but timely support services provided to students in health and the library media center may be hampered. (facility tour, self-study, school counselors, library media specialist)

Although a comprehensive school counseling curriculum is not in place at Career High School, a significant range of comprehensive guidance services is provided to students. School counselors schedule individual meetings with their students at least twice a year. During these meetings, counselors provide personal, career, and post-graduate counseling that includes college planning. Students state that it is easier for them to go to the guidance suite to request a visit with a school counselor than it is to wait for a pass to be sent to them. They understand that the counselors are busy and appreciate that counselors will see them more readily when they initiate a visit to the counseling suite. The school's block schedule with no study time provided impedes the counselors from meeting with students more regularly. School counselors will, at times, deliver whole group lessons (registration for standardized national assessments, review of standardized assessment scores, etc.) during a class period. These lessons typically fall during the English block. The student course selection process is initiated by the school counselor, with input from students, teachers, and parents. Schedule cards are used to record teacher recommendations for future course selection. School counselors review these recommendations with students and schedule courses accordingly. Unfortunately, an archaic computer system is utilized to record student grades, and counselors do not have access to these grades. This impacts the scheduling process, and, many times, a student's schedule must be modified when grades are forwarded to the counselors. School counselors work extra days beyond the school year to accommodate such revisions as well as to perform other counseling tasks. Despite the fact that guidance services are not documented in a comprehensive written curriculum, students are still able to benefit from a range of services that are provided. (school counselors, students, social worker, self-study)

School counselors collaborate with community and area mental health agencies and social service providers. At times, community agencies provide professional development which counselors attend. A strong collaboration with the school social worker and additional social worker provided by Yale enhances counseling services. Finally, school counselors meet with and attend planning and placement team (PPT) meetings as well as 504 accommodation plan team meetings for students in their caseload. School counselors are required to perform numerous clerical tasks in the absence of a full-time guidance clerk, reducing the level of support provided to students. Overall, the efforts of the school counselors to support students at Career High School assist them in meeting the mission and expectations for student learning. (school counselors, students, social worker, self-study)

A part-time nurse and a part-time nurse practitioner are available to support a comprehensive health service program for Career High School students. They work together to

provide both comprehensive preventative health services and direct intervention services to students. However, the times of operation of the health services center are not clearly posted. The school nurse does maintain health records to ensure student immunizations are up-to-date. When a student enters the health suite, he/she is initially assessed by the school nurse. If the student's health warrants a more detailed evaluation, he/she is referred to the nurse practitioner. The nurse practitioner is able to prescribe medication to these students as necessary. The school-based health clinic operated by Yale New Haven Hospital significantly increases student accessibility to critical health services. Hearing, vision, and scoliosis screenings are performed by the school nurse. The nurse follows doctor's orders and administers medications to students as needed. Each staff member at Career High School has been trained in CPR, and some teachers are Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). A crisis intervention team exists at Career High School and has developed a crisis manual to be used in the event of a variety of emergencies. Overall, the health service program at Career High School does help to ensure that student well-being is addressed. (facility tour, school nurse, teachers, students)

Generally, the library/information services program and materials are integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. The library media center can, without trouble, accommodate two classes of average size (19 to 25 students). There is a large meeting area with long tables, padded upholstered chairs, an LCD projector mounted into the ceiling, and an interactive white board. This area is used to instruct and demonstrate various online research strategies. There are six study carrels for independent quiet study. In another section of the center, there is a bank of 31 computers that are on the *Windows 2003* operating system. This area is used for demonstrative instruction and student output. While the library media center has access to databases and other on-line resources, its print materials are aged and cannot be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. The library media specialist meets with teachers across the curriculum. Currently, the curriculum focus is on English and history. Other content areas and courses that involve the magnet themes are included as needed. The library media specialist participates in teacher-led curriculum planning meetings to facilitate the integration of library media services and materials into the implementation of the curriculum. Consequently, the resources of the library media center, with the exception of some of the print materials, support teachers' and students' efforts to achieve the expectations for learning. (observations, library media specialist, self-study)

Library/information services personnel are very knowledgeable about the curriculum and are a great support to its implementation. The library media specialist collaborates with teachers across the curriculum. In the essence of collaboration and lesson enhancement, the library media center and its resources are offered to teachers to create effective lessons for their students. The library media specialist's participation in the school's educational leadership team and curriculum committees, district meetings with other school library media specialists, and advanced training in the district's data warehouse system provides her with the knowledge and skills to support instruction. She has also received advanced training in the use and application of *SchoolNet*, the district's data warehouse system. A full-time information technology coordinator manages all of the technology needs of the school. He travels from room to room, depending on the needs of individual teachers and staff members. He also supports instruction in various business classes, including a digital multimedia course for which he obtained grant

funding from the regional service center, *Education Connection*, which provides a curriculum related to digital production. The technology coordinator is integral to Career High School's ability to provide various technologies for students and faculty members. The final product of the collaboration between the library media specialist and the information technology coordinator results in a comprehensive listing of lessons that reflect the school's curriculum and the *Connecticut Frameworks*, ensuring that students practice and achieve the expectations aligned with these standards. (observations, self-study, library media specialist, information technology coordinator)

Library/information resources, technologies, and other services are available to students and faculty members and are utilized to improve teaching and learning. Resources are provided in a variety of formats and are reflective of the diversity of the school's population. The center houses a variety of instructional technology that includes 31 computers, four TV/VCR/ DVD carts, one ceiling mounted LCD projector, one LCD projector on a cart, one interactive whiteboard, one camcorder, two CD and tape players, and one digital camera. Most of these technologies are available for teachers to use in the library media center space or to sign out for classroom use. Databases are available online and serve as supplements to the aging print materials. The print collection supports all areas of the curriculum and reflects the diversity of the school's population. This diversity includes not only the racial and ethnic range of the student body but also the diverse reading and interest levels of the students. However, the print materials in various content areas are outdated and many publications in the career tracks of business and health/science, both of which are constantly changing, have publications that date back to the early 1990s. Students and teachers do have access to resources from the New Haven public libraries. Overall, Career High School works to provide exposure to and practice in a wide range of materials in a variety of formats along with access to up-to-date information through technology. (observations, library media specialist, collection analysis documents, self-study)

Students, faculty, and support staff members do not have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as part of their educational experience before and after the school day. The library media center is accessible to students independently only with passes throughout the school day. However, it is consistently available for teachers to utilize for classroom instruction. The library media specialist stays after school Tuesdays and Thursdays for approximately two hours to assist students and faculty members using library media resources. Access before and after the school day is limited for students because of bus transportation schedules and inadequate library media staffing. Nonetheless, the library media specialist constantly strives to provide services to the school community throughout the school day. The limited access to library resources impedes student use and ability to conduct ongoing research and to achieve the academic expectations. (library media specialist, observations, self-study)

The library/information services program fosters independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty members to use various school and community information and resources and technologies. The library media center's homepage lists many resources for both students and teachers, among which is *iCONN.org*. Students can access this database by using their

Connecticut library card. Applications for a New Haven Public Library card are available in the media center, but students must bring the completed application to a library branch to physically receive the card in order to gain broad access to the available databases. The school's library media center is linked to the New Haven Public Library, thereby expanding student access to a wider variety of print and non-print materials that support independent inquiry by students and faculty members. The programs and services in the library media center are designed to expand student access to information and thus adequately support student and teacher independent inquiry to improve both teaching and learning. (school's library media website, library media specialist, self-study)

Board approved policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet. The board policies that are in place for the selection and removal of information resources are from the New Haven Public Schools Library Media Office. They include policies for collection development, weeding guidelines, lost or damaged library materials, questionable materials, and citizen's requests for reconsideration of materials. The acceptable use policy (AUP) for student use of the Internet is another document that has been developed by the district and must be signed by students. The policies put in place by New Haven Public Schools for the selection and removal of resources and technology and Internet use are designed to ensure that inappropriate and seriously outdated materials and resources are removed from circulation. However, print materials in many content areas in the Career High School Library Media Center have publications that are seriously outdated. Thus, despite the fact that policies and procedures are in place for faculty members to make informed decisions for the selection, use, and removal of information resources and technologies to ensure that students use these resources in a responsible manner, the inconsistent adherence to some of these policies has resulted in outdated non-fiction materials remaining in circulation, reducing student access to current information. (self-study, library media specialist, school district policies, observations)

Career High School complies with local, state, and federal laws related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students to special education. Students who enter Career High School and who are identified for special education services, have existing individual education plans (IEPs) and documented records regarding accommodations and other issues. Prior to entry, the planning and placement team (PPT) chair attends the student's exiting PPT at the school of origin and the IEP is continued at Career High School. A referral process is also in place to identify students who demonstrate behaviors that may warrant intervention through the student assistance management team (SAMT). After discussion and the implementation of strategies to address the area of concern are provided, students who are identified as requiring special education services are referred to the PPT chair. Parents are provided with procedural safeguards at the PPT meeting to discuss their child. There is a resource lab that is available only to provide special education students with support. Students who receive special education support are appropriately monitored, and annual program reviews are in place to ensure goals and objectives are appropriate. Appropriate special education services are provided to identify and serve all special education students to enable them to achieve the school's expectations for learning. (self-study, special education teachers, review of special education records)

Commendations

1. The resources that are available to provide comprehensive student support services
2. The communication by student support services staff members with students, parents/guardians, and other school personnel designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services
3. The continuum of accessible, comprehensive health services provided at Career High School
4. The school-based health clinic operated by Yale New Haven Hospital that provides a continuum of care for students
5. The part-time nurse practitioner who is available to all students at Career High School
6. The programs and services provided by school counselors despite limited clerical assistance and limited access to on-line student information
7. The collaboration among the library media specialist, the information technology coordinator, and teachers that provides strong support for student achievement
8. The library media specialist's effort to train students to assist in increasing opportunities for students to access the library
9. The opportunities programs connecting the Career High School students with the greater New Haven community
10. The morning broadcast that is an informative way to effectively communicate with students and school personnel
11. The careful orchestration of the library media class schedule that allows two classes to use the library media center simultaneously

Recommendations

1. Implement a computer-based student information system that would allow school counselors to access student records and to have the ability to create and print accurate transcripts
2. Provide full-time clerical assistance in the guidance office to relieve counselors from performing clerical tasks
3. Ensure that school administrators are involved in assessing the efficacy of the student support services programs and make revisions, when necessary, to support student learning

4. Develop a comprehensive school counseling curriculum
5. Provide a library clerk to allow more students opportunities to utilize library media resources throughout the entire school day and after school
6. Extend library media center hours to ensure access for all students and implement a mechanism to encourage student use of the center after school
7. Provide students without IEPs opportunities to utilize the support of the resource lab, staffed by the special education department, to ensure a better continuum of academic support/services to all students at Career High School
8. Assess and post the scheduled operating times for all Career health facilities to ensure coverage for the entire school day
9. Develop evaluation measures to determine effectiveness of programs provided by student support service personnel
10. Ensure timely notification for the delivery of various communications, so students and parents are better able to take advantage of school programs and services
11. Upgrade the print and technology collections to meet the needs of students in the 21st century
12. Provide fire/flood proof storage facilities for all records

SUPPORT STANDARD

7

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

Hill Regional Career Magnet High School engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and encourages their participation in school programs and parent support groups. There is active participation in school programs such as the parent, teacher, student organization (PTSO), district-mandated orientation sessions, "Meet the Teacher Night", report card distribution nights, and the Achieving Higher Expectations for Academics (AHEAD) summer program for ninth grade students and their parents. Nearly 50% of parents participates in parent support groups or the PTSO. The school's full-time parent liaison works actively to engage parents through various community outreach programs, workshops, and a monthly newsletter. Teachers regularly make frequent telephone calls to parents and also send e-mails to parents. Parents feel the teachers and administrators are accessible and accommodating to their needs and concerns about their child's education. This gives the entire Career High School community ownership of the success of the high school. (self-study, parents, teachers, Endicott Survey)

Career High School fosters productive business, community, and higher education partnerships that support student learning through a number of community initiatives. The business and allied health internships, college and career pathways, and the emergency medical services (EMS) cadet program all create opportunities that greatly enhance student learning and are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The Academy of Finance and the Academy of Information Technology partner with the United Shoreline Federal Credit Union to support the school-run credit union. Higher education partnerships with Yale University, the University of New Haven, Southern Connecticut State University, and Gateway Community College allow students to gain valuable post-secondary experience while attending the high school. Teachers participate in curriculum writing workshops sponsored by Yale University during the summer. The community is supportive and frequently uses the school facility, particularly the swimming pool. Career High School's partnerships with business and post-secondary institutions provide students opportunities to enhance their education and explore career opportunities. (self-study, teachers, school support staff)

The school site and plant support all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. Career High School was constructed in 1998 and contains classrooms, science and computer laboratories, an auditorium, an up-to-date library media center, administration and guidance offices, a health suite, a swimming pool, and a gymnasium. A school-based health clinic operated by Yale New Haven Hospital is adjacent to the school's health office and serves the needs of students year round. The health/science department consists of eight laboratories for chemistry, physics, and biology that are equipped with ventilation hoods, lab tables, lab chairs, and lecture space. All labs have prep rooms and adequate storage facilities. In addition, there is a simulation classroom for students in the nurse's aide and emergency medical technician (EMT) programs. This provides students with hands-on experience working in a hospital-like environment. The business/technology department has a classroom furnished as an office with cubicles and work stations for use by *Creative Computer Services* which is an actual student-run business. Students are able to rotate through various positions within this

company. Additionally, a fully-functioning school store and a school credit union which are situated in the main lobby are also operated by students. All classrooms are wired for the Internet; some have wireless and others have enough computers and ethernet access to accommodate a full classroom. However, some teachers state that there is an insufficient number of classrooms, requiring them to move from room-to-room to provide instruction, and that storage space in general classrooms is inadequate. Teachers and students report that some classroom areas of the building remain very warm, with limited or no air conditioning provided, which is not conducive to the educational process. However, for the most part, students and teachers are able to learn and work in a facility that supports the educational process. (observations, administrators, teachers, students)

The high school is a handicapped accessible facility meeting the requirements of state and federal American with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. The Occupational and Health and Safety Administration (OHSA) continues to monitor and evaluate the building on a regular basis to ensure workplace safety. Tests are conducted for radon, asbestos, and air quality, as required by state law. Fire alarms are inspected and sprinklers are tested on a regular basis. Fire extinguishers are visible, serviced on schedule, tested by the local fire department, and are in compliance with local fire safety regulations. Air filters are cleaned or changed on a scheduled basis, and heating, ventilation, and cooling (HVAC) repairs and services are ongoing. Lighted exit signs are provided, but emergency evacuation directions are not visible in all occupied spaces. There is also a concern about the number of improperly secured electrical and data wires in occupied spaces. The materials safety data sheets (MSDS) were documented in 2003, but it is difficult to ascertain if there are more current sheets for the new chemicals on the property. There is a comprehensive plan of lighting, security, and green cleaning upgrades provided within the building by both building and central office staff, and outside contracted vendors. The school also makes efforts to conserve energy in the building, particularly in the pool heating system and by the encouragement of staff energy conservation. Career High School's physical plant is generally a safe working environment that meets local, state, and federal safety requirements and standards. (self-study, work orders, observations, central office administrators, school administrators, teachers, students)

There is adequate equipment to address facility concerns, but the cataloguing system that is in place to track and monitor the purchase and use of equipment is not uniform and is inadequate, limiting the school's ability to make decisions regarding equipment repair and replacement. Some interactive whiteboards, document cameras, and computers have recently been purchased for some classrooms, and the school district recently purchased new computers for all teachers. However, teachers state that they need additional technology such as more interactive whiteboards to meet 21st century instructional challenges. In addition, equipment purchased through the federal Perkins Grant has not been properly identified. There is a district-wide technology plan, but it does not provide a clear procedure and record for the maintenance and replacement of existing equipment. In addition, Career High School does not have its own formal plan for maintaining, cataloging, and replacing equipment. Equipment repair and maintenance is done by the school's information technology coordinator on an as-needed basis. Thus, the absence of formal procedures for identifying needed repairs, maintenance, and

replacement of equipment hinders the use of school equipment to enhance student learning. (self-study, teachers, information technology coordinator)

There is a comprehensive plan, including adequate funds allocated for repair and maintenance at Career High School, but the school does not adhere to this plan. Forty-two percent of staff members states that they disagree that “needed repairs are completed in a timely manner.” Fourteen percent strongly disagrees that “repairs are completed in a timely manner” as also reflected in the Career High School work orders. Inadequate attention to minor maintenance and repair issues (e.g. painting classrooms on a regular basis, cleaning tape and stains on carpets, replacing water-stained ceiling tiles, cleaning the gymnasium locker rooms, and repairing damaged cement walls) has a negative effect on the overall esthetics, use, and safety of the building. Teachers and students state that lavatory supplies are not maintained on a consistent basis and desks need to be thoroughly cleaned. There are ample supplies and cleaning materials, but the recent reduction in the custodial staff hinders the ability to clean and repair the facility and to prepare it for occupancy each morning. The lack of routine maintenance, repair, and cleaning of the school building results in an environment that hampers teaching and learning and contributes to the deterioration of the building. (Endicott Survey, observations, facility tour, teachers, custodial staff)

Career High School does ensure that there is some long range and ongoing planning in place to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements. However, the school does not have one formal and comprehensive plan that addresses all of these areas. There is a school improvement plan that addresses academic goals but does not address enrollment, staffing, or capital improvement while the district-wide technology plan outlines a program of acquisition and use of technology in the district. The school’s staff uses *Tenex*, a system-wide computer database, to collect and compile data necessary for short and long-term planning. The system tracks yearly school enrollment with breakdowns by course and department as well as staffing allocations. The school’s curriculum team, academic departments, and administrators meet regularly to evaluate needs based on relevant statistics, student course requests, and staff observations. Staffing needs are addressed regularly when the number of incoming students becomes available, and student retention is established. Because Career High School is a state designated magnet school, its funding depends on meeting enrollment benchmarks defined by the Connecticut Interdistrict Magnet Office. In general, Career High School does support ongoing planning to meet future needs and has an adequate level of data-driven decision-making and analysis to meet future program needs. (self-study, administrators, standard committee)

Career High School’s inter-district magnet school grant, the New Haven community, and the New Haven Board of Education ensure adequate and dependable sources of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies that enhance student learning. The district budget is the primary source of funding to support the program and needs at Career High School. In addition, the district has obtained various grant monies from both the state and federal level coupled with private grants which have been instrumental in providing a dependable funding stream. The PTSO and community partners such as Yale New Haven Hospital and Yale

University are strong advocates and can be called upon to demonstrate support for the passage of the budget. Despite the difficult economic times, students at Career High School continue to be provided with ample resources to assist them to meet the mission and expectations. (self-study, district documents, principal)

Faculty members have minimal involvement in the budgetary process, including budget development and implementation. Budget allocations are often decided at the administrative and central office level. Teachers state that their budgetary requests are granted on an as-needed basis, relying on the discretion of building administrators. In the initial budget development, administrators consider and assess budgetary needs based on student and teacher input, but there is no formal procedure to provide input into the development and implementation which may lead to inequitable budget distribution. Each department receives a set amount of money in the school's budget which is used for the purchase of materials and textbooks. The actual purchasing process begins in May when administrators ask teachers to develop lists of classroom materials and books that will be needed for the next school year. These lists are examined and prioritized according to availability of resources. The principal indicates that he will listen to individual teacher requests and will often support their requests during the school year through the school budget or the magnet school grant. In general, however, the different roles and levels of involvement in the budget process leads to frustration on the part of some faculty members. (teachers, administrators, budget documents)

Commendations

1. The parent liaison outreach efforts
2. The excellent communication and involvement of parents and families in the school
3. The active involvement of the community and the board of education in support of the school
4. The exemplary school-business and post-secondary partnerships
5. The school-based health clinic that provides a continuum of care
6. The effective use of green cleaning products and energy management and conservation methods
7. The effective advocacy for passage of the school budget
8. The ongoing efforts to obtain grants from both public and private sources

Recommendations

1. Continue to expand parental involvement in student educational process

2. Continue classroom technology upgrades to provide equity of access to technology across the disciplines
3. Properly secure electrical and data wiring in a safe manner
4. Prepare and post emergency evacuation directions in all occupied spaces
5. Develop a comprehensive plan of maintenance and repair of computers and other technology equipment
6. Catalog all equipment and maintain up-to-date inventory
7. Comply with federal Perkins Grant labeling requirement on equipment purchased with grant funds
8. Ensure that cleaning and sanitation supplies are adequate and available at all times in both student and faculty areas
9. Ensure that the daily cleaning protocol is effective and closely supervised
10. Repair broken cement walls that exist in the building
11. Ensure that there is a full complement of custodial staff for cleaning the building
12. Develop a formal long range strategic plan to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements
13. Include teachers in all phases of the budgetary 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 Hill Regional Career Magnet High School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty 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 CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 69. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the 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 NEASC visiting team members have attempted in a short period of time to evaluate your school and to confirm your findings as they were documented as part of the self-study conducted by your faculty and administration over the last two years for the school's continued accreditation. We measured your program against the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Standards of Accreditation to determine to what extent Hill Regional Career Magnet High School is in compliance with each of the Standards. It is our desire that our report will be beneficial to the school in a way that will support continued growth and development.

In closing, the visiting team members wish to express their warm and sincere appreciation to the administration, faculty, staff, students, parents, and community of Hill Regional Career Magnet High School for their cooperation, openness, and hospitality. There is no doubt that efforts will continue to ensure that Hill Regional Career Magnet High School remains a place of caring for the young people who enter its corridors every day.

Hill Regional Career Magnet High School
NEASC Accreditation Visit
October 17-20, 2010

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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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
- 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
- identification by the state as an underperforming school
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees