

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Founded in 1885

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for Grafton High School

Grafton, Massachusetts

September 22 – September 25, 2013

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

- Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

- Curriculum

- Instruction

- Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

- School Culture and Leadership

- School Resources for Learning

- Community Resources for Learning

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

Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Grafton High School, a committee of 10 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee then selected two co-chairs to lead each standard subcommittee. All faculty and staff ranked their preference as to which subcommittee they would like to serve on, and then worked to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included volunteer members from various school and community groups.

The self-study of Grafton High School extended over a period of four school years from May 2009 to September 2013. The self-study phase of the accreditation process was extended by approval of the Commission on Public Secondary Schools due to a building project that addressed facility concerns that had been raised during the previous decennial visit. The school greatly benefitted from the opportunity to complete a new state of the art facility and for faculty and staff to settle into the new building and routines before bringing in a team to evaluate the institution in terms of its own stated educational goals and the seven Standards for Accreditation of the Committee on Public Secondary Schools.

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

It is important that the reader understand that every subcommittee appointed by the steering committee was required to present its report to the entire professional staff for approval. No single

report developed in the self-study became part of the official self-study documents until the entire professional staff had approved it.

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of sixteen (16) evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Grafton High School. The Committee members spent four days in Grafton, Massachusetts, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, charter schools, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Grafton High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- thirty-six (36) hours shadowing sixteen (16) students for a half day
- a total of ten (10) 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 thirty-two (32) teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUMMARY

A semi-rural town, Grafton, MA is located 30 miles west of Boston (35 minutes east) and 5 miles southeast of Worcester, MA (8 minutes northwest). The town is located within Worcester County and the Blackstone Valley and has a total area of 23.3 square miles, of which 22.7 square miles of it is land and 0.5 square miles of it is water. Grafton is governed by by-laws, semi and special town meetings, and town budget. Residents are served by the MBTA commuter rail, which runs daily from the North Grafton commuter station to South Station in Boston.

The population of Grafton as according to the 2010 census is 17,765, an increase of 8% over the 2000 census of 14,894. No identifiable minority comprises more than 0.09% of the predominantly white population. Other racial populations include African American, Native American, Asian and Hispanic. English is the primary spoken language. The average household income of Grafton is \$107,208; the per capita income is \$40,835. Within the district, 10.4% of families are considered low income.

Grafton Common has many historic homes, churches and buildings and is considered to have the most quintessential common in the Blackstone Valley. The town is part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, the oldest industrialized region in the U.S. Today, Grafton still has working mill complexes at both Wyman-Gordon Company and Washington Mills. In addition, Grafton is home to Tufts University, Grafton Community Barn, and the historic Willard Clock Museum.

To accommodate Grafton's growing population and to ensure better educational services to the community, Grafton Public School system has recently reorganized and opened a sixth school, the new Grafton High School (grades 9-12). Grafton High School's former building is now the home of the Grafton Middle School and houses grades 7-8. The remaining grades are organized as follows: North Street Elementary School (grades 2-6), Millbury Street Elementary School (grades 2-6), North Grafton Elementary School and South Grafton Elementary School, with Pre-K-1 at both schools. In addition to the Grafton Public School system, there are two private schools in town: Touchstone Community School, serving children aged 3.5-14 and Silver Spruce Montessori, preschool to third grade.

Grafton High School has a current population of 780 students (2013-2014 school year). As of the 2013 school year, the district has a total of 3,113 students.

The Grafton School District is ranked in the bottom three percent of school districts in the state in terms of per pupil expenditures and expended \$10,036.56 per pupil compared to a state average expenditure of \$13,635.97 per pupil in 2012-2013. There are ten districts statewide out of a total of three hundred and twenty-eight that spend less money per pupil than Grafton. There are 317 school districts that spend more per pupil than Grafton. In FY 2014 the Town of Grafton allocated 57.35% percent of its revenue to the school district.

Grafton High School includes students in grades 9-12 with a total enrollment of 780 students divided between 375 males and 369 females. During the 2012-2013 school year, the ethnic, racial, and cultural composition has increased with 5.8% Asian, 3.2 % Hispanic, 1.9% African American, and 2.0% Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic. The average dropout is 2.4%, and the average daily student attendance is 93.1%. There are 59 teachers at Grafton High School, creating a ratio of 13.9:1. Individual teachers carry an average load of 114 students with an average class size of 21 students. Students must attend school for 183 days and for a minimum of 1,189.5 hours.

As of the 2012 school year, all freshmen are placed in a non-leveled English class. In addition, all students have the opportunity to enroll in a heterogeneous elective. Students in grades ten to twelve may select from college preparatory, honors or Advanced Placement. Approximately 14% of students receive special education services. All students are required to take 20 credits of English, 20 credits of math, 15 credits of science and technology and 15 credits of history. Additionally each student must complete 2.5 credits of health and 10 credits of physical education.

Mission, Core Values and Beliefs

Grafton High School

Mission

The mission of Grafton High School is:

- The mission of Grafton High School is to prepare our students intellectually, physically, and socially for their role as lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

Core Values and Beliefs

At Grafton High School we value:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Integrity
- Academic Excellence

We believe students learn best:

- When provided with a comprehensive, challenging and engaging curriculum, to meet all learning styles.
- In an environment that fosters high expectations for one's own actions, motivation, and responsibility.
- When they are encouraged to think, work and communicate effectively.
- In a safe and accepting learning environment that fosters high expectations for one's own actions, motivation, and responsibility.
- When they are encouraged to think, work and communicate effectively.
- In a safe and accepting learning environment that fosters respect and tolerance.
- When health and wellness are promoted and encouraged.
- By working independently and collaboratively to accomplish goals.
- When given equal opportunity to succeed academically and develop socially.
- When the entire Grafton community supports their learning in all regards.

Grafton High School students will be able to:

- Read, write, and speak effectively
- Demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge to complete tasks effectively
- Utilize critical thinking
- Enhance knowledge and skills with technology
- Exhibit behaviors that promote personal physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle
- Practice responsible and appropriate social behaviors
- Recognize and respect diversity
- Understand and demonstrate the duties and responsibilities that come with citizenship

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Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Conclusions

The Grafton High School (GHS) community used a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process to identify and document their core values and learning beliefs based on research. Development of the school's core values and beliefs was the result of a collaborative effort on the part of faculty, students, and parents. Over a five-year period, faculty met multiple times to create the basis of the school's core values and beliefs. Faculty meetings, as well as in-service hours, were used to identify those components and principles which faculty believe are central for best student learning. The outcome of this work is a well-crafted list of eight statements which steer and reflect the cultural tapestry of the GHS community and the fundamental essentials needed for best methods of learning in the 21st century. Faculty voted unanimously in March 2010 to approve the final wording of the belief statements.

Desiring to select those words which best describe and reflect Grafton High School's core values, students, parents, staff and faculty were surveyed for input. During the 2011-2012 school year, student advisory time was devoted to creating a core values list. In the first advisory activity, students generated a list of twenty-two terms which they felt best reflected GHS values. In a second advisory session, the list was consolidated down to the current core value list: respect, responsibility, integrity, and academic excellence.

The Endicott survey shows more than 91.4 percent of students and 92.5 percent of parents agree they are familiar with Grafton High School's core values and beliefs. In the same survey, more than 77.6 percent of parents indicates they agree these core values and beliefs about learning represent the community values. Developing core values and beliefs in an inclusive manner by the Grafton High School community ensures the universal use and continuity of authentic learning expectations for all stakeholders, and drives academics, culture, and the essence of the school. (Endicott survey, teachers, parents, Core Values and Beliefs Subcommittee, self-study)

The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students, which address academic, civic, and social competencies, and are somewhat defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify high levels of achievement, although they are not universally implemented. Grafton High School has eight challenging learning expectations, including six academic expectations (reading, writing and speaking, applied knowledge, critical thinking, use of technology, and healthy

lifestyle) a social expectation (respecting diversity), and a civic expectation (demonstrating citizenship). Faculty groups have developed detailed analytic rubrics for most of the learning expectations. The reading and writing rubrics are specific, reflect their respective learning expectations, and have the potential to be addressed across disciplines. The social and civic rubric, created by the school council, cannot be considered an analytic rubric since it does not address the expectations or follow the model of a gradation of skills. The Endicott survey shows that only 38 percent of teachers uses school-wide analytic rubrics to assess student work. Few examples of student work included the use of rubrics, and when questioned, students and teachers expressed a lack of knowledge and hesitation of the implementation of these rubrics. Grafton has begun to report student achievement of a limited number of learning expectations via their report cards. This initiated the process of including student's progress toward achieving 21st century learning expectations. This initiative was driven by the mission of Grafton High School and was communicated to parents and students using multiple forums including student advisory meetings, school committee meetings, and parent meetings. Grafton High School has developed challenging learning expectations designed to prepare each of its students for the 21st century and there is potential, with continued review and revision of school-wide rubrics, that the school will ensure that every student has the opportunity to meet these expectations. When challenging 21st century learning expectations are in place and are assessed by school-wide analytic rubrics, all students, with access to appropriate instruction, will grow and reach high goals preparing them for the future. (Endicott survey, students, teachers, student work, classroom observations, administrators, parents)

The core values and beliefs are actively demonstrated in the culture of the school, informally drive curriculum, instruction and assessment, consciously guide school policies, procedures and decisions, as well as deliberately guide resource allocations. The core values and beliefs are actively reflected in the Grafton High School's culture and are deliberately incorporated in a variety of areas. The core values and beliefs are listed in the student/parent handbook, are written in faculty lesson plan books, is visibly posted throughout the school, is reiterated in morning announcements, and is available on the school's website. In addition, the mission of Grafton High School is reflected in clubs and organizations like SADD, the Tolerance Project, and the Stars Program. The new 1:1 iPad initiative is a clear reflection of the culture of the school and the drive to achieve 21st century learning expectations. Although 21st century learning expectations are published in a variety of handbooks, websites, and banners, the format is inconsistent. The format on the back cover of the student handbook clearly delineates the academic, social, and civic expectations.

At this time, the school's core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations informally drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The mission statement and 21st century learning expectations are found in many course expectations sheets, in the program of studies, and is exhibited by the methodology of learning strategies used by many teachers. The spirit of the core values and beliefs are embedded in instructional practices, however, they are not explicitly addressed and are rarely linked to instruction and assessment on a daily basis. The adoption of the Atlas Curriculum Management software with the emerging alignment with 21st century learning expectations is a clear example of the core values and beliefs driving curriculum. Instructional practices that are driven by the core values include all students participating in heterogeneous English 9 courses, all students accessing technology, and teachers utilizing the "flipped classroom." In addition, common assessments are required for all students at the same level in all disciplines, and the English department is using school-wide rubrics in order to assess 21st century learning expectations. Students who are at risk also have safety nets built into their everyday schedule through academic support classes, ADC, and the Achieve Program in order to help them move to a higher level of achievement. A plethora of honors and AP courses are offered to all students which helps to promote academic rigor.

Grafton High School's core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations consciously guides school policies, procedures and decisions, as well as deliberately guides resource allocations. There is an ongoing evaluation and modification of the student/parent handbook, specifically in the area of technology use. In addition, co-teaching and common planning have been implemented, addressing the need that all students receive access to the curriculum and assessing all students with common standards. A new schedule was also implemented when Grafton High School moved to the new building in order to better accommodate student needs. Initiation of unlevelled core classes was also driven by the need to address the preparation of all students in 21st century learning expectations. Resource allocations are driven specifically by the core values and beliefs of Grafton High School. Technology has been made accessible to all students and a technology integration specialist was hired to assist in this process. In addition, professional development in using iPads in the classroom, the Common Core, curriculum development, social responsibility, and anti-bullying awareness training were all allocated to assist in achieving the goals expressed in the mission statement. The positive school climate, supportive staff, and collaborative administration that reflects and embodies the core values and beliefs exemplified by all students, parents, and staff who foster citizenship, healthy lifestyle, and an intellectually stimulating environment will be reinforced when they are explicitly stated in everyday instruction and assessment at Grafton High School. (self-study, program of studies,

student handbook, faculty lesson plan book, teachers, students, administrators, special educators, parents, student shadowing, observation, classroom visits)

Grafton High School reviews its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on multiple data sources as well as on district and school community priorities, but limited research. One source of research used to review core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations was the book *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in our Times* given to faculty in 2011. The staff regularly reviews MCAS data and College Board data in order to hone in on the skills that students need to improve. In addition, administration encourages faculty to review the school-wide analytic rubrics. Although the rubrics are not universally used, the English department has taken the lead on this initiative, and has reviewed and revised the writing effectively rubric. In addition, parents and students participated in a survey that focused on the use of each 21st century learning expectation being addressed at Grafton High School. The survey reveals that parents and students overwhelmingly agree that students are meeting 21st century skills. In addition, faculty and staff regularly reviews its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations in faculty meetings, in-service days, and opening day activities. Maintaining an ongoing appraisal of a common mission, core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations allows all stakeholders at Grafton High School to understand and work toward a unified goal and progress toward true 21st century learners and student achievement. (Core Values and Beliefs Subcommittee, teachers, self-study, parent and student survey, administrators, *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in our Times*)

Commendations:

1. The positive school culture and drive of staff to help all students reach 21st century expectations
2. The collaborative identification and development of the core values and beliefs by all essential stakeholders
3. The new schedule that was implemented when Grafton High School moved to the new building in order to better accommodate student needs
4. The initiation of unlevleled core classes driven by the need prepare all students for 21st century learning expectations
5. The allocation of resources driven specifically by the core values and beliefs of Grafton High School
6. The technology that has been made accessible to all students

Recommendations:

1. Implement and consistently use the school-wide analytic rubrics in a meaningful way
2. Ensure that students understand the relevance of the 21st century learning expectations that are reflected in the fabric of the school's culture
3. Ensure 21st century learning expectations are published in a consistent format throughout all GHS publications
4. Explicitly relate Grafton's core values and beliefs to instructional goals and practices
5. Develop and implement analytic rubrics for the social and civic learning expectations using a format that is consistent with the academic analytic rubrics

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Curriculum

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

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

Curriculum

Conclusions

In general, the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The variety, type, and rigor of courses offered within each department allow students to achieve the school's 21st century expectations. Existing curriculum guides do not show a direct and explicit correlation to the school's 21st century learning expectations and teachers were unsure of how the 21st century learning expectations should be shown in the curriculum. However, with the migration to Atlas Curriculum Management software, teachers are now provided with a template that connects the 21st century learning expectations into the curriculum and are working to make this link clear and explicit. In 2012 each department defined the 21st century learning expectations for which they would take primary or secondary responsibility; however, the manner in which departments are putting the 21st century learning expectations into practice is not consistently shown in the written curriculum. The Endicott survey indicates 72.7 percent of the staff agrees that the school's curriculum design ensures that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. It is also indicated that 79.4 percent of parents agrees that the curriculum provides their children with opportunities to achieve the school's learning expectation. When the school's 21st century learning expectations are included in the curriculum guides, the importance of and the accountability to the expectations will be communicated clearly and consistently. (Endicott survey, teachers, program of studies)

The curriculum is generally written in a common format using the Grafton Public Schools Curriculum Template that includes essential questions, skills, and instructional strategies; frequently includes concepts and content; but rarely specifically addresses 21st century learning expectations or assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics. The school district has identified the need to reform their curriculum development practices. After several changes to its common format in the recent past, the district has recently selected a software program and begun to migrate its curriculum from the previous versions to the Atlas Curriculum Management format. The new format will contain essential questions, concepts, content, skills, the school's 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. While the Endicott survey indicated that 74.5 percent of the staff agrees that the curriculum is written in a common format, it will soon contain all of the necessary elements to be both common and complete. A curriculum written in a common format, that contains all defined elements, ensures that teachers provide all students exposure to a high-quality curriculum

in each subject area and course. (self-study, curriculum guide, teachers, department leaders, central office administrators, Endicott survey)

The curriculum generally emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, and higher-order thinking. While examples of excellent cross-disciplinary learning exist, they are initiated by individual teachers and are not a planned part of the curriculum. Opportunities for students to engage in authentic learning are meaningful but limited. Art, music, web design, sports and entertainment management, and life skills classes are outstanding examples of teachers adding authentic learning to the curriculum and demonstrate how this can be expanded to other curricular areas. Informed and ethical use of technology is increasingly being emphasized. The recent revision of the Grafton Public Schools Curriculum Template to include essential questions in curriculum development shows the school's commitment to increase inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking. This is substantiated by the Endicott survey results which indicated 89.4 percent of students, 85.5 percent of staff, and 74.8 percent of parents agree that the curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills. Students and teachers cite several examples of effective and engaging cross-disciplinary learning, particularly between English and social studies classes. However, these experiences are based on collaboration between colleagues and are not a planned part of the curriculum. The student body will benefit from including similar opportunities across the spectrum of course offerings. With the 1:1 iPad initiative, which puts an iPad in the hands of each student, the importance of and emphasis on an informed and ethical use of technology policy is increasing. All departments are encouraged to include lessons on proper citation in their courses. The Endicott survey indicates that 95.1 percent of students, 92.7 percent of staff, and 76.6 percent of parents agree that the curriculum emphasizes informed and ethical use of technology. Emphasis within the curriculum of cross-disciplinary and authentic learning opportunities will improve inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking. (self-study, curriculum guide, teachers, Endicott survey)

There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum. Teachers in several departments use common projects or common assessments, including midterm and final exams that ensure their instruction is aligned with each other and the curriculum. Beginning in 2011-2012, the daily schedule allowed for most departments to have a common planning time to use for collaboration and synchronization. However, a few co-teaching staff members don't share a common planning time to coordinate implementing the curriculum, but administration does make efforts to provide other opportunities to allow collaboration. The Massachusetts Teacher Evaluation System holds teachers

accountable for teaching the written curriculum. As part of the evaluation system, administrators conduct walk-throughs on a regular basis to observe instruction and the curriculum being taught. There is a process for teachers to accompany administrators on walk-throughs to observe instruction techniques of the subject curriculum. Some departments have set up a schedule as to what days they will specifically meet to plan how they will deliver the curriculum. Teachers also use monthly department meetings to collaborate and align their instruction with the curriculum, state standards and the Common Core. The Endicott survey indicates that 74.5 percent of the staff agrees that the written and taught curriculum are aligned. By aligning instruction to the curriculum, teachers ensure opportunities for students to achieve learning expectations. (self-study, curriculum guide, teachers, department leaders, Endicott survey)

There is limited curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among the academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. At Grafton High School many departments are meeting regularly to discuss and improve curriculum alignment within the disciplines from year to year. The school schedule allows for most departments to have common planning time. The common planning time is generally used for common lesson planning, analyzing results, and for articulating the curriculum from year to year. Although monthly department curriculum meetings exist, these meetings are frequently used for other, competing priorities. The result is that although there are opportunities for collaboration, they may not be fully utilized by all staff. Similarly, the vertical alignment with the sending school is limited. However, the district has created several committees to address this issue. This effort is aided by the close proximity of the new high school building to the middle school. The fine arts department has begun to work with 8th grade students to produce art and perform music. The high school social studies department is working directly with middle school colleagues to align curriculum to the Common Core. The world languages department has sponsored its middle school counterparts for training in the high school's language lab in anticipation of sharing this high school resource with middle school students. Migrating the curriculum to the Atlas Curriculum Management software will allow for all schools in the district to have access to each other's curriculum and will provide opportunities for better coordination between sending and receiving schools, and among and between departments. Central office administrators have identified the need for, and have assigned a high priority to, articulating curriculum from K to 12. Adopting common curriculum mapping software should aid in these efforts. Renewed emphasis on effective curriculum coordination will provide a seamless educational experience for all district students. (self-study, curriculum guide, teachers, department leaders, central office administrators)

Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/ media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. Staffing levels in the library/ media center result in limited access during lunches and before/after school hours. The adoption of the 1:1 iPad initiative for students and faculty has increased the availability of technology for instructional purposes. The new school has eliminated deficiencies in the school facility that previously had a negative impact on the delivery of curriculum. New science and world languages labs, performing arts and video recording studios, a new library and a wealth of other well-equipped spaces have improved the ability of faculty to present and deliver new curriculum opportunities. In contrast, the recent growth of the student population and scheduling constraints have created some challenges with classroom teaching loads and class sizes. These issues will only be exacerbated as the projected enrollment increases continue to occur. An exemplary facility and appropriate instructional resources, facilitate the delivery of a high quality curriculum focused on preparing students for the 21st century. (self-study, teachers, students, building tour, parents)

The district provides personnel with limited financial resources and time for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. Most departments have a common planning period, but that time is more often devoted to collaboration on pacing, lesson planning, and common assessments than on revision of curriculum. Teachers attended monthly curriculum meetings but curriculum revision is frequently superseded by more immediate priorities. Based on the Endicott survey 76.4 percent of staff agrees that they are directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. However, only 32.8 percent of staff feels that they are provided sufficient time to thoroughly review curriculum on a regular basis. Of note, the Endicott survey predates an increase in the amount of common planning time available for teachers. Presumably, this additional time for collaboration would have a positive impact on the survey results. The district offers a stipend for curriculum development work and many teachers take advantage of this opportunity, even beyond the number of reimbursed hours. An adequate combination of time and financial resources that can be completely dedicated to curriculum development will allow for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision. (self-study, teacher interview, central office personnel, Endicott survey)

Commendations:

1. The use of the Atlas Curriculum Management software to improve curriculum documents

2. The common assessments, including midterms and finals, makes clear connections between the written and taught curricula
3. The common planning time for departments allows for vertical curriculum alignment within the school
4. The new facility and well-planned resource acquisition allow for fully implementing the curriculum and enhancing other learning opportunities
5. The teachers who are invested in the revision of curriculum
6. The students and teachers who are involved in effective and engaging cross-disciplinary learning, particularly between English and social studies classes
7. The emphasis on an informed and ethical use of technology with the 1:1 iPad initiative
8. The fine arts department that has begun to work with 8th grade students to produce art and perform music
9. The high school social studies department that is working directly with middle school colleagues to align curriculum to the Common Core
10. The world languages department that has sponsored its middle school counterparts for training in the high school's language lab in anticipation of sharing this resource with middle school students
11. The new science and world languages labs, performing arts and video recording studios, a new library and a wealth of other well-equipped spaces that have improved the ability of faculty to present and deliver new curriculum opportunities

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that the migration to the Atlas curriculum template includes documenting the 21st century expectations in the written curriculum
2. Continue to explore increased opportunities for cross-disciplinary and authentic learning
3. Ensure that the commitment to higher order thinking in the curriculum is evident in the curriculum and classroom instruction
4. Develop and implement a process to ensure curricular coordination and vertical articulation exists between and among all academic areas within the school and with sending schools in the district.
5. Examine staffing levels to ensure that class sizes and student load are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
6. Provide the school's professional staff with sufficient time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research

3

Instruction

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

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

Instruction

Conclusions

Grafton High School's teachers have begun to examine instructional practices for consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Common planning time has enabled some teachers to improve consistency of instructional practices and to create common assessments. Many teachers use instructional strategies and practices that are consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, but limited evidence exists that these strategies are explicitly connected to core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. During interviews with district leaders, for example, individuals reported that they spend time visiting classrooms with the principal to examine instructional practices related to the district goal of active learning but did not explicitly connect their observations with specific learning expectations. Although the new educator evaluation system includes goal setting by educators, teachers at Grafton High School do not explicitly connect those goals to the school's core values, beliefs, or learning expectations. Additional evidence supporting this finding is reported through the Endicott survey, as 58.2 percent of teachers agrees that when making important teaching decisions, they consider the school's core values and beliefs about teaching, although nearly 70 percent of teachers agrees that teachers continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Teachers can better provide students with an opportunity to achieve the school's learning expectations by enhancing their well-established efforts to examine their instructional practices with a more explicit focus on ensuring consistency with the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott survey, district leadership, Instruction Committee)

Many teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by engaging students as active and self-directed learners, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology; some teachers support the achievement of learning expectations by personalizing instruction, engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, and emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, and applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. Teachers across the school employ such practices to varying degrees. In the Endicott survey, 47.3 percent of Grafton students reports that their teachers personalize their instruction, while 81.1 percent of students reports that teachers give them opportunities to choose topics for some assignments, pointing to an important distinction between simply providing some element of choice in an assignment and authentically personalizing instruction in a meaningful way. Review of work samples also revealed that many assignments

provide opportunities to make simple choices for an assignment (i.e., select a character for a character analysis; choose three professions to explore) while few assignments employ a deeper level of personalization.

Sufficient evidence exists of collaboration between departments, including collaboration between the special education department and other disciplinary departments, including math and science. However, examples of cross-disciplinary instruction are more rare. During interviews, students and teachers highlighted as an engaging opportunity for interdisciplinary work an interdisciplinary unit on the Vietnam War between the English and the social studies departments. While there does not exist a formal process to develop or support these collaborations and students were hard-pressed to come up with examples of interdisciplinary learning in group interviews, 43.6 percent of students reports that the curriculum emphasizes cross-disciplinary learning on the Endicott survey.

Individual teachers at Grafton High School are embracing practices that emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills that engage students as active and self-directed learners. Flipped classrooms, student-led activities, and group activities were all noted during classroom observations. At the same time, many other classroom observations were led by teacher-centered instruction, providing students with few opportunities to demonstrate these higher-level skills. A review of teacher-selected work samples revealed many assignments that require low and middle order thinking skills and few that require higher order thinking skills. This trend was consistent across the college prep and honors level courses, with a noticeable increase in assignments that promote higher order thinking skills in elective courses. Similarly, there was evidence in work samples and in the classrooms that required students to apply knowledge to other experiences throughout the curriculum, but this practice seems to be an emerging trend.

Grafton High School teachers regularly provide students with opportunities to self-assess and reflect on their progress in order to improve. Specific methods vary from department to department and teacher to teacher. Some especially creative practices merge the process of self-reflection with other learning objectives; for example, math students conduct an “error analysis” to gather information about the kinds of mistakes they are making as they prepare to correct errors and reflect on their progress in the unit. In an English class, students shared thesis statements and asked their peers for feedback, which was then used for further improvement of the work.

Grafton High School has experienced tremendous growth in the area of technology over the past year. The 1:1 iPad initiative has provided students and teachers alike with myriad opportunities and challenges. There exists throughout the school a range of adoption practices spanning from the most sophisticated strategies that promote problem-solving, higher order thinking skills, and active learning to simple substitution practices where no functional shift takes place in teaching and learning. Teachers throughout the building use technology to deepen, streamline, and even revolutionize the exchange of information and student learning. Students participating in flipped classrooms are playing more active roles as they acquire and process information. Teachers use a variety of models to provide, process, and analyze information that move beyond the more traditional model of the student as a passive recipient of a one-way stream of information flowing from teacher to student. At the same time, in other classrooms, the new technologies are being used to streamline and enhance previously existing systems and practices without radically altering the dynamic of the learning process. Students in a Latin class collaborate on a shared Google document throughout the year to compile and add to a group study sheet. Teachers are dramatically reducing the shuffle of paper back and forth in the classroom, thus reducing opportunities for students to misplace assignments or notes. Formerly inert documents become living, evolving records of ideas and discourse as students collaborate on Google documents. However, classrooms do exist in which the new technologies are serving solely as high-end vehicles to move through lessons that are essentially identical to the lessons that existed prior to the introduction of the technologies. For example, during one classroom observation, students used iPads to complete and review worksheets from a workbook that was scanned and uploaded; this technology did not add value to the instruction. With additional professional development and instructional comfort level of the teachers and students, fewer examples of this type of lesson should be seen in the future.

While the 1:1 iPad initiative offers many rich and diverse educational opportunities to the Grafton High School community, with those opportunities come many challenges. The iPads provide easily distracted students with new opportunities for distraction, and teachers must address new and significant management issues. The iPads are often touted as an asset for students who struggle with organizational issues, but some students and teachers reported that they have introduced as many organizational challenges as they have solved. In some classes, there does not exist a consistent system, platform or application for disseminating or recording information or submitting work. Teachers were observed instructing students in the same course on multiple platforms which seemed to distract from the content. While one parent described this challenge as a “valuable, real-world skill,” other parents and teaching assistants reported these challenges to be overwhelming and, at times, all-consuming for

some students. In addition, while teachers have been provided with extensive iPad training, instructional assistants are provided with neither iPads nor iPad training, so the individuals responsible for providing support to the students who have the most significant challenges in this area are seemingly the least prepared to provide this support.

When teachers' instructional practices at Grafton High School more regularly include personalizing instruction; engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning; engaging students as active and self-directed learners; emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking; applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; engaging students in self-assessment and reflection; and integrating technology; more of Grafton's students will achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, teachers, students, self-study, student shadowing, student work samples, observations)

Teachers often adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student using a variety of tools for formative assessments and by providing additional support, but examples of strategically differentiated instruction or purposefully organized group-learning activities were limited. Teachers and students report an increased use of technology tools for quickly ascertaining student understanding for real-time instructional decision-making. Evidence of these strategic practices was present during classroom observations, discussed in conversations with students and teachers, described by teachers in the self-study, and demonstrated in a variety of school documents. During some classroom visits, however, teachers missed opportunities to use iPad applications to gather learning data to gauge the specific nature of student understanding; instead, teachers queried students informally through prompts, such as, "Everyone got it? Good? OK." Similarly, teachers reported a variety of practices that strategically differentiate instruction and purposefully organize group-learning activities; however, this was not observed during classroom visits. While grade 9 English provides an opportunity for teachers to differentiate instruction for heterogeneously grouped students, a few students in sophomore classes report that during the roll-out of the program in their previous year English classes it did not provide a rigorous experience for them and that instruction was sometimes "one fit for all."

Students are quick to compliment teachers on their willingness to provide additional support during advisory time and before or after the school day. Indeed, the structure for the advisory period scheduled each day affords teachers with time for meeting students individually or in small groups for learning support. Observations of these advisory periods provided evidence that the time was used for

this purpose. In the majority of classes visited, students were not grouped or working collaboratively in groups; many classes observed were teacher-centered. Differentiation practices, when evident, most often took the form of providing student choice for projects. When all teachers use differentiated instruction effectively and strategically and organize group-learning opportunities, all students will have access to high quality instruction. (self-study, student shadowing, classroom observations, teachers, students, work samples)

Systems exist at Grafton High School for teachers, individually and collaboratively, to improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; examining student work; using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; and examining current research. All teachers participate in different elements of these practices to varying degrees. Teachers in English and mathematics review state assessment data annually. Teachers conduct line-by-line analyses of the questions that challenged their students, cross-reference instructional items with curriculum documents, and propose adjustment to address and enhance corresponding instructional practices. Many teachers take advantage of online applications designed to gather real-time data about student understanding of concepts and skills, although other teachers seem to miss valuable opportunities to gather such data.

Teachers have common planning built into the daily schedule. While some of this time is used to analyze data and instructional practices, it seems to be used primarily for day-to-day planning and coordinating. There exists across the school a wide range of practices for using this shared planning time. The English department has regular, grade-level meetings, while other departments describe their meetings as taking place “as needed.” Departments have a monthly curriculum meeting that seems to have a greater focus on discussing instructional practices and data. Grafton High School teachers gather data from a variety of sources including student surveys, informal conversations in class, and feedback provided through the teacher evaluation system, and they use this data to reflect on their teaching practices. Isolated instances exist during which teachers go as far as conducting mini-research projects to evaluate their practices; one English teacher conducted a unit using two different strategies and gathered feedback from students on the experience to guide future planning. Some teachers participate in voluntary walk-through experiences, during which they visit a series of classes with an administrator with the intent of focusing on a previously determined teaching element across the classrooms visited. The participating teacher and administrator follow up the walk-through with a brief, informal discussion of the best practices observed in the classrooms. When all Grafton teachers collaboratively and individually use data, student work, and self-reflection to improve instructional

practices, the quality of instruction for all students will continually improve. (self-study, teacher interview, student work, evidence provided by subcommittee, student shadowing)

Teachers at Grafton High School are encouraged and supported in their efforts to maintain expertise in their content area and with content-specific instructional practices. Teachers attend conferences and workshops, participate in on-site trainings, and take graduate level courses. The district provides financial and logistical support for these endeavors. Department heads and other faculty members attend the Southern Worcester County League subject-area meetings to discuss curriculum, instruction, and technology in their specific content areas. A variety of off-site professional development opportunities are available to faculty. In addition, individual faculty members may approach the administration with information on workshops or courses that they would like to attend. Finally, administrators may approach a faculty member or a group of faculty members with a request to attend a particular program that addresses a curricular need. Faculty and administrators alike have described the in-house faculty/administrator walk-throughs as providing exceptionally rich learning experiences. When teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, quality of instruction improves and teachers are better positioned to provide rigorous, engaging experiences for students. (district documents, teachers, administrators, self-study)

Commendations:

1. The allocation of common planning time for most departments to focus on ensuring consistency in instructional experiences and assessments
2. The creation and implementation of innovative strategies by some faculty for incorporating the iPads to engage students as active and self-directed learners
3. The regular opportunities for students to self-assess and reflect on their progress
4. The increased use of technology tools for quickly ascertaining student understanding for real-time instructional decision-making
5. The design of the daily advisory period, providing students with opportunities for extra support for achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
6. The district support of professional development for teachers
7. The in-house faculty/administrator walk-throughs that providing exceptionally rich and collaborative learning experiences.

Recommendations:

1. Explicitly connect instructional strategies to the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
2. Explore ways to better connect teacher evaluation goals to the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
3. Increase collaboration among teachers to develop more interdisciplinary experiences for students
4. Increase the frequency of lessons and assignments that foster higher order thinking skills across all course levels
5. Utilize available technology in increasingly sophisticated ways to promote personalization, authentic tasks, and self-directed learning
6. Ensure that all staff who are providing support to students with iPads are trained and equipped to do so effectively
7. Consider having departments adopt a common set of iPad applications that are specific to their content area in order to enhance instruction
8. Provide professional development focused on differentiation strategies and ensure that teachers incorporate these to meet the needs of all students



Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

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

Assessment

Conclusions

Grafton High School's professional staff is beginning to use school-wide rubrics, to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. School-wide rubrics have recently been developed to assess 21st century learning expectations as outlined in Grafton High School's mission. As the process is still in the formative stage, the use of school-wide rubrics generally varies from one teacher to the next and from one department to the next. Some teachers report not using the rubrics; others have modified them or incorporated elements into other rubrics. At present, each department reports on one assigned learning expectation for each student through report cards. After the marking term, administration reports on overall student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations using graphical representation of aggregate student data from PowerSchool in a parent letter explaining the expectations and sharing the overall student body results. The principal explained this sharing of information is continuing to evolve and will continue to be communicated to parents and the community using the school's website, school committee meetings, parent forums and parent letters. The use of school-wide rubrics on the part of academic departments is inconsistent, making them at present, unreliable for assessment of individual or whole-school progress in achieving 21st century learning goals. The English department has embraced the school-wide rubrics and has incorporated their use in regular evaluations of student reading, writing and speaking. When all teachers consistently apply the use of school-wide rubrics and collectively modify the rubrics and process to better fit their needs, the school will be able to increasingly measure student and school progress at achieving the 21st century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, sample rubrics, committee interviews, student interviews, meeting with principal, self-study)

Grafton High School's professional staff has begun to communicate individual student progress in achieving the schools' 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's overall progress to the community. Each department currently has responsibility for reporting on one primary learning expectation using the rating scale and language from MCAS, the Massachusetts standardized testing for public school students. This new reporting initiative has led to the addition of the 21st century learning expectations and associated rating scale of "exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, and failing," to the current student report card, which is sent to all parents at the end of a marking term. Two times per year, teacher's report individual student progress in achieving their department's 21st century expectations (at the end of the first and third marking terms). Teachers attempt to use the school-wide rubric to report on their department-specific learning expectation. After the 3rd quarter of 2013, administration reported in a parent letter on overall student progress in

achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations using aggregate student data from PowerSchool. Administrators plan to continue with this parental communication following each reporting term. The school uses multiple ways to inform and educate the community on 21st century learning expectations. The school's website provides a 21st century learning page to showcase examples of student work exhibiting these skills along with a Parent and Community Connections page to share information with the Grafton community. The school's Facebook page offers another means of communicating with students, families, and community. The school committee agenda from April 9, 2012 highlighted a presentation on the differences between 21st century mobile learning versus 20th century traditional learning. Minutes from Parent Connections meetings highlighted the goal of a challenging curriculum that incorporates 21st century learning. Further revision of the school-wide rubrics to effectively align with departmental learning expectations and expanded use of existing communication vehicles will assist in the professional staff's reporting on student and school progress in achieving Grafton's 21st century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, Assessment Committee, administrators, website, school committee agenda, parents)

Departmentally, the professional staff periodically collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Through the use of common planning time, teachers within a department informally share student data on mid-year and final exams, as well as on some common assessments and standardized testing. This is done to identify areas for improvement and to modify class lessons to improve student achievement. All algebra classes now take a common benchmark at the beginning of the school year to identify common skills and content areas in need of review. The science, English, and math departments use common planning time to review MCAS scores, to identify areas for improvement, and to formulate a plan to improve student achievement. As a result of MCAS analysis, biology teachers identified a weakness in the biochemistry area and created a new lab to review the topic prior to MCAS testing to assess student knowledge of curriculum taught early in the school year. After observing poor performance on an English paper, the English department reevaluated research paper elements and policies to create a GHS guideline for research papers across all grades and levels. Formalizing the process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student data for mid-year and final exams, common assessments, and MCAS will enable the professional staff to better respond to inequities in student achievement. (Assessment Committee, teachers, self-study, school leadership meeting, departmental meeting documents)

Prior to each unit of study, teachers often communicate to students the unit-specific learning goals, and occasionally the school's 21st century learning expectations, to be assessed. According to the Endicott

survey, 72.1 percent of students feels that teachers communicate the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Some teachers use school-wide rubrics to share these goals, others do so with modification. Far more teachers create their own rubrics to be specific to a lesson or unit of study. The goal of an assignment is often communicated to students at the start of a lesson and then posted in the teacher's web page for student review. Assignments including Abstract Initials, DNA Technology, Alice Storyboard into Code, and Dinner with Lady Catherine, each provide evidence of the communication of the unit-specific goals. Continuing to provide unit learning goals and expanding consistent communication of 21st century learning expectations will enable students to understand what it is they need to know and be able to do for each unit of study. (Endicott survey, teachers, classroom observations, self-study, printed and online examples of teacher expectations)

While some Grafton High School teachers employ a variety of summative assessments including videos, projects, art and music pieces, traditional tests are also used. Rubrics or scoring guides are provided prior to or with summative assessments in those cases where performance is being assessed. Rubrics or scoring guides are used at Grafton to assess presentations, writing assignments, video production and portions of larger assignments, which sometimes are used as summative assessments. When rubrics are not used, teachers also communicate learning expectations through consistent posting in the classroom, the regular use of formative assessments, class websites and review assignments prior to assessment. Grafton's self-study survey shows that the majority of students (88 percent) is informed of teacher expectations. About 84 percent of students reports that their teachers use rubrics to assess work and 86 percent understands the rubrics being used, however, the self-study never clearly assessed the distribution of rubrics prior to summative assessment. Limited evidence of authentic assessments and corresponding rubrics suggested that their use as summative assessment tools is still emerging. Higher order thinking and 21st century learning expectations as expressed in Grafton High School's mission and core values lend themselves to authentic assessments and measurement through the use of well-designed rubrics. The increased use of authentic assessments and rubrics will connect students and faculty more integrally with well-crafted learning goals and 21st century learning expectations. (rubric samples, teacher interviews, student interviews, Endicott survey, self-study)

Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment strategies in each unit of study. Units and disciplines vary greatly in types of objectives to be assessed and the information needed by teacher and/or student, and so do the assessment strategies. Faculty members deploy a variety of formative

assessments. Formative samples include short open response quizzes, a “Question of the Day” to check previous concepts, exit ticket, Socrative quizzes, student-posted math homework solutions for class review, submission of notes or work via iPad, and informal one-on-one conversations. Teachers and students reported that these formative assessments occur regularly. Summative assessments, many times, take the form of the traditional test, but students also may be required to perform a lab, create and present a poster, rescale a three-dimensional object, navigate the creation of a simulated sports arena or write a literary research evaluation within or as a summative assessment. The use of varied assessment strategies including formative and summative assessments aligned with school-wide expectations that engage students in a multitude of meaningful ways to utilize 21st century learning expectations adds authenticity in the assessment and application of higher order thinking. (assessment samples, class observations, teacher interviews, student shadowing, student interviews, class websites)

Grafton High School teachers regularly collaborate in formal and informal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Most departments utilize common planning time built into the seven-day rotation to examine, analyze, revise, and create a variety of assessments. During this time, teachers informally share common assessment and results, discuss content and skill areas in need of improvement, and make assessment revisions as needed based on unit-specific goals. At other times, teachers will seek out colleagues teaching similar courses to share and revise assessments. In a co-taught math class, the classroom and special education teacher have the opportunity to review student results and to make appropriate adjustments to assessments. Formally, teachers have focused on the development of common mid-year and final exams across many departments. Implementation of a formal process to create, analyze, and revise common assessments across departments will ensure consistent, continual review of student assessment practices to improve overall student achievement and fulfillment of Grafton’s learning expectations. (teacher interviews, Assessment Committee meeting, self-study, department meeting documents)

Teachers generally provide timely, corrective feedback to ensure students improve their work. It is unclear how often students “revise” as oppose to “improve the next time” around. The Endicott survey revealed 70 percent of students believes that teachers return assessed or corrected work in a reasonable amount of time and about 80 percent indicates that teachers offer suggestions for improvement. Student perception of “fair and consistent” grading was reported at 66 percent overall, with 59 percent and 55 percent of juniors and seniors respectively, responding positively. Suggestions for improvement on assignments come in a variety of forms. Several homework assignments from the

math department showed that feedback is plentiful if not always specific. While most samples simply indicated which problems students solved incorrectly, one diagnostic example included a rubric. The English department uses a five-step writing process with scheduled opportunity for teacher and peer evaluation and feedback. Several examples of formative assessments from other disciplines were designed to be corrected easily and returned quickly. In one math class, students were asked to review their mistakes and not only correct, but also explain the reasons for their corrections. The School Fusion website increases teacher accessibility, and some teachers make themselves available beyond school hours for extra help providing additional avenues outside of the regular school day when students can receive personalized feedback. Consistent use of timely feedback will better prepare students for summative assessments and foster the achievement of the school-wide 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott survey, student work, teacher interviews, Assessment Committee, student shadowing)

Grafton High School teachers regularly use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Across disciplines and levels, teachers use a variety of formative assessments, including dip-sticking, questioning, class discussion, question of the day, Socratic quizzes, sharing of student class work, and teacher circulation. Using these methods, teachers appear to gauge student performance at multiple times during a lesson and adjust instruction if needed. In a painting class, the art teacher circulated to check student work for concept understanding prior to moving on to the application of the skill. In an English class, the teacher asked for individual student input and then checked for overall student agreement via a series of closed ended questions prior to moving on in the lesson. The addition of the 1:1 iPad initiative has added new methods of formative assessment that continue to evolve. Across disciplines, some teachers are using the Evernote iPad application to collect and review student notes prior to class; students then use class time to apply concepts, working individually and, sometimes, in groups. When a particular math concept revealed lower than expected student performance, students were asked to revise and comment on their work. Grafton High School's continued regular use of formative assessments to inform and adapt instruction will continue to improve student learning. (self-study, classroom observations, teacher interviews, Assessment Committee, student work)

Teachers and administrators work individually and collaboratively to examine a range of evidence of student learning for curriculum revision and improvement of instructional practices. This effort frequently includes student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, standardized

assessments, and data from sending schools, but never receiving schools, post-secondary institutions or survey data from current students and alumni. Some teachers do walk-throughs of classes with an administrator to begin a dialog about instructional practices and student learning. In most departments, teachers have been given common planning time once per cycle in part, to provide opportunities for collaboration. Mentoring of new teachers is, by definition collaborative, and mentor/mentee meetings review and evaluate student work, lessons and curriculum. MCAS data, AP results and common assessment results are resources utilized during curriculum review. Grafton High School also has had a five-year curriculum review cycle and process that allows a year for review and revision, a year for additional revision and approval with the remainder of time devoted to training and implementation. It is unclear how that cycle has worked and there is evidence that other pressing matters have sidetracked curriculum development. With a shift to Atlas for online curriculum development, there will be a need for Grafton to look at the process of curriculum development anew, to adjust for the many changes the school has endured in recent years. Teachers regularly examine student work to assess the effectiveness of lessons and to make adjustments to units of study. For example the math department regularly gives assignments grounded in Common Core objectives. These are evaluated on an ongoing basis and sometimes result in changes in the speed, depth and method with which subsequent lessons are delivered. Common planning time is used, in part, for collaboration on common assessments such as those submitted for the US II mid-term, geometry mid-term, English 9 mid-term, and a frog dissection lab/assessment. The English department has also used common planning to integrate school-wide rubrics into many of their assignments and assessments.

While content-specific assessments are regularly reviewed and used to improve the curriculum and instructional practice, evaluation of individual and school progress in achieving 21st century learning expectations is inconsistent in most departments. Teachers review the results of standardized assessments to modify curriculum. Reflections on MCAS results caused the biology teachers to develop a digestion lab to review aspects of biochemistry lessons from earlier in the year at a time when anatomy is taught, which is also closer to MCAS. AP exam results were reviewed over a ten-year period to identify areas in need of improvement. Grafton High School examines data from the middle school as part of a district initiative to facilitate better transition from the middle school to the high school. The high school has used this data most recently to help determine student placement in 9th grade math courses. According to the self-study, Grafton High School does not examine evidence of student learning from post-secondary institutions, nor does GHS make use of survey data from alumni. Teachers and administrators collaborating to formally and regularly review a variety of evidence of student learning accumulated from walk-throughs, assessments, student work, data from sending

schools and survey data, will increase effectiveness of evolving curriculums and instructional strategies with increased integration of authentic assessments and rubrics, and the addition of data from post-secondary sources. (teachers interviews, school committee meeting, curriculum review process overview, memo AP scores)

During the 2012-2013 school year, grading and reporting practices were reviewed and revised to align with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. The school committee reviews grading policies and requires major changes in the reporting system to be preceded by a cooperative study and evaluation by teachers, principals, parents, and others. This data is then presented as a proposal for school committee consideration and approval. During the 2012-2013 school year, Grafton administration employed a series of focused surveys to collect data on how other districts report on school core values and learning expectations. As a result of this data collection and consideration, administration, in conjunction with faculty consultation, adapted the current reporting practice on the school's 21st century learning expectations. This practice was first utilized in the 2013 third term marking period and will continue to be reported during first and third marking terms. Administration reports that this practice will continue to be monitored and adjusted as needed based on faculty and parent feedback. All teachers use PowerSchool to report on student course-specific grades on a regular basis. Expanded use of the school-wide rubrics will further ensure consistency in grading across disciplines, levels, and teachers. Continuing to evaluate and adjust grading and reporting practices will ensure all students and parents receive feedback on student achievement of both course-specific and school-wide learning expectations. (school committee meeting, website, administration, self-study, teacher interviews, school leadership meeting)

Commendations:

1. The development of the first phase of a reporting process on school-wide 21st century learning expectations for both individual student and overall school progress
2. The use of common planning time to collect, share, and analyze student assessment results, and to create and revise common assessments
3. The use of detailed course-specific rubrics in projects and other performance assessments
4. The clear, consistent communication of unit-specific expectations and goals to students
5. The variation in types of formative assessments, including examples of emerging authentic assessments, utilized across disciplines, courses, and levels

6. The student acknowledgement of teachers for offering suggestions for improvement to student work
7. The review and revision of curriculum based on standardized and common test results
8. The English department use of a five-step writing process with scheduled opportunity for teacher and peer evaluation and feedback.
9. The SchoolFusion website that increases teacher accessibility outside of the regular school day
10. The mentoring of new teachers that is collaborative, and enables mentor/mentee meetings to review and evaluate student work, lessons and curriculum

Recommendations:

1. Develop and implement a formal process, based on the school-wide analytic rubrics, to be used by all staff to assess individual student progress in achieving the school-wide learning expectations
2. Develop and implement a process to ensure the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and unit specific learning goals are communicated to students prior to each unit of study
3. Ensure prior to summative assessments that teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics
4. Ensure teachers use the opportunities provided through formal common planning time to collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments
5. Ensure teachers use data from sending schools, post- secondary institutions and survey data from current students and alumni in the school's purposeful revision of curriculum and instructional practices
6. Develop and implement a plan to regularly review and revise course grading and reporting practices to align with the school's core value and beliefs.
7. Formalize a process employed across departments to allow for the consistent creation, analysis, and revision of common assessments
8. Create more opportunities for students to revise and resubmit work
9. Create cross-discipline common planning opportunities focused on assessment
10. Examine evidence of student learning from post-secondary institutions and survey data from alumni

Support Standard

5

School Culture and Leadership

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

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

School Culture and Leadership

Conclusions

The Grafton High School community provides an environment that is widely perceived to be a safe, positive, respectful and supportive culture where there is a fostered sense of pride and ownership by all. The school community is inclusive of all staff, students, teachers and parents. Structures are in place to reinforce a strong sense of community. Senior leaders, school-wide advisory, and parent connection groups are all examples that contribute to the safe and positive feeling in the building. Students and parents reported strong evidence of all staff members, including non-teaching staff, reaching out in positive ways to make students feel welcomed in the school. There are many varied clubs and groups that provide opportunities for students and staff to engage in support of diverse perspectives and personalities. These groups reach out to a broader population and embody the school's core value of respect for all. These are often student-to-student as well as teacher-to-student initiatives. The electronic grading through PowerSchool provides a robust opportunity for student and teacher communication surrounding grades and achievement. School-wide rubrics are a nascent tool that is beginning to emerge as another method to empower students to take charge of their learning. Grafton High School meets or exceeds the vast majority of the hallmarks of a safe and positive school culture. When the community is invested in the educational outcomes, and all feel that they have a voice, a powerful conversation will foster student responsibility for learning and will result in shared ownership, pride and high expectations for all. (parent interviews, teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing, facility tour, leadership interview)

Grafton High School provides an equitable and inclusive learning community which provides for a heterogeneous learning environment for all 9th graders in their English core courses, in world languages and for most students in their elective offerings. The program of studies has been adapted over the past two years to eliminate all level 2 course offerings in social studies and science. In addition, beginning in 2012-2013, all grade 9 English classes have been structured to provide a heterogeneous learning environment in a core course. In addition, 9th graders who take a world language enter at the appropriate level of the course (level 1 or 2), which is not delineated as college prep/honors for students. Elective courses are also largely unleveled. Instructional strategies such as co-teaching have been implemented, and teachers who co-teach have been provided with professional development in co-teaching strategies. Reaching all students in an included classroom is a developing strategy in the school with regular educators and special educators striving to present themselves as equals in the classroom and leveraging lowered student-teacher ratios in support of the learning-challenged students within the classroom. When students are heterogeneously grouped and research-

based strategies are implemented, there is great opportunity for increased growth and learning by all students. (parent interviews, teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing, leadership interview, student work)

At Grafton High School there is an established ongoing program through which each student is intended to have an adult in the school who knows the student well and who frequently meets and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Grafton High School currently has two advisory programs. The school-wide advisory program has been in existence for two years and encompasses students from grades 10 through 12. Throughout the year, students and advisors meet twice a quarter to discuss issues and concerns related to a successful student experience at Grafton High School. In addition, school-wide advisory is responsible for implementing a formalized curriculum that focuses on the school's mission, expectations, core values and beliefs according to grade level. The grade 9 advisory program has been in existence for six years. This program relies on grade 12 students to facilitate small group discussions with 9th graders every seven days. The topics of these discussions have been determined by the school leadership and the overall theme focuses on the transition to high school, study skills, peer pressure, bullying and digital citizenship. Although the connection for 9th graders with 12th graders is a laudable concept, the school must exercise caution to ensure that the student-adult relationship is maintained. With the adoption of formalized advisory programs, students feel a sense of support and investment that helps them to develop meaningful relationships, familiarity with the mission and expectations of their school and ultimately facilitates student success at the high school level and beyond. (self-study, teachers, teacher interviews, parents, student shadowing, panel presentation)

The principal and professional staff have many professional development opportunities to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning, use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices, dedicate formal time to implement professional development and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Through the scheduling of common planning time, department meetings, faculty-wide collaboration meetings, and monthly school leadership team meetings comprised of administrators and department heads, the faculty has a number of opportunities for sharing, analysis, inquiry and reflection. In addition, faculty members receive strong support for professional development opportunities inside and outside of the building. As a result of annual faculty-wide individual professional development plans, monthly in-school professional development and content-specific professional development numerous opportunities exist for faculty

and administrators to participate in learning opportunities that will enhance the quality of instruction and engagement at Grafton High School. Most departments have common planning periods built into the master schedule and evidence was provided of frequent and effective use of this time for planning for curriculum and educational strategies. Grafton High School adopted the Atlas Curriculum Mapping program and educators are also afforded time to plan and complete these maps together.

District wide, there is time for teams from various schools to work together in K through 12, K through 8 and 9 through 12 configurations which have resulted in collaborations on curriculum mapping, common assessments and resource decision-making. When educators are provided with time to talk and collaborate with other educators, the stage is set to improve practices in the art of teaching that further student growth and development. (panel presentation, teacher interviews, school leadership interviews, self-study)

Grafton High School is in the second year of implementation of a research-based evaluation and supervision system. Approximately half of the staff was evaluated through the new system last year and the remaining half will engage in the new evaluation process this current school year. Teachers reported a positive response to year one of implementation. All new teachers, and volunteer veteran staff were evaluated under this system in year one. TeachPoint software provided an efficient opportunity for administrators to record and provide meaningful feedback to teachers in a timely manner. Both administrators and teachers reported positively about the experience of the periodic walk-throughs and the impact on practices in the classroom that resulted from those conversations. The effective rollout of the system in year one has set the stage for continued implementation in year two that is met with positive anticipation for the next phase by the faculty. Effective implementation of the new educator evaluation system is a positive tool that will improve instruction and ultimately will raise student achievement. (administrators, teacher interviews, panel presentation, Evaluation Rubric and TeachPoint templates)

By design, the organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. Common planning time for most departments has been structured within the master schedule for Grafton High School. Department and district meetings are scheduled during after-school hours and during in-service days on a regular basis, to support both vertical and horizontal integration of the curriculum as well as to enhance collaboration for the sharing of instructional practices and strategies. School periods of a little more than an hour provide sufficient time to employ a variety of activities within each lesson. The incorporation of an advisory period into each day's schedule also allows for teachers to spend extra time with students

within the school day, if required, during those advisory periods that are not scheduled for specific advisory curriculum. Deliberate planning for and scheduling of collaboration time as well as for thoughtful construction of the master schedule maximizes the opportunity for excellent instructional strategies, resulting in continually improving student achievement. (teacher interviews, school leadership interviews, master schedule, district calendar)

At Grafton High School, student load and class size enable most teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Despite the challenges of a growing population, the addition of a state-of-the-art building combined with administrators monitoring student loads for teachers as well as for class sizes has positively impacted teaching and learning overall. Although these averages are beneficial for most teachers, thirty percent of classes has over 24 students. As a group, social studies teachers as well as some other disciplines in the core curriculum have the largest class sizes. According to the Endicott survey, 38 percent of the faculty, 60 percent of parents and 71 percent of students believe that student load and class sizes allow the faculty to meet the needs of individual students. This data is indicative of the strong sense of responsibility that teachers feel for providing the best educational environment for their students. When student load and class size are equitable for all staff, then teachers are enabled to meet the learning needs of individual students resulting in a focused and positive educational environment for all learners. (self-study, Endicott survey, teachers, department chairs, master schedule, parents, students).

The principal, working with other building leaders, effectively provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. From the Endicott survey, 83.3 percent of students and 74.5 percent of staff report that the principal and other building-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations. This is a strong indicator of a high level of communication that includes clarity and consistency about the implementation of the mission of Grafton High School. The principal issues a weekly email to all staff which clarifies and communicates district goals and visions to all faculty members. In addition, he holds monthly Secondary Leadership meetings with 7 through 12 building leaders, School Council meetings, faculty meetings, curriculum meetings, Parent Connection meetings and principal coffees to ensure that the goals and mission of Grafton High School are consistently and effectively communicated to all stakeholders. The principal and the leadership team ensure that relevant professional development is provided for faculty to help them to implement practices that directly reflect the core values and beliefs of the school. Common planning is now built into the master schedule and teachers reported that the principal is willing to provide class coverage

when additional collaboration time would benefit the overall mission of the school. The administrative team has effectively rolled out the new educator evaluation system as well as the 1:1 iPad initiative.

When a building leadership team consistently and effectively provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs and expectations, then students and faculty members are empowered to actualize the mission of the school. (self-study, teacher interviews, school leadership team interviews, parent interviews, central office interviews, Endicott survey)

Teachers, students, and parents are collectively involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. The school community plays a vital role in the decision-making process at Grafton High School. The School Improvement Council, which drafts the School Improvement Plan, includes students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members. These meetings are held on a monthly basis and members of these constituencies consistently reported that their voice is heard in important decision-making. Parents attend Parent Connections and monthly principal's coffees in which opportunities are provided for parents to share their questions and concerns. Teachers, parents, students and school committee members collaborated on various NEASC subcommittees and teachers are given leadership roles on committees and in the writing of curriculum. Teachers and students took the lead in presenting to the NEASC visiting team. Teachers and parents are also active in the Parent-Teacher Organization. As a matter of practice, teachers survey both parents and students for their input on instructional matters. When the community is involved in a meaningful way in the educational decisions for the school, ownership and support by the broader school community produces positive educational outcomes. (parent interviews, teacher interviews, panel presentation, school leadership interviews, self-study, Endicott survey)

The vast majority of teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. Teacher leadership is encouraged and empowered by the school leadership. Teachers played a major role in the NEASC self-study and presentations to the visiting team. Teachers are engaged in curriculum mapping using the recently acquired Atlas Curriculum Mapping software. They develop new classes, integrate technology, facilitate school events and organize field trips that enrich the educational environment at GHS. They advise clubs like Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), National Honor Society (NHS), Best Buddies, Unified Sports and other organizations and serve as mentors to students in the school-wide advisory. Teachers serve on the School Improvement Council and two teachers took on the enormous job of co-chairing the NEASC accreditation process for Grafton High School. Research shows that the most significant influence on student learning is the effectiveness of the teaching staff, and when

teachers demonstrate initiative and leadership it brings extraordinary value to their sense of belonging, and ultimately the learning of the students in the school. (student interviews, teacher interviews, panel presentation, Endicott survey, parent interviews, observation)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are deliberately collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school board, the superintendent and the principal form an effective team in leading the district and the school. They are clear about the roles that each serves and respect the differing lines of authority between them. In the same spirit that the principal invites many constituencies to offer input for decisions, the superintendent listens carefully to the principal and makes recommendations to the school board for consideration. The collaboration of all three groups is evident in the School Council Improvement Plan in which they annually review the goals for the high school and implement an action plan complete with multiple checkpoints in order to ensure that goals are being met for the future improvement of the school. Having a clear and collective vision for the school's mission is a powerful tool in gathering financial and intellectual support for that mission. (leadership team interviews, central office interviews, school committee interviews, self-study, Endicott survey, parent interviews, teacher interviews, observation)

The school principal has been given sufficient decision-making authority to lead the Grafton High School. A clear partnership among the high school principal, the central office administration and the school committee has promoted the success of the school. The principal is highly collaborative and works closely with stakeholders to make appropriate decisions about the school's budget, curriculum, and needs. He enacts both long-term and short-term goals that have been adopted by the superintendent and school committee, but has a fair degree of autonomy to make decisions that will lead to the best outcome and cleanest accomplishment of the goals. The communication lines are extremely open, and the emphasis is definitely centered on school improvement. The Endicott survey results show that parents and staff recognize the principal's authority with less than two percent of the respondents in disagreement with the notion that he makes decisions about leading the school. Working effectively with the School Improvement Council, the principal presents both educational and cultural goals for each school year. Appropriately empowering the principal with decision-making authority allows the principal to focus on continuous school improvement. (self-study, school board, central office personnel, administrators, school support staff, Endicott survey, parents, students)

Commendations:

1. The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all
2. The principal effectively provides instructional leadership that is universally recognized and respected and provides a sense of pride throughout the school community
3. The school actively solicits input from all stakeholders in the community and uses the input to inform its decisions
4. The allotment of common planning time has deliberately been built into the master schedule for most departments
5. The time and resources that are allocated for relevant professional development to support planned initiatives
6. The formal, ongoing program which meets on a regular basis for all students to examine and explore the school's 21st century learning expectations.
7. The cross-district collaboration time provided for K through 12 articulation
8. The effective and positive rollout of phase one of a new evaluation system
9. The department and district-level information and collaboration meetings scheduled on a regular basis
10. The continuous effort to monitor and address both student load and class size
11. The environment that encourages and empowers teacher leadership and responsibility
12. The strong communication of a shared vision
13. The respect for lines of authority
14. The consistent provision by the school board and superintendent of sufficient decision-making authority for the principal to lead the school

Recommendations:

1. Plan and implement opportunities for departments and co-teachers without common planning time within the master schedule to be collaborative
2. Provide additional professional development to staff on the educator evaluation system
3. Provide additional opportunities for student to participate in heterogeneous core courses
4. Ensure opportunities for connections between grade 9 students and the adult mentor in the advisory program
5. Develop and implement a plan to ensure class size and teacher loads are appropriate to meet the learning needs of individual students in the face of enrollment changes

6. Examine and resolve any identified concerns with the equity of student load and class size across departments

Support Standard

6

School Resources for Learning

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

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

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

School Resources for Learning

Conclusions

Grafton High School has intervention strategies in place that are occasionally timely and coordinated, but are most often directive. In 2013, the 8th grade school counselor “looped” with the incoming 9th graders, making articulation and purposeful support for identified and at-risk students more complete. For those students, as well as for previously identified upperclassmen, the ACHIEVE program provides individualized supports and easier access to counseling and psychological services.

ACHIEVE serves students with the greatest needs and a specially assigned adjustment counselor is available to this program in order to quickly assist students in family, mental health, anxiety and relationship issues that might otherwise derail academic progress. A less intensive intervention than the ACHIEVE program is the ADC (Academic Development Center) which is utilized by at-risk students. This program provides certified content-area staff to tutor students in curricular areas for a 68-minute period. Students who build skills toward self-sufficiency are able to “graduate” from the ADC at the semester or year mark. A Student Support Team (SST) meets approximately once every ten days in order to discuss students who present as needing additional supports. This team is made up of regular education, special education, and guidance staff. They discuss students demonstrating “red flag” behaviors such as attendance issues, peer or behavioral problems, or failing grades. The SST then suggests possible interventions classroom teachers may use before initiating other avenues of assistance for at-risk and/or struggling learners. As referenced in the Endicott Study, 59.7 percent of students and 58 percent of parents feel the school provides timely, coordinated strategies to meet the needs of all students. Because of the consciously structured ACHIEVE and ADC programs, Grafton High School students with the greatest needs are strongly bolstered by appropriate support staff.

However, the timeliness of intervention strategies for all students would be further enhanced by the development of a coordinated process which more efficiently identifies and intervenes with recent or newly struggling learners. (Endicott study, self-study, teachers, parents, department leaders, school support staff)

Grafton High School utilizes technology for providing the vast majority of its information to families about available student support services and has a plan to reach out to those most in need. The high school guidance web page provides general information about counselor assignments, important upcoming dates and programs, and links to college and financial aid resources. Most often, students and families are directed to the online handbook for essential content, information and various forms, or to schedule an appointment. Recently, “guidance breakfasts” have become an additional vehicle used to allow face-to-face contact between families and the guidance personnel and a specifically

targeted email or postal mail correspondence goes out to senior and grade 9 parents in particular, to help them understand where their children fall in comparison to graduation requirements and course progressions. For those students demonstrating the most need, more systematic phone and/or email contact can be established between the adjustment counselor, ACHIEVE and ADC support staff, and the family. Parent meetings can then be established with the SST when most beneficial. As approximately two-thirds of parents (67 percent) agrees or strongly agrees that the school provides information to families about available support services, Grafton High School is frequently able to meet the communication needs of its constituents about available support services. As the school continues to evaluate what will be most helpful to the neediest families, they will be better able to utilize available support services. (self-study, teachers, parents, department leaders, school support staff, Endicott survey)

Grafton High School is utilizing technology to support and coordinate an effective range of services for each student. PowerSchool is utilized as the main student information system which provides communication between teachers/staff and students/parents on grades, scheduling and attendance data. Teachers can use PowerSchool to check the progress of their students in other classes, and administrators and ELL teachers also have access to students' data in order to verify their grades, assignments and status. An English translation module is attached to PowerSchool, so that non-English speaking parents can be informed about their student without possessing full command of the English language. The nursing staff (n=1) has FileMaker Pro as her data base program. She can record data and print necessary medical reports. The nurse is able to communicate by email with staff and parents when necessary about health topics and issues. Lunch software is available with a program called Nutrikids. SchoolFusion is yet another program available as a communication device between school and home as it allows teachers and other staff to create individual web pages, as well as to post calendars, schedules, expectations for learning, rubrics, curriculum, etc. Grafton High School special education and 504 staff uses SemsTracker to coordinate documents, review /create progress reports, make plans, and produce invitations to annual meetings. Regular education teaching staff can log in to this program as well in order to view student goals and accommodations.

In the GHS library, reservations for rooms and computer labs are made online. The librarian has access to Destiny, a web-based library management program which includes an online library catalog. School counselors have Naviance available to them, which allows students to track their progress, save particular personal achievement data (log activities for resume building in senior year, for example) and complete interest inventories. In addition to Naviance, other programs which link into

PowerSchool include Autocomm, SIF, and LevelData. The intention of the 1:1 iPad initiative, begun in the fall of 2012, was to support student learning. Individualized technology support is available through apps such as “read2go.” Instructional assistants and behavior learning assistants are not provided iPads nor have the ability to view student grades through PowerSchool. Instructional and behavior learning assistants have also not been included in professional development opportunities related to technology intergration or iPad deployment. However, these staff members often work most closely with students demonstrating the greatest needs for support. By continuing to make technology available to the entire school community, support services staff will be able to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. (self-study, facility tour, panel presentation, teacher interview, students, department leaders, school support staff)

Grafton High School has an adequate number of certified / licensed personnel to provide school counseling services to all of its students; however, lacking a written developmental program, the counselors seldom meet with students on a regular basis individually or in groups, inconsistently provide outreach to outside social service providers and do not routinely use feedback to assess programmatic effectiveness. GHS employs five full-time counselors for a student population of approximately 780. The average counselor to student ration ($780/5=156$) is well within all acceptable guidelines. In addition there is a full-time guidance secretary, a separate adjustment counselor who works with many students including those in the ACHIEVE program, a school psychologist and the school nurse to support the counseling team. There is no written, developmental guidance program used or in place at Grafton High School. In addition, the guidance department does not utilize or implement any of the school-wide rubrics. Counselors in the guidance department rarely meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, or college counseling. GHS counselors attempt to meet with students two or three times per year, although that does not always happen.

Parent reflections and the Endicott survey highlight this problem as significant as only 24 percent of parents believes counselors meet regularly with their children. While seniors often have more access to the counseling staff as they prepare for the college search and application process, the majority of students (72 percent) reports they do not meet with their counselors regularly. The adjustment counselor runs occasional group sessions, particularly focusing on social relationships and peer interaction issues. Counselors, in order to introduce students to Naviance or to provide information on the college search or financial aid opportunities, provide full-class group meetings. The guidance staff at GHS when required can provide collaborative outreach and referral to community and mental health agencies or social service providers. The department has worked with DCF, MASSHealth, and You Inc., a local agency which is able to provide once per week appointments for students in need of

therapeutic counseling sessions. Students in crisis can be evaluated and assisted by YMCI, a mobile crisis intervention team, as well. Grafton's guidance department does not routinely utilize data or feedback to assess their programmatic effectiveness or to make improvements. When asked why the guidance breakfasts were instituted this year, one counselor replied because s/he had seen the concept at a professional conference. No end-of-year surveys to parents or students with the intent of gathering suggestions for improvement were referenced. By delivering strong, clear, coordinated services in its guidance and counseling program, GHS will improve practices and will enable each student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, student shadowing, facility tour, teacher interview, teachers, counselors, parents, school support staff, Endicott survey)

The school does have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel to meet the health and nursing needs of the student population; however, there are times when the availability of support staff would enhance the delivery of services. Grafton High School employs one full-time nurse and no support staff. With the student population of GHS at approximately 780, one nurse is able to provide the recommended level of care. While the nurse makes herself available before and after school (specifically for the needs of sports teams) she has no support staff to assist with necessary paperwork, to supervise the health office while she is out. Grafton High School's nurse sees 30 to 80 students per day in her office for routine first aid, common ailments, OTC medications and daily medication administration for prescribed chronic conditions. She provides direct intervention when she administers EpiPens, nebulizers, insulin, splints, and/or seizure care. The nurse is able to consult with a local physician contracted by Grafton Public Schools in order to appropriately refer students. A process is in place which requires parental consent and follows all district policies for federal and state confidentiality and privacy. The nurse provides ongoing health assessments when she works with students in the health classrooms for programs such as smoking cessation or blood pressure clinics. She also utilizes BMI (Body Mass Index) data from all 10th grade students to keep informed of overall student health and also schedules workshops when indicated. Some of the workshops she has scheduled include discussions on how family genetics can influence diabetes, obesity, and other serious conditions. The nurse seeks out and uses relevant feedback to inform how to improve student health services. One specific and popular need which sprung from such data was the offering of first aid and CPR training and certification for any student or staff member interested in learning these skills. However, some of her time is devoted to filing and other clerical duties, and this takes away from her ability to provide direct student care services and programs. When staffing levels are examined and adjusted based on identified needs of the student population, nursing services will more efficiently and

thoroughly provide preventative health services, direct intervention services, and ongoing health assessments. (facility tour, nurse, teachers, parents, school support staff)

Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices with limited staff who are engaged in the school's curriculum and are responsible to respond to student's interest and needs in order to support independent learning. The library at the new Grafton High School possesses a beautiful design and is accessible to staff and students for most of the school day. The librarian maintains a pleasant, helpful environment with effective and engaging displays. Every effort is made to maintain a wide variety of resources that support all students as evidenced by a recently purchased Easy Reader Collection that support lower level readers at GHS. The librarian offers outreach collaboration to teachers and students by providing class presentations concerning plagiarism, online database usage and individual student research support. Teachers who sign up online to use the facility receive an immediate response from the librarian requesting the nature of the visit and offering to support the project with electronic and print resources. Staffing is a concern with student access to the library limited before and after school, and the library closed each day during 2nd lunch. The Endicott survey reported that 52.8 percent of the staff agrees that the library has sufficient staffing. At this time, the new 1:1 iPad initiative has created a school environment in which many students do not see the need to avail themselves of the offerings of a vibrant 21st century library experience. Students most often visit the library for occasional computer use, to create projects at the tables, or to use the air printing capabilities with their iPads. Students are encouraged to complete an exit slip upon leaving the facility to document their activity, and some useful data has been collected that could direct future library growth. Best practice for 21st century learning leading to career and college readiness requires that students are knowledgeable in accessing, evaluating and utilizing a wide variety of sources of information. When the school finds a way to expand student access to the library media center before, during and after school hours and develop a stronger collaborative model for the librarian and all teaching staff, there will be a positive impact on student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, self-study, library correspondence, library website, librarian, teachers, student shadowing, observation)

Grafton High School has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who cooperate with teachers, counselors, targeted services and other support staff to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. Support services staff facilitate inclusive learning opportunities for all students and perform ongoing assessments to improve services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA and English language learners

(ELL). The Academic Development Center (ADC) and the ACHIEVE programs are designed to support students who may struggle with content material for a variety of reasons. The Student Support Team collaboratively reviews data to determine the best support program for each individual student and facilitates the communication between and among teachers, parents, and students about specific goals. These programs are designed to provide academic, social, and developmental supports connected to core course materials. This enables students to access most of the learning opportunities that GHS offers. Inclusion in these programs is based on assessments, observations, review of student needs, and additional relevant data. In addition, there are co-taught classes that include a content certified teacher and a special educator. This co-teaching model has the potential to enrich instruction and support access to the curriculum for all learners. Other student services include individual aides and Behavior Learning Aides (BLAs) who provide individual student support in classrooms. Vertical alignment efforts to identify these at-risk students have begun and a focus is on transitioning and supporting students entering high school. In addition, while the ELL population is small, services are in place to support these students including an ELL certified teacher and access to tutors when needed. While GHS has many programs in place to support identified students, continued development of the co-teaching model and review of current programs will ensure that all students can access the curriculum and achieve the core values and learning expectations. (teachers, observations, self-study, parents, facility tour, support services staff)

Commendations:

1. The ACHIEVE and ADC programs are well defined, well staffed, and well utilized by students
2. The 8th grade counselor transitioning to high school with the class of 2013 provided depth of specific student familiarity
3. The great deal of information about support services available online to students and families
4. The abundance and availability of technology to staff
5. The adequate staffing in place to provide a beneficial and viable school counseling office which addresses the needs of all students
6. The new library facility, the technology resources, and the collaborative outreach approach to staff and students provide a sound foundation for the library facility to support 21st century learning expectations

Recommendations:

1. Investigate and implement a more timely process for identifying and supporting struggling learners

2. Provide additional opportunities for families to interact with support services and the guidance department through non-technological avenues to allow further positive connections to families most in need
3. Ensure the technology tools and training are available to all support staff in order to fully coordinate the range of services for all students
4. Ensure school counseling and guidance priorities provide regular meetings for personal, academic, career, and college counseling to all students
5. Use parent, student, and community surveys to receive feedback and to assist in identifying guidance priorities and expectations
6. Design, implement and deliver a written, developmental program in guidance
7. Develop and implement a comprehensive written guidance curriculum
8. Conduct a formal analysis of nursing needs and staffing levels and implement any identified findings
9. Revise the job description of the librarian/ media specialist to reflect a technologically connected school and to support 21st century learning expectations
10. Ensure that the library facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
11. Continue to develop the vertical alignment of services in order to improve earlier remediation and support for struggling students

Support Standard



Community Resources for Learning

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

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

Community Resources for Learning

Conclusions

The district's governing body consistently provides dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment and sufficient instructional materials and supplies to support teaching and learning at Grafton High School. Through the budgetary process, which includes input from each department head and then moves up the chain of command until it is reviewed by the school committee who evaluates the budget and to the town administrators who make the final approval, the school is able to attain the necessary and appropriate funding. Although many faculty members mentioned the need for more staff to decrease class size, the documentation suggests that in most areas a reasonable class load currently exists. However, it is important to explore this more in depth with the projected increase in student population. In interviews with the district leadership team it became clear that although funding is always a concern, they have been supported by the community and have plans in place to continue curriculum development confirmed by the recent purchase of the Atlas Mapping program and technology development through the 1:1 iPad initiative and the support of technology through Tech Force, run with the support of student interns. The consistency and dependability of the budget through the years has proven to be a source of confidence for the school. Maintaining reliable funding is critical in the face of student population shifts and as in order to continue to provide students with appropriate resources and access to quality education. (school leadership, self-study, parents, school committee)

The school has successfully developed, planned and funded for maintenance and repair programs to maintain, catalogue and replace the equipment and keep the school clean on a daily basis. The recent implementation of the SchoolDude and SchoolDudePM programs are practical solutions to the maintenance needs of the school and address the issue of preventative maintenance, although the implementation of these programs is not being employed to its fullest potential. The director of grounds and maintenance and school administrators use these programs in order to keep abreast of problems with the building and physical plant and to streamline the inflow of information to one collective location; however, many of the staff and faculty are not aware of its implementation. Although many of the warranties have terminated since building occupancy, the lead custodian has maintained positive working relationships with vendors and contractors to aid in the maintenance and refinement of these very complex systems in order to fine tune the output to make the building more efficient and to keep them working properly. The lead custodian is responsible for logging the daily outputs and rates based upon gauges for all of the equipment including but not limited to chilling

units, boilers, glycol pumps, etc. Although the Building Management System (BMS) is an extensive computer-based program that allows for the tracking and management of the system levels, classroom temperature levels, airflow, and other pertinent systems for the school, the levels are checked against the actual outputs, and there is human revision and oversight to the program. In addition to the lead custodian's use of this program, he is also training members of the night custodial staff in its use. The lead custodian received 40 hours of training to be able to effectively use this program. The lead custodian and director of building and grounds work in a cooperative manner, as well as with the rest of the faculty and staff. Reviewing the division of labor among the custodians could leave the lead custodian more time to serve in the role of a "facility director" and would help with the day-to-day upkeep of the building. The staff apprises the custodial staff of maintenance issues through emails and phone calls. The five custodians on the night staff focus on the cleaning of classrooms, common areas, prepare the building for events, etc. The school is proactive in the maintenance of the school and implementation of programs that will ensure the current and future maintenance of the school and physical plant. The maintenance, cataloging and replacement of equipment is effective to ensure the building will stay in top working condition. By finding ways to expand the use of programs that support the maintenance and upkeep of the school, the facility will continue to support 21st century learning for the foreseeable future. (school support staff, teachers, facility tour, school leadership)

The community dependably funds, and the school conscientiously implements, a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital investments. Grafton High is part of the district wide five-year capital plan aimed at ensuring that all students are able to perform at high levels in a clean and safe learning environment. According to the Endicott survey, 87.3 percent of staff believes that the school has a long-range plan that adequately addresses facilities, programs, services, staffing levels and capital improvements. Prior to the construction of the new high school, Grafton Public Schools hired the New England School Development Council to provide future enrollment projections and in doing so was able to construct a building with large classrooms and the ability to add on if the numbers exceed the anticipated projections. Currently, Grafton High School has adequate staffing available, however with the projected increase in enrollment over the next five years, the central office and school administration will need to address long-term staffing concerns to maintain the current teacher-to-student ratios and all appropriate ratios due to the anticipated population increase. In 2009, as a means of assuring that all future facility needs and programs meet the growing need of the Grafton community, the Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of teachers, administrators, students, parents, school committee members, business partners and government leaders, put together a plan to address future needs in

regards to facility maintenance and expansion of programs. As the Capital Plan has expired, Grafton High School must construct a new plan to ensure that the goals remain current and in line with district and school goals. In addition, with the anticipated construction of the new Grafton High School, a Technology Plan was developed (FY 2010-FY 2013) outlining the goals and objectives aimed at supporting the infrastructure of a 21st century high school. Although the implementation of this plan was part of the architectural, engineering, and construction process, the end of this plan is fast approaching, thus Grafton High School will need to update their technology plan to ensure that the high level of technology with the building is supported for years to come. As Grafton High School continues to settle into the new facility, it is essential for school and central office administration to develop and implement long-range plans that are lapsing in regards to facilities, staffing needs, and technology to ensure that, with the projected increase in population, future generations of students are able to have a similar high level educational experience that Grafton students are currently experiencing in meeting the student learning needs articulated in Grafton's Core Values and Beliefs. (self-study, teacher interviews, facility tour, central office personnel, Endicott survey)

By design, Grafton High School makes every effort to involve a variety of faculty and building administrators in the transparent development and implementation of the budget. All members feel that their voices are heard even if the particular budget items are not approved. As this is a lengthy process with a pre-determined timeline for each step, department heads are asked to discuss and evaluate their needs with staff early in the school year to develop an accurate budget proposal. Once compiled, the department chair engages in a preliminary conversation with the principal to determine validity and affordability when compiling the school-wide budget. After all department chairs have contributed to the development of the school budget, the principal continues the conversation with the superintendent who will deliver the recommendations to the school committee for review. The school committee evaluates the school budget, making cuts as needed, and presents their final approved budget to the town administrators. Over the past five years the town of Grafton has fully supported the budget. As a result, the development and implementation of the budget at Grafton High School is all inclusive and supports quality teaching and learning. (self-study, teacher interviews, central office personnel, school leadership)

The school site and plant successfully supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. Grafton High School has extensively addressed the concerns cited in the last NEASC decennial report in regards to the building's ability to support curriculum and high quality instruction. The new Grafton High School includes a wide variety of instructional areas including a classroom for

every teacher, state-of-the-art science labs and a welcoming library facility. Guidance and health suites support the physical, social, and emotional needs of students designed to respect privacy and confidentiality. Dedicated special education spaces are integrated throughout the building designed to support large and small classroom instruction. The development of life skills rooms, which supports the Vocational Program, adequately serves the post-graduation special education students as well as provides space dedicated to speech pathology, occupational and physical therapy. The creation of numerous non-dedicated collaborative spaces such as the Academic Development Center provides support and assistance to struggling learners in a safe and comfortable environment. The new athletic facilities including the gym, locker rooms, fitness room, and dance studio not only provide a beautiful setting for extracurricular sports programs, but also adequately support the physical education curriculum. Grafton High School displays extensive support for technology as shown in the 1:1 iPad initiative as well as various dedicated computer labs integrated throughout the building. The design and construction of Grafton High School shows the commitment of the town to support high quality instruction to ensure that the needs of all student learners are met through a variety of programs and services. (self-study, teacher interview, facility tour, school leadership)

Grafton High School successfully maintains the necessary documentation to ensure that the physical plant and facilities meet all state and federal laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. After touring the facilities with the lead custodian, interviewing with the director of building and grounds and reviewing the evidence provided it is clear that the facilities are in full compliance with all pertinent regulations, performs the appropriate inspections and maintains the corresponding documentation for those inspections. By maintaining facilities in compliance with all pertinent laws, the students can learn in a safe environment and teachers can focus on instruction. (school support staff, faculty tour, building permits, central office personnel)

All professional staff at Grafton High School make a concerted effort to actively engage parents and families in a variety of ways as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school in a variety of manners. As a result of the Endicott survey, indicating a need for greater solicitation by the school's professional staff to increase parental involvement, a variety of opportunities have emerged, aimed at drawing more parental involvement in both formal and informal manners. In addition to the traditional open house and parent-teacher conferences, parents are invited to serve as members of a variety of committees including the School Advisory Council, Parent Connections Group, Special Education Parent Advisory Committee, District Strategic Planning Committees and the School Improvement Council. Both the

school and the district administrative teams have made an extra effort to reach out to parents of at-risk students who are enrolled in the ACHIEVE program, inviting them to attend bi-monthly informational meetings designed to provide relevant information on the program. The GHS Parent Group, designed as part of the 2011-12 School Improvement Plan is another opportunity for professional staff to provide face-to-face accessibility, meeting monthly with parents providing them with the opportunity to ask questions or discuss issues surrounding their child's education. With the opening of the new school building, the staff at GHS increased their electronic communication with parents. In addition to weekly emails by the principal as well as a principal's page containing a blog updating parents on upcoming events, teachers have utilized SchoolFusion and PowerSchool as a means of providing parents with a vast amount of easily accessible information including expectations, assignments, rubrics, and grades. By continuing to actively engage families of less connected students, Grafton High School will provide support for students and improve the overall learning experience. (self-study, teacher interviews, central office personnel, Community Resource For Learning Committee)

Grafton High School has successfully formed multiple partnerships with parents, local businesses as well as with surrounding colleges and universities in order to expose students to a variety of opportunities which support student learning. The purpose of these partnerships vary in nature from academic to volunteer to social or business. Students volunteer at local nursing homes with FCCLA (Family Career and Community Leaders of America) through which they are able to form relationships with members of the community while providing a service to the nursing home and strengthening bonds with the local businesses among other service projects. The guidance department facilitates some of these relationships and others come from individual student interest, administrative direction or teacher input. The parent partnerships are strengthened by communication from school administration inviting them to participate on many different committees. The Dual Enrollment Programs allow students to take credits at local colleges and are an excellent opportunity for students who are looking to receive credits before attending a four-year college or university. Additionally, representatives from Johnson and Wales participate in cooking demonstrations with students. Some seniors participate in off-campus coursework that pairs them up with local businesses to work in a community service style internship. Grafton High School offers a number of quality partnerships that are continuously being developed and expanded. These connections have been affirmed by the superintendent and through interaction with the student body that has participated in these programs, specifically within the 18 to 22 year old post-graduation population. Although, according to the Endicott survey, only 6.5 percent of students strongly agrees that their parents are involved in school programs, there is ample opportunity for parents to get involved and form a partnership with the

school if desired. Through the partnerships developed with parents, the surrounding community and business and higher education organizations, the students are able to augment their learning and growth from in-class instruction and to receive learning opportunities and advantages that are not always available in school or during the school day. (self-study, teachers, school leadership, students, Endicott survey)

Commendations:

1. The governing body's dedication to continually place a value on education and to provide funding even in lean economic times
2. The implementation of the 1:1 iPad initiative
3. The ample availability of equipment, material and supplies
4. The use and effectiveness of the Building Management System
5. The responsiveness and effectiveness of the custodial staff to maintain a clean school
6. The planning and construction of a beautiful, state-of-the-art 21st century high school
7. The adoption of technology as a foundation for educational practices
8. The transparency of the budgetary process and the inclusive nature which enables faculty to be directly involved
9. The quality of the building that promotes programs and services within the school
10. The variety and flexibility of school spaces and school building design to encourage dynamic student interaction and learning
11. The physical plant and facilities that are in full compliance to all codes and regulations
12. The myriad opportunities available for parents and families to connect with their children's education
13. The strength of the partnerships fostered by the post-graduation population

Recommendations:

1. Review, evaluate, and implement identified changes to the staffing needs as a result of the projected population growth
2. Examine and reallocate as needed the distribution of custodial staff to ensure that the facility remains clean and maintained throughout the school day and the various evening activities
3. Examine how teachers can better use technology to report facility concerns and ensure that the building is maintained and repaired
4. Develop and implement a long-term plan to address facility needs
5. Update the Five-Year Capital Plan and Technology Plan

6. Continue to build community-based partnerships to broaden and increase the variety and scope of opportunities for students

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 67. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress

Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The visiting team extends its appreciation to all members of Grafton High School for their hospitality. We are most grateful for the steering committee's attention to detail in preparing for our visit. The visiting team was able to work effectively and efficiently due to the quality of the self-study and other work completed prior to our arrival. The faculty and staff of Grafton High School followed a transparent process that resulted in an honest and thoughtful self-study. We appreciate the efforts to prepare the school community for the accreditation process, and we believe the school will be equally efficient in continuing school improvement.

Grafton High School

NEASC Accreditation Visit

September 22 – September 25, 2013

APPENDIX A - VISITING COMMITTEE

Michael Jette, Chair Merrimack Valley High School Penacook, NH 03303	Shirley Lundberg Watertown High School Watertown, MA 02472
Melissa Muzzy, Assistant Chair John Stark Regional High School Weare, NH 03281	David Murdoch Spaulding High School Rochester, NH 03867
Laura Chenette Bedford High School Bedford, NH 03110	Stephanie Nault Southwick-Tolland Regional High School Southwick, MA 01077
Monica de Aguiar Dartmouth High School Dartmouth, MA 02748	Judy Paolucci Leicester Public Schools Leicester, MA 01524
Mary Eldringhoff Tewksbury Memorial High School Tewksbury, MA 01876	Michael Pratt Tantasqua Regional High School Fiskdale, MA 01518
Ivan Ferron Triton High School Byfield, MA 01922	Mary Romans Oliver Ames High School North Easton, MA 02356
Tracy Goodell-Pelletier Eastconn/A.C.T. Willimantic, CT 06226	Steven Slate Blackstone-Millville Regional High School Blackstone, MA 01504
Benjamin Hanchett Masconomet Regional HS Boxford, MA 01921	Rebecca Tucker-Smith Mt. Greylock Regional High School Williamstown, MA 01267

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

APPENDIX B - SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

APPENDIX C - COMMENDATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Standard 1 - Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Commendations:

1. The positive school culture and drive of staff to help all students reach 21st century expectations
2. The collaborative identification and development of the core values and beliefs by all essential stakeholders
3. The new schedule that was implemented when Grafton High School moved to the new building in order to better accommodate student needs
4. The initiation of unlevleled core classes driven by the need prepare all students for 21st century learning expectations
5. The allocation of resources driven specifically by the core values and beliefs of Grafton High School
6. The technology that has been made accessible to all students

Recommendations:

1. Implement and consistently use the school-wide analytic rubrics in a meaningful way
2. Ensure that students understand the relevance of the 21st century learning expectations that are reflected in the fabric of the school's culture
3. Ensure 21st century learning expectations are published in a consistent format throughout all GHS publications
4. Explicitly relate Grafton's core values and beliefs to instructional goals and practices
5. Develop and implement analytic rubrics for the social and civic learning expectations using a format that is consistent with the academic analytic rubrics

Standard 2 - Curriculum

Commendations:

1. The use of the Atlas Curriculum Management software to improve curriculum documents
2. The common assessments, including midterms and finals, makes clear connections between the written and taught curricula
3. The common planning time for departments allows for vertical curriculum alignment within the school

4. The new facility and well-planned resource acquisition allow for fully implementing the curriculum and enhancing other learning opportunities
5. The teachers who are invested in the revision of curriculum
6. The students and teachers who are involved in effective and engaging cross-disciplinary learning, particularly between English and social studies classes
7. The emphasis on an informed and ethical use of technology with the 1:1 iPad initiative
8. The fine arts department that has begun to work with 8th grade students to produce art and perform music.
9. The high school social studies department that is working directly with middle school colleagues to align curriculum to the Common Core
10. The world languages department that has sponsored its middle school counterparts for training in the high school's language lab in anticipation of sharing this resource with middle school students.
11. The new science and world languages labs, performing arts and video recording studios, a new library and a wealth of other well-equipped spaces that have improved the ability of faculty to present and deliver new curriculum opportunities.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that the migration to the Atlas curriculum template includes documenting the 21st century expectations in the written curriculum
2. Continue to explore increased opportunities for cross-disciplinary and authentic learning
3. Ensure that the commitment to higher order thinking in the curriculum is evident in the curriculum and classroom instruction
4. Develop and implement a process to ensure curricular coordination and vertical articulation exists between and among all academic areas within the school and with sending schools in the district.
5. Examine staffing levels to ensure that class sizes and student load are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
6. Provide the school's professional staff with sufficient time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research

Standard 3 – Instruction

Commendations:

1. The allocation of common planning time for most departments to focus on ensuring consistency in instructional experiences and assessments
2. The creation and implementation of innovative strategies by some faculty for incorporating the iPads to engage students as active and self-directed learners
3. The regular opportunities for students to self-assess and reflect on their progress
4. The increased use of technology tools for quickly ascertaining student understanding for real-time instructional decision-making
5. The design of the daily advisory period, providing students with opportunities for extra support for achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
6. The district support of professional development for teachers
7. The in-house faculty/administrator walk-throughs that providing exceptionally rich and collaborative learning experiences.

Recommendations:

1. Explicitly connect instructional strategies to the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
2. Explore ways to better connect teacher evaluation goals to the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
3. Increase collaboration among teachers to develop more interdisciplinary experiences for students
4. Increase the frequency of lessons and assignments that foster higher order thinking skills across all course levels
5. Utilize available technology in increasingly sophisticated ways to promote personalization, authentic tasks, and self-directed learning
6. Ensure that all staff who are providing support to students with iPads are trained and equipped to do so effectively
7. Consider having departments adopt a common set of iPad applications that are specific to their content area in order to enhance instruction
8. Provide professional development focused on differentiation strategies and ensure that teachers incorporate these to meet the needs of all students

Standard 4 – Assessment

Commendations:

1. The development of the first phase of a reporting process on school-wide 21st century learning expectations for both individual student and overall school progress
2. The use of common planning time to collect, share, and analyze student assessment results, and to create and revise common assessments
3. The use of detailed course-specific rubrics in projects and other performance assessments
4. The clear, consistent communication of unit-specific expectations and goals to students
5. The variation in types of formative assessments, including examples of emerging authentic assessments, utilized across disciplines, courses, and levels
6. The student acknowledgement of teachers for offering suggestions for improvement to student work
7. The review and revision of curriculum based on standardized and common test results
8. The English department use of a five-step writing process with scheduled opportunity for teacher and peer evaluation and feedback.
9. The SchoolFusion website that increases teacher accessibility outside of the regular school day
10. The mentoring of new teachers that is collaborative, and enables mentor/mentee meetings to review and evaluate student work, lessons and curriculum

Recommendations:

1. Develop and implement a formal process, based on the school-wide analytic rubrics, to be used by all staff to assess individual student progress in achieving the school-wide learning expectations
2. Develop and implement a process to ensure the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and unit specific learning goals are communicated to students prior to each unit of study
3. Ensure prior to summative assessments that teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics
4. Ensure teachers use the opportunities provided through formal common planning time to collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments
5. Ensure teachers use data from sending schools, post- secondary institutions and survey data from current students and alumni in the school's purposeful revision of curriculum and instructional practices

6. Develop and implement a plan to regularly review and revise course grading and reporting practices to align with the school's core value and beliefs.
7. Formalize a process employed across departments to allow for the consistent creation, analysis, and revision of common assessments
8. Create more opportunities for students to revise and resubmit work
9. Create cross-discipline common planning opportunities focused on assessment
10. Examine evidence of student learning from post-secondary institutions and survey data from alumni

Standard 5 - School Culture and Leadership

Commendations:

1. The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all
2. The principal effectively provides instructional leadership that is universally recognized and respected and provides a sense of pride throughout the school community
3. The school actively solicits input from all stakeholders in the community and uses the input to inform its decisions
4. The allotment of common planning time has deliberately been built into the master schedule for most departments
5. The time and resources that are allocated for relevant professional development to support planned initiatives
6. The formal, ongoing program which meets on a regular basis for all students to examine and explore the school's 21st century learning expectations.
7. The cross-district collaboration time provided for K through 12 articulation
8. The effective and positive rollout of phase one of a new evaluation system
9. The department and district-level information and collaboration meetings scheduled on a regular basis
10. The continuous effort to monitor and address both student load and class size
11. The environment that encourages and empowers teacher leadership and responsibility
12. The strong communication of a shared vision
13. The respect for lines of authority
14. The consistent provision by the school board and superintendent of sufficient decision-making authority for the principal to lead the school

Recommendations:

1. Plan and implement opportunities for departments and co-teachers without common planning time within the master schedule to be collaborative
2. Provide additional professional development to staff on the educator evaluation system
3. Provide additional opportunities for student to participate in heterogeneous core courses
4. Ensure opportunities for connections between grade 9 students and the adult mentor in the advisory program
5. Develop and implement a plan to ensure class size and teacher loads are appropriate to meet the learning needs of individual students in the face of enrollment changes
6. Examine and resolve any identified concerns with the equity of student load and class size across departments

Standard 6 - School Resources for Learning**Commendations:**

1. The ACHIEVE and ADC programs are well defined, well staffed, and well utilized by students
2. The 8th grade counselor transitioning to high school with the class of 2013 provided depth of specific student familiarity
3. The great deal of information about support services available online to students and families
4. The abundance and availability of technology to staff
5. The adequate staffing in place to provide a beneficial and viable school counseling office which addresses the needs of all students
6. The new library facility, the technology resources, and the collaborative outreach approach to staff and students provide a sound foundation for the library facility to support 21st century learning expectations

Recommendations:

1. Investigate and implement a more timely process for identifying and supporting struggling learners
2. Provide additional opportunities for families to interact with support services and the guidance department through non-technological avenues to allow further positive connections to families most in need
3. Ensure the technology tools and training are available to all support staff in order to fully coordinate the range of services for all students

4. Ensure school counseling and guidance priorities provide regular meetings for personal, academic, career, and college counseling to all students
5. Use parent, student, and community surveys to receive feedback and to assist in identifying guidance priorities and expectations
6. Design, implement and deliver a written, developmental program in guidance
7. Develop and implement a comprehensive written guidance curriculum
8. Conduct a formal analysis of nursing needs and staffing levels and implement any identified findings
9. Revise the job description of the librarian/ media specialist to reflect a technologically connected school and to support 21st century learning expectations
10. Ensure that the library facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
11. Continue to develop the vertical alignment of services in order to improve earlier remediation and support for struggling students

Standard 7 - Community Resources for Learning

Commendations:

1. The governing body's dedication to continually place a value on education and to provide funding even in lean economic times
2. The implementation of the 1:1 iPad initiative
3. The ample availability of equipment, material and supplies
4. The use and effectiveness of the Building Management System
5. The responsiveness and effectiveness of the custodial staff to maintain a clean school
6. The planning and construction of a beautiful, state-of-the-art 21st century high school
7. The adoption of technology as a foundation for educational practices
8. The transparency of the budgetary process and the inclusive nature which enables faculty to be directly involved
9. The quality of the building that promotes programs and services within the school
10. The variety and flexibility of school spaces and school building design to encourage dynamic student interaction and learning
11. The physical plant and facilities that are in full compliance to all codes and regulations
12. The myriad opportunities available for parents and families to connect with their children's education
13. The strength of the partnerships fostered by the post-graduation population

Recommendations:

1. Review, evaluate, and implement identified changes to the staffing needs as a result of the projected population growth
2. Examine and reallocate as needed the distribution of custodial staff to ensure that the facility remains clean and maintained throughout the school day and the various evening activities
3. Examine how teachers can better use technology to report facility concerns and ensure that the building is maintained and repaired
4. Develop and implement a long-term plan to address facility needs
5. Update the Five-Year Capital Plan and Technology Plan
6. Continue to build community-based partnerships to broaden and increase the variety and scope of opportunities for students