

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for

Derby High School

Derby, Connecticut

September 26-29, 2010

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Statement On Limitations.....	2
Introductions	4
Overview of Findings	6
Quality of the Self-Study	
Discussion of Significant Findings regarding	
Teaching and Learning and the Support of	
Teaching and Learning	
School and Community Report	11
School's Statement of Mission and Expectations for Student Learning	16
Teaching and Learning Standards	17
Mission and Expectations	18
Curriculum	23
Instruction	32
Assessment of Student Learning	39
Support of Teaching and Learning Standards	45
Leadership and Organization	46
School Resources for Learning	57
Community Resources for Learning	69
Follow-Up Responsibilities	76

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Appendix B

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

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

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

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

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

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit – The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Derby High School, a committee of ten members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included: students and parents, but there was no participation by any board of education members. The self-study of Derby High School extended over a period of 28 school months from September 2007 to April 2010. The visiting committee noted that a few students and parents joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their 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 Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Commission, Derby High School also used questionnaires developed by the Endicott College Research Center to reflect concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. This questionnaire provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 15 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Derby High School. The Committee members spent four days in Derby, Connecticut, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commissions' Standards for Accreditation. Since the educators represented public schools from Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Derby High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 42 hours shadowing 15 students during the visit

- a total of 22 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 30 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, teachers, parents, school and district administrators, support staff, and custodians
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

Overview of Findings

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

Derby High School has identified its strengths and weaknesses through its self-assessment process and examined its programs and services. The visiting committee has supported many of the commendations and recommendations found in Derby's self-study report. This report is an attempt to help provide the school a direction as it seeks to meet the ever-changing needs of its student body and school community. Derby High School has many successes to be proud of in both the academic and extracurricular areas.

Teaching and Learning at Derby High School (DHS)

The mission and expectations for student learning document at Derby High School was developed as a collaborative effort among faculty, staff, and administrators with some parent and student input after the basic document was completed in its rough draft form. The document was written in the fall of 2007, using the previous statement as a sample to go by. In December of that year the committee presented the document to the full faculty for acceptance. In February of 2008, the board of education approved the statement. Students were given a copy of the mission to take home and discuss with their parents. There was some rewriting of the mission as a result of this. The mission and expectations is now prominently displayed and discussed throughout the building. The mission clearly reflects the values of the Derby school community with the ABC's of Derby being prominent. Derby High School pursues Academic achievement, promotes creative and critical thinking, expects appropriate Behavior, and fosters responsible Citizenship. Although all students are aware of the ABC's of Derby, not all stakeholders are quite as aware of the academic expectations listed. Teachers must use the academic expectations, and the entire school community must employ it as a guide during all decision-making processes. The current mission statement does not drive procedures, policies, or decisions affecting all students at Derby. The school has a clearly defined set of academic, civic, and social expectations, although the civic and social expectations do not have a tool to measure a student's successful achievement of these indicators. The faculty developed five school-wide rubrics to measure the academic expectations and assigned a different subject area department with the responsibility of implementing the rubrics. The rubrics lack rigor for all students attending Derby, and there is no delineation of a proficient rating. All teachers are to use the school-wide rubrics twice per quarter to give them a good sampling of student achievement and measuring the accomplishment of the academic indicators, but they do not all accomplish this. There is no system of retrieval of data or analysis of data. Much emphasis has been placed on the ABC's of Derby as the current administrators have begun a successful turn-around for the school. This may be a long process requiring the support of the entire faculty and staff. A formal scheduled review and revision process for the mission statement and student expectations must be created and implemented.

Derby High School offers a variety of courses as well as co- and extracurricular activities, providing students with various ways to meet the expectations of the curriculum. Although each curriculum area has been assigned responsibility for one of the academic expectations listed in the school's mission statement, that expectation is not listed in curriculum documents. The written curriculum documents are also not all up-to-date and some of the curriculum documents don't have board of education approval. Since the elimination of the position of curriculum coordinator, there is no formal review or coordination of the curriculum (K-12) or assurance that each high school teacher follows the prescribed curriculum. There is no common planning time scheduled to do the curriculum work, nor is there any indication that data derived from student work or assessment is used to serve as a guide for curriculum revision. Although there were several examples in the student work provided of inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order thinking as well as some authentic application of knowledge found in the curriculum, it is not universally present in all content areas or in all classes with all students. All curriculum documents must be updated or revised to provide all students with a documented

rigorous curriculum based on the school mission and student expectations statement. When the whole school joins in to accomplish this, student aspirations and achievement can be raised. The curriculum is also geared to emphasize breadth of knowledge over depth of understanding. There is no evidence that shows integration across the curriculum and only one curriculum area, physical education, is grouped heterogeneously.

The success of future efforts at refining instruction, assessment, and curriculum is also dependent on an effective program of professional development. The professional faculty and staff members should be involved in its planning, and they require time and research opportunities to develop more rubrics related to the expectations; review student work using a consistent protocol; use differentiated instruction with a diverse student population; and develop interdisciplinary activities that assist students in making connections among the various subjects. Funding must be found to provide professional development activities, repair and review of technology, and provide such basics as a textbook in all classes for all students. All faculty and staff members are involved with the Derby High School advisory program. Faculty members use a variety of methods to assess students, including the use of rubrics, paper and pencil assignments, and the opportunity to demonstrate and apply skills and knowledge that they have attained. There must be formal scheduled time for the faculty to discuss instructional strategies or use administrative feedback in their classrooms, however, discussions of instructional strategies must be fully embraced by the entire professional staff. Limited feedback from parents and students is sometimes discussed informally, but it is not used by everyone as a basis for improvement of instruction. Up-to-date and consistently operational technology in each classroom and the library is necessary for both teaching and learning.

Teachers at Derby High School use a variety of classroom assessments to evaluate the growth of their students. Some teachers use rubrics, lab experiments, written tests, oral reports, group projects, portfolios, CAPT problems and questions, and written quizzes as other means of assessing students. The results of these assessments and a compilation of that data can serve as a means for the entire professional staff to review and revise curriculum and instructional strategies in all departments by all faculty members. However, many of these types of assessments ask students to perform lower level recall and comprehension and lack a higher level of thinking and application. Most Derby High School teachers are dedicated to student success, and are willing to provide students with extra time and opportunities to succeed.

Support of Teaching and Learning at Derby High School

There have been many changes in the school and central leadership over the past five years at Derby High School. The current high school administrative team is dedicated to providing the best possible education for all students. The administrative team had to regain control of the school and all that was happening within the storied walls of DHS. This has taken a major effort and a great amount of time to begin and to accomplish, but this team is on its way to turning Derby High School into an academic institution that all stakeholders can be proud of. Although the school has written and published a respectable mission statement and student expectations, the main thrust of the administrative team has been to emphasize the ABC's of Derby;

academics, behavior, and citizenship. Good behavior, respect and citizenship by all, is most important to accomplishing the administrative goals, and the school is beginning to show the effects of this effort. Most students, teachers, and staff, and support staff members are joining the effort, and many good improvements have been made. There has been much to overcome along the way including: major budget and staff reductions, the elimination of the library media specialist and curriculum coordinator, a mostly dysfunctional technology system, and sometimes little support by the board of education. The faculty is highly qualified and dedicated and most are concerned about the quality of education provided to its students. School personnel, guidance, cafeteria workers and school paraprofessionals have a high level of concern for the student's well-being and demonstrate this on a daily basis. Most students are relatively well-behaved and polite and respect each other and the faculty and staff. There is a sense of school pride among students, parents, faculty members and the administrators. Parents are involved in co- and extracurricular programs and booster groups, but they are not involved as often in committee work or programs related to academics. Continued attempts to improve the communication with parents, community members, board of education members, and city office holders must be made in order for all to get the message of what is going on at Derby HS. A more broad-based representation of the school's and city's diverse population by parents and community members must be implemented in all areas of the school and community to hopefully improve the school in all areas. There is also a need to increase the diversity and the number of students and parents in the decision-making process.

Student support services provide a range of services by certified personnel in all areas except the library. Due to budget cuts, the certified library media specialist's position was eliminated; however, the current library clerk has assumed many of the librarian's tasks. This group of people work cooperatively together to help meet student needs and to assist them on focusing on their learning. A special education teacher and two paraprofessionals also had their positions eliminated. The school has instituted a learning center program with a four to one student to teacher ratio to service handicapped students, but an alternative education program, which would have helped to reduce the school's special education budget was also eliminated from the budget proposal. In fact, the alternative program has the potential of bringing in money to the school system as several surrounding towns do not have a like program. The guidance counselors provide a range of services and programs based on the belief that a student's success in college, work, or community is based on a well-rounded approach to education. The counselors are appreciated for the work that they do. The library clerk keeps the library open during the entire school day and has instituted using a relaxed atmosphere in the library. She is hampered in this effort by the lack of quality technology, the inability to keep the print and non-print collection up-to-date, the lack of a school board approved weeding policy and challenge policy, and the inability to participate in curriculum review, revision and integration. The library clerk, who is a great asset to the school, participates in, and is willing to help in any way that she can and should participate in curriculum work. The school utilizes a registered school nurse who is responsible for a myriad of duties and an athletic trainer who attends all home athletic events. The employment of a school resource officer and a full-time safety monitor has drastically reduced inappropriate behavior and the cutting of classes and is a continued supportive effort in the administrators' goals of maintaining a safe school for all.

The school district's board of education and the city's governing body have not insured an adequate or dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, facilities, equipment, technological support materials or supplies. Many essential positions have been eliminated and programs reduced or cut, and many students go without textbooks. There are no essential professional development opportunities for teachers who must have the current and updated knowledge to perform at the highest levels. There are concerns that all of this non-support has brought about an attitude that OK is alright for all students. Many students and teachers are concerned with the lack of rigor and high level thinking that is required of all students. There must be a major effort in differentiated instruction to help teachers work with a very diverse student population. The school currently has an excellent administrative team and many excellent teachers, but the continued battle of having to face no curriculum coordination, no certified librarian, not enough textbooks for all students, larger class sizes, and an unresponsive board of education and a city governing body that turns a blind eye to its young people and their pressing needs may cause them to abandon this very high cause. The school is an aging facility that needs to have the five-year capital improvement plan supported as well as the three-year technology plan. Hard working IT personnel cannot make the improvements necessary without appropriate funding. The building is clean and safe and much work is performed by a dedicated maintenance director and custodial staff with the barest of supplies. Participation in the entire budget process, from start to finish, by all school personnel is virtually non-existent. A proactive plan of action rather than a reactive plan will better serve all students at Derby High School and their attempts in achieving the school's mission statement and student expectations.

The city of Derby, Connecticut and Derby High School are very diverse in the city and student population. This influx of new community members has occurred over the last ten to fifteen years. However, as the diverse population continues to grow, there have become two Derby's; one on the east side of town and one on the west side of town. The entire school community must come together as one regardless of what side of town one lives in. Some students will continue to suffer the emotional strains of living on the wrong side of town and the school will also be hurt in many ways. It is imminent that this diversity is recognized and dealt with in a positive way and all members of the diverse school community are welcome and encouraged to share representation on any of the city or school committees.

Although there were very few parents, community members, or students involved with the entire self-study process, there were always parents and students available to meet with the visiting committee during our four days at Derby High School. Perhaps holding meetings at various times other than right after school, including evenings, would increase parent participation and support for the total school program. We thank those parents who did participate and for their insight into the happenings of DHS. Many parents and faculty members at Derby High School recognize the strengths and areas needing to be addressed and highlighted in the above and following paragraphs. This report is addressed to the entire Derby school community in hopes that it will provide a valuable tool to help provide the best possible programs and opportunities for all students attending Derby High School.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Community

Derby High School, home of the Red Raiders, is located in Derby, Connecticut. Derby is the smallest city in Connecticut, but its impact in state history is significant. Derby is established in what is known as the All-American Valley within New Haven County. It is rooted in its historical attributes to government and society. It is well-known for its industrial history; mainly due to its connection at the confluence of the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers. Derby is located in the center of three major Connecticut cities; New Haven is to the east, Bridgeport to the south, and Waterbury is to the north. The town has easy access to both Route 8 and Route 34 leading travelers to Interstate 95, 84, 91 and the Merritt Parkway. The city of Derby also has a Metro-North Railroad stop.

Derby, incorporated in 1675, consists of 5 square miles of land which includes, according to the 2000 census, 12,391 people. Out of this population, 20.8% of adults have not obtained a high school diploma, and 3.8% of adults are not fluent in English.

Considerable racial, ethnic, and economic diversity is reflected in the city's population. Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans make up approximately 30% of Derby's total population, and those numbers are continuing to grow as parts of this small city begin to take on an urban landscape.

The median family income during the 2000 census was \$43,670. In 2008, the median was estimated at \$57,589, which is approximately \$10,000 less than the Connecticut state average. The Derby population had income at 8.3% below the poverty level in 2008, compared to the state's average of 7.9%. Two major chain stores and many small businesses and restaurants contribute to Derby's economy. Although most people stay close to the valley area, many residents must go outside of the city for work and recreation. Approximately 80% of employed residents work for companies, 11% work for the government and 5% are self-employed. In December, 2009, Derby's unemployment rate was 10.3% which was the highest in the lower Naugatuck Valley and considerably higher than the state's average of 8.9%.

The Derby Public School District has four schools: Derby High School, Derby Middle School, Bradley School, and Irving School. In total, these schools are responsible for educating 1,455 students. The City of Derby also includes one private school, St. Mary/St. Michael's Catholic Grammar School, which enrolls approximately 280 students in grades pre K- 8. There are approximately 100 students that choose to attend schools other than Derby Public schools. Their choices would include private schools, open choice, magnet, or technical schools in the surrounding area.

The percentage of Derby's local property taxes allocated to fund education was 58.93% in 2009. Approximately 46% of students in the Derby Public Schools are receiving free or reduced price meals for breakfast and lunch. Based on the School Profile for 2008-2009, Derby spends \$11,513 per pupil in comparison to the state average of \$12,805.

The City of Derby recently built a new multimillion dollar middle school across the street from the high school. Prior to January, 2010, the middle school (grades 7 and 8) was housed at Derby High School. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, grade levels will be redistributed due to the new middle school. Both elementary schools will include grades K-5. The middle school will house grades 6-8, and the high school will remain grades 9-12.

The community has seen many changes and faced many challenges regarding the school system. Derby has had three superintendents and three interim superintendents in the past 10 years. Derby High School has had four principals in the past five years. Three years ago the Derby School System added a middle school principal. As well, a full-time assistant principal (10-month position) for the high school and a dean of student development for the middle school have been added. The changes have been significantly positive. These changes have provided continuity, consistency, and a clear focus on the mission.

The School and the Students

Derby High School's 2008-2009 enrollment stood at 641 for grades 7-12. Of the 641 students, approximately 422 were enrolled in grades 9-12. Derby Middle School separated from Derby High School in January 2010. The reporting for the strategic school profile in the 2010-2011 school year will include only grades 9-12; however, the following information is based on the 2008-2009 strategic school profile (unless otherwise noted). The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition is diverse and has become more diversified with each school year. Derby High School consists of 63.5% white students, 17.8% Hispanic students, 15.3% Black students, 2.7% Asian American students, and .8% American Indian students. This is a significant change from 10 years ago when the ratio of white students to minority students was 80.6%: 19.4%. In general, the average number of students that attend DHS has not changed dramatically, but the population has become increasingly transient as our diversity has increased. The average dropout rate for the past two years was 2.1% and the average daily student population was 94.2%.

In January 2010, Derby High School had 30 instructors and 395 students which make the student teacher ratio 13:1 and a class size average of 18 students. Teachers' attendance rate was 93.9%. Most teachers at DHS teach at least two different courses and those few who teach the same course teach different levels. Although the school has no formal provision for common planning time, the faculty has been provided common planning time during four early release days.

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, the school day is scheduled into 7-47 minute periods. There will be no formal homeroom period; rather, the third period of the day will be extended by five minutes to allow for school announcements. All classes meet every day. The class of 2010

graduation requirements included four credits of English, three credits of mathematics, two credits of science, three credits of social studies, one credit of physical education, one-half credit in health, one credit of a vocation or art credit and a score in the proficiency range on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) in reading, writing and mathematics or completion of a CAPT-like alternative assessment, if applicable. As Derby High School has recently undergone many changes in administration, numerous changes have also taken place within our program of studies including changes in our graduation credit requirements. The required credits for graduation have increased from 22 to 24 with the class of 2011. Derby High School has also begun to level its courses: English, mathematics, science and social studies classes have leveled into three categories: academic, college prep, and honors. During the 2009-2010 school year, 24% of students enrolled in academic classes, 55% in college prep, and 20% in honors courses. Derby High School also offers Advanced Placement courses based on student course requirements. Currently, 35% of students at Derby take a minimum of one honors and/or AP course. Derby has 36 students enrolled in one or both dual enrollment UCONN Italian and History courses offered on campus. DHS also currently has partnerships with Housatonic Community College and Naugatuck Community College giving its students an opportunity to earn college credits during their senior year. Fourteen percent of Derby seniors participate in the cooperative experience and practicum course which affords students the opportunity to earn credit for obtaining and maintaining a job. Currently, Derby does not have service learning requirements or performance graduation requirements beyond the required courses and CAPT. Eighty percent of Derby's graduating class of 2009 pursued higher education with 13.7% joining the workforce or military.

Derby High School has 8.1% of its students included in the special education program. These students are fused into academic inclusion classes where both the academic and special education teacher instruct class. These identified students also attend various other courses depending on their individual education plan. There are 3.3% of the Derby students enrolled in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program and these students are scheduled into a maximum of two ESL courses in addition to their mainstream courses. All students go to school for 182 days and for approximately 966 hours.

Derby students are performing alarmingly below the state averages on the Connecticut Achievement Performance Test (CAPT) with the percent of Derby students meeting the state goal in reading and math at almost half of the state average. Writing has the highest percentage with 40.6% of students meeting the state goal. 73.7% of the 2009 graduating class took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), which is close to the state's average of 74.5% tested. Derby students who took the SAT also fell below state averages with approximately a 70 point differential from the state average scores in all three areas tested.

Derby High School acknowledges both academic student achievements and non-academic achievements in a variety of ways. Derby High School has an honors banquet every year celebrating the academic achievements of its students. This banquet also includes induction of Derby High School's National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, and Italian Honor Society members. Derby High School gives special recognition to the valedictorian and salutatorian

during the graduation ceremony. Also during the graduation ceremony, the school shows its pride by awarding over 200 scholarship awards for academic, social, citizenship, extracurricular and athletic talents. In addition, Derby students receive CAPT Scholar awards, book awards, and other government certificates for academic achievement.

The Derby athletic program has endured throughout all the changes in administration and budget limitations. There are currently 19 sports programs, some of which were discontinued due to budget cuts, but brought back with the help of community donations and fundraisers. The Derby sports programs have always been strongly supported by the community. Student athletic recognition, both major and minor, is well received by the student population from enthusiastic morning announcements to positive reporting from community newspapers. Many students receive all-conference and all-state awards. Most sports hold banquets at the conclusion of their season to honor and recognize their teams' accomplishments.

Derby High School has instituted some very important school initiatives since the new administrative team has been in place. One of the most important of these initiatives is the advisory program. Twice a month, during a dedicated period, students report to their advisory group. Each advisor has been given plans to help shape an advisory curriculum. All who are involved, from students to superintendent, responded optimistically to the program as a beginning towards building a deep connection that will endure throughout each student's high school experience. Along with the advisory program, the administration has initiated a coffee and conversation night once a month. This gives the parents and community members a chance to come to Derby High School and meet with the principal and assistant principal to share any comments or concerns. This important endeavor has begun to strengthen the trust between parents, the community and the administration.

School Improvement Planning

Positive changes are occurring at Derby High School every day. Derby High School's belief in its "Derby Pride" is visible throughout the school. Although there is not an actual school improvement team; one has begun to evolve since the current administration came into position. In general, the school has been making improvements as specific situations come up that need immediate action. The school is looking forward to making great strides in their academic rigor and school climate as a whole.

Through analysis of CAPT scores and SAT scores, the need to raise the academic bar and to increase student motivation is illustrated. Professional development has been given in Response to Intervention (RtI) and Glasser's Choice Theory. Although the need for continued professional development is evident, this has allowed teachers to begin to unite in a direction and better understanding of the diversity within the school and community population. This is also the first step in addressing the need for differentiated instruction.

DHS has begun to make improvements by putting together working committees that can address issues that need solutions. Some committees include: the administrative team (including)

department coordinators); student leadership team; child study team; parent-teacher organization; extracurricular advisory; health and safety; and scheduling (which also includes the department coordinators). These committees, and other groups have already made major changes, such as a change to reflect courses being offered by different instructors to give all students a chance of success; leveled course offerings in most core subjects; and a complete advisory program added to the schedule to ensure that the faculty is making personal connections with every student. While teachers still have much to do, they have made progress towards achieving the school goals.

The current administration has made a substantial list of positive changes to make in almost every aspect of school life. The two administrators have done an unwavering job of prioritizing the needs of students, teachers, parents, community, and the school board. Under the new administrative team, DHS has not only survived, but is beginning to thrive on a set of educational systems that are becoming a foundation for a safe, academically rigorous, and professional environment.

DERBY HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Derby High School pursues Academic achievement, promotes creative and critical thinking, expects appropriate Behavior, and fosters responsible Citizenship.

A DERBY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WILL:

Academic

- * Demonstrate proficiency in reading, active listening, and visual literacy among and across disciplines
- * Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication skills among and across disciplines
- * Critically apply math skills to solve problems
- * Demonstrate basic scientific concepts and their relationships
- * Use technology and applied arts to facilitate learning and communication

Social Expectations

- * Demonstrate respectful behavior toward all
- * Make positive contributions to the learning environment
- * Demonstrate appreciation for diversity

Civic Expectations

- * Promote volunteerism
- * Demonstrate respect for our environment
- * Demonstrate awareness of one's role in the community and the world
- * Demonstrate understanding of systems of government

The ABC's of DHS

Academic - achievement through creative and critical thinking; **Behavior** – that is appropriate, respectful and positive; **Citizenship** – that is responsible in order to foster a better community

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SCONDARY SCHOOLS**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS**

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

1. Teaching and Learning Standard

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

The mission and expectations for student learning were developed by the high school teachers and approved by the school community. The mission statement writing committee was composed of five teachers and the principal. After drafting the mission statement and expectations for student learning, the faculty was given the opportunity to make suggestions for revision. One board of education member and a parent participated in a revision meeting, and student club leaders also provided opinions. Several of the school constituencies were not represented in the creation of the mission, but the school is now much more aware of the value of a mission. In December 2007, the faculty approved the document. In the winter of 2007, parents and students were asked to approve the mission, and in February 2008, the board of education accepted it. In order to create a more active school community, stakeholders need to be involved in the actual writing and revision of the document from its inception to guarantee that all stakeholders will embrace, support, and understand the mission statement. This can be accomplished in the review process where the school can request constituency support and keep the interest in the mission before all current members of the school community. (self-study, parents, students, board of education, panel presentation)

The school mission statement reflects the Derby High School (DHS) community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning. The mission can be found in numerous publications throughout the school (student handbook, posters on walls, in every classroom, on school letterhead, and emails). Additionally, it is read during morning announcements and discussed in the advisory period. The student body truly understands the basic premise of the mission, the ABCs of DHS (academics, behavior, and civics). Teachers, students, and parents provided examples of behavioral and civic expectations. For the most part, students and faculty members are working toward creating a respectful climate that embraces the social and civic values of their mission, but both students and parents could not define academic expectations other than to say it means doing well in classes. Teachers stated that it is not common practice to explain to students how their lessons are connected to the academic expectations in the mission statement. However, some teachers connected their objectives on their cover sheets of provided student work to specific academic learning expectations, and one teacher was observed making the connection to his objectives and the school's mission. Furthermore, although the academic expectations stress proficiency, most faculty members and students are unable to clearly define what determines proficiency. While the school has expanded its academic levels and has increased the credits required for graduation, it does not have broadly established high expectations, and many students express a need for greater academic challenges and rigor within the curriculum and a more diverse offering of electives. Now that DHS has effectively directed its efforts toward developing a respectful and responsible learning environment, the academic expectations now need to be clarified and connected to student learning in all areas in order to challenge all students. (students, teachers, classroom observations, student work)

Derby High School has developed five, school-wide academic rubrics that are measurable and reflect the school's mission statement, but social and civic expectations have not been defined nor have performance indicators been developed to measure the successful completion of the social and civic indicators. The expectations and performance levels have been delineated, but the indicators in the rubrics are basic, not rigorous. Last year, all teachers were required to

assess two assignments per quarter using school-wide rubrics, but there was no follow-up to determine the results of this trial or if all faculty members participated. Students say that they are aware of the rubrics, but they are often not used. Teachers comment that they do not use the school-wide rubrics consistently, if at all. This was also the case of some classes that were observed. Some teachers rely on their own individually developed rubrics for their assignments, and, even then, rubrics are not always employed as evidenced by viewing the provided student work. Some students say they do not know the criteria by which they are being assessed until after the assignment has been completed and assessed. Derby High School needs to develop a total school culture that embraces school-wide rubrics in a more systematic fashion so students and parents can better understand them as learning tools that allow students to understand what they are supposed to do and how to improve their work. Thus academic expectations take on real meaning as intellectual skills for which the students are being measured. Social and civic performance indicators must also be developed along with indicators to assess the school's progress in achieving school-wide social and civic expectations. (teachers, students, student work, student shadowing/observations)

Although Derby High School has created school-wide rubrics for each of its academic expectations with targeted levels of achievement, the school has not indicated the acceptable level of completion for all students. While two of the expectations on the mission statement indicate students will demonstrate "proficiency," the meaning of this term has not been clearly defined. Teachers comment that its use varies from instructor to instructor. One teacher defined it as the 65% passing grade, another as the proficient measure number on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), and yet another as the middle of the grading spectrum. Furthermore, the rubric uses the same terminology as the indicator to describe the level and is redundant not clarifying. The indicator on the "reading", "active listening", and "visual literacy" rubric for "superior" reads: "Demonstrates a superior understanding of the text, video, or oral presentation," with no details of how to demonstrate understanding. Departments have been assigned responsibility for using one of each of the five developed rubrics, but there is no method of data collection to measure the successful mastery of each of the academic expectations. The acceptable level of performance must be identified, and terminology between the indicator and the descriptors in all academic rubrics must be defined or explained. A system of data collection must also be adopted to measure and document successful completion of the academic indicators by students. Only when school-wide rubrics are understood and used consistently by all, will the measurement of these expectations as educational goals be meaningful to both teachers and students and ultimately to the whole school community. (school-wide rubrics, teachers, mission strand interviews)

Derby High School does not have formal indicators to assess the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations. While there is no formal method of tracking student participation for these expectations, students take pride in their civic and social responsibilities. They participate in activities that include blood drives, acting as greeters, and volunteering in the greater community at fire departments, Harvest House, and the local hospital. During interviews, parents cited with pride the volunteer work their children and others have accomplished, aware of the value in students being encouraged to participate in school activities. Students say they have turned in sheets to the guidance office that validate their community service hours to receive academic credit. Administrators are beginning to gather data on

behavioral referrals and internal suspensions to measure student progress with the school's social expectations. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators are proud to report fewer fights in the building and a safer school environment. The civic and social expectations have been effective in creating a more positive environment in the school and have re-instilled confidence that the school is moving in the right direction, but formal indicators need to be developed to measure success and a reporting system adopted. (self-study, students, parents, and administrators)

The Derby High School Mission Statement and Expectations for Student Learning are used to guide many procedures, policies, and decisions. Out of necessity, the administration has prioritized its efforts on the behavioral and civic expectations to effect positive change in student behavior. Administrators are constantly present in the hallways during and between classes. The homeroom period has been discontinued, and morning announcements were moved to the beginning of the third period, based on student and teacher feedback on the ineffective focus of the homeroom period. The student handbook contains a DHS Behavioral Chart that clearly states offenses and consequences as well as a clear tardy to school and cutting of class policy. These clarifying steps, along with the addition of a safety monitor, and consistent application have resulted in a safer and more positive climate for all in the hallways, the cafeteria, and in common areas. The principal and superintendent recognize that now that student behaviors have improved markedly, focus needs to shift to clarifying, referencing, and assessing the academic expectations. DHS is currently in the initial stages of aligning curriculum with the academic expectations. It may be necessary to provide professional development programs for the entire faculty in the creation and use of rubrics to assure that both the school's expectations and course objectives are satisfactorily measured and that the mission and expectations guide all procedures, policies, and decisions of the school. Although the mission statement has made a direct impact on the implementation of procedures and policies covering the social and civic expectations, the work toward the academic areas has been less forceful. The spirit of the mission and expectations, however, is evident in the culture of the school as the school community works toward improving the entire school culture and incorporating the academic expectations throughout the curriculum. (student shadowing, observations, administrators, self-study)

Currently, the faculty has not utilized or collected data nor developed a plan to review or schedule a review process of the mission statement and student expectations for student learning to ensure that they continue to reflect student needs, community expectations, the school mission, and state and national standards. There is currently no formal plan to gather data to review the mission and faculty members do not formally collaborate to form common assessments or discuss consistent rubrics use to measure student learning for evaluation of the mission's academic expectations. Neither professional learning communities nor common planning time is in place to facilitate gathering and sharing data. A planned and regularly scheduled review and revision of the school's mission statement, utilizing collected data, by a committee that represents all stakeholders in the school community will be necessary to ensure the continued relevance and strength of the DHS mission statement and continue the remarkable improvement of student engagement to produce achievement. (meeting with mission standard committee, parents, teachers, self-study)

Commendations

1. The use of the mission statement to foster a positive climate in the building
2. Students, staff, and parents familiarity with and the ability to articulate the values and beliefs expressed in the school's mission statement and the ABC s of Derby
3. The use of the mission statement to guide many procedure and policy decisions
4. The high visibility of the mission statement in the school and on public documents
5. The development of five academic rubrics
6. The assignment of departments to be responsible for successful completion of a student expectation
7. The significant improvement in school climate
8. The spirit of volunteerism throughout the school
9. The "ABC's of DHS" effective slogan

Recommendations

1. Develop performance indicators for the school's successful completion of the social and civic expectations
2. Develop and implement a system for recording student achievement in the social and civic expectations and a method of informing the public
3. Provide professional development programs to all faculty and staff members in the collection and analysis of data
4. Implement a plan with a time line for the review of the school's mission and expectations for student learning, utilizing collected data, including representatives of all stakeholders
5. Assure that the school-wide rubrics are used consistently in all curriculum areas by all faculty members
6. Ensure that the entire faculty is committed to supporting and using the school's academic expectations
7. Cite the mission and expectations when making all educational decisions
8. Develop and institute a program that informs all stakeholders of the successful completion, by students, of the academic, civic and social expectations contained in the DHS Mission Statement

2. Teaching and Learning Standard

CURRICULUM

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

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

9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusions

The school staff has identified the academic expectations for student learning for which each department is responsible, but these are not contained in the written curriculum documents. Derby High School (DHS) has a mission statement which includes academic, civic, and social expectations. Each department is responsible for one of the five academic expectations stated in the school's mission statement. Although school leaders reinforce this mission statement, recent budget cuts have eliminated the district curriculum coordinator position hindering the implementation of oversight to include these expectations in the curriculum. School-wide rubrics have been designed to address the five academic expectations. Some departments are aligning their course work with the new academic expectations, but departments do not all clearly articulate learning standards that support those expectations as a consistent part of curriculum delivery. Specific course assessments with category and task-specific rubrics are not used in all departments. In most classes, students receive a course outline that includes expectations, concepts covered, essential readings, and a breakdown of grade calculations. The course outlines are made available at open house and parent teacher conferences. There must be a substantial amount of work accomplished before the expectations for student learning are strongly supported in the curriculum. Efforts to make expectations for student learning, behavior, and civic growth an essential part of the curriculum are hindered. Teachers must be consistent in instructing students in how the curriculum connects to the academic expectations and how and when students are given the opportunity to meet these expectations in each subject area. (self-study, student shadowing, teachers, administration)

Although some curriculum documents are aligned with the school's mission and expectations, there are many that do not have expectation and rubric specifics, and not all teachers are aware of the specific expectations assigned to their department, making it difficult for all students to be given sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. Many department curriculum guides are currently under revision, are in need of revision, or have been revised but are not currently approved by the board of education. The math department has revised its curriculum to include essential questions and enduring understandings. Because of the current lack of a district curriculum coordinator, there is no common template or common vision driving completion of this task nor ensuring that curriculum issues have a high priority. Work must be completed to delineate the relationship between curriculum and the mission and expectations statement. Some teachers find it difficult to align their curriculum delivery with the school-wide academic expectations. More familiar course-specific goals are often used, and there is no consistency among departments or across curricula in the use of expectations and rubrics. Recent budget cuts have eliminated professional development opportunities as well, so that there is no review of best practices in instructional assessment, curriculum enrichment, or revision of curricula. Although the mission and expectation document is visible throughout the school it does not generate aggregate data that is applied school-wide through the curriculum to improve curricular effectiveness. A complete curriculum plan and format and the personnel to create and implement the plan are essential for the district to ensure that the academic expectations are being met and that all students have opportunities to practice and master them included in their curricula. (classroom observations, panel presentations, self-study, documents provided)

Although some course documents provide learning objectives, sample lessons, and suggestions for assessment, there is no standard format for integrating relevant school-wide learning expectations into the curriculum or for presenting content, instruction, and assessment in a clear and explicit format. Budget constraints, and the absence of professional development in curriculum work and district oversight leave teachers without curriculum training. Course documents are published independently, with no requirement to establish the over-arching connection to the academic expectations. A common template for all curriculum documents and the school-wide completion of all curriculum guides should lead to documents that can serve as a guide for students, parents, and faculty members which will give all students the opportunity to achieve the school's academic learning expectations. While some revised curriculum guides are available, some teachers are not aware of their content and others do not consistently utilize them for instruction. Teacher developed grading scales are often based on custom rather than on current best practices, and the majority of these assessment guides are numerical ratings scales which do not provide descriptors of acceptable and unacceptable work or exemplars as rubrics systems would do. While members of the learning community agree that the mission and expectations reflect their beliefs, they have yet to incorporate them as the explicit guiding forces in the development, review, and implementation of the curriculum. Thus, the school must focus on producing a complete curriculum for all courses that provide opportunity for all students to master the school-wide expectations and are expressed in a complete format that prescribes content, integrates relevant school-wide learning expectations, identifies course-specific learning goals, suggests instructional strategies, and suggests assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics. (self-study, student work, teachers, material provided, curriculum committee)

The curriculum does not engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking and does not provide all students opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. Some students commented about a lack of rigor in many of their classes. Some curricula contain some elements, but they are not universally present in all content areas or in all classes. The district has made higher order thinking skills a priority, but not all students have equal opportunities to practice these skills. While some of the curricula, particularly those which have been most recently revised, contain essential questions, enduring understandings, and cornerstone projects to promote higher order thinking and authentic application of knowledge and skills, those curricula are largely not used consistently by teachers. The high school offers a variety of educational and elective levels: advanced placement (AP), University of Connecticut Early College Experience (ECE), honors, college prep, academic, and general. The result of assignment to one of these numerous levels has left many students feeling unchallenged. Some student work provided, primarily from upper level classes, shows an expectation for intellectual rigor while many other samples lack critical thinking elements and opportunities for authentic application. Observations and student work provided, primarily from college prep and academic classes, indicate primarily lower level thinking skills such as simple understanding and recall of facts. Consequently, many students are not being challenged or even engaged or given the opportunity to improve their higher level thinking skills or provided with the opportunity to meet their full potential. The school should incorporate active higher level practices into all classes and ensure their consistent use by including them in their curricula at all levels; thus greatly

improving both rigor and challenge as part of the new school spirit of learning and pride.
(student work, classroom observations, self-study, committee meetings)

The curriculum is not formally integrated across disciplines and does not emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. Curriculum at DHS has been neglected in order to work on school-wide issues dealing with the school culture and the social and civic expectations cited in the mission statement. The faculty and administration acknowledge this. The lack of professional development has hindered all teachers' understanding of best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. There are examples of authentic application, however, in English, some classes require students to apply acquired skills in authentic scenarios; in social studies, students interact with authentic materials; and in art, students present their work in an authentic manner during an interactive art presentation during an end-of-the-year art festival. Other examples can be found in world language and journalism classes. According to the self-study, most teachers feel that they promote a curriculum that offers opportunities for students to apply what they have learned in real-world experiences through a diverse array of course offerings. However, there is insufficient emphasis placed on making connections across the curriculum, isolating the student's knowledge to one particular subject at a time. Expectations for higher order student learning are not posted in classrooms, nor are they evident in the curriculum or in their instruction. However, exemplars of excellence were observed in several classrooms. The self-study states that the school recognizes that there is more emphasis place on the breadth of instruction rather than on depth of understanding. A student whose exposure and practice of depth of understanding is not consistent and does not have sufficient opportunity to develop independent and successful thinking processes nor problem solving skills will be hindered in his learning. (student work, classroom observations, self-study, documents provided)

While the school provides some opportunities for some students to extend learning beyond the normal course offering and the school campus, these opportunities are not available to all students. The school offers advanced placement (AP) courses in Spanish, psychology, anatomy, and calculus as well as UCONN Early College Experience (ECE) courses for college credit in several subjects for advanced students. Through the Bridge program, a partnership with Housatonic Community College, one or two students may take a course for dual credit at no charge. The school used to offer Virtual High School (VHS) for students as well to take courses not offered at the high school, but this program was cut because of budget constraints. There is a variety of clubs including guitar club, ski club, environmental club, photography club, HUGS (Helping Unite Gays and Straights, formerly the Gay Straight Alliance), Italian club, and Spanish club. The groups are open to all students and offer experiences outside of school, such a beach cleanup trip and trips to Ellis Island, Italy, and Puerto Rico. Despite these opportunities, the school lacks a variety of elective courses that could personalize a student's education. Limited offerings in business, art, and technology education along with lack of computer courses and family and consumer science offerings also limit students' opportunities to engage in meaningful exploration of the world and their potential. As a result, many students are not able to pursue areas of interests and broaden their knowledge beyond a traditional limited high school experience. (teachers, students, program of studies, support staff, self-study)

There is very little curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school and with the sending school in the district. Although there appears to be recognition among members of the faculty and administration that both vertical and horizontal coordination and articulation are needed, it is currently not being done. The current high school administration has attempted to begin coordination with the middle school. Informal discussion during department meetings or monthly faculty meetings and district-wide professional development days about what is being taught takes place between teachers within the same department, but this is not consistent across all academic departments. Communication with the middle school is minimal, with department heads visiting the middle school just once per year. The absence of a district-wide curriculum coordinator to initiate, coordinate, and implement curriculum alignment K-12 makes it difficult to align curricula with the relatively recent academic expectations system. Only by providing and maintaining a well articulated and coordinated curriculum, will the school in any way guarantee that the school's expectations are being addressed or delivered consistently and that all students have the opportunity to learn. (self-study, principal, department leaders, teachers, teacher interview)

Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library media center are insufficient and that fact has adversely impacted implementation of the curriculum. Budget constraints and cuts have hindered teachers from providing enough textbooks or other resources to adequately present the curriculum. Several teachers report that they must copy entire textbooks so that all students have access to class materials. The school can not provide students with information and technology resources in the classroom and in the library media center because of insufficient, outdated, and unreliable technology and infrastructure throughout the building. The two computer labs are overburdened and outdated; classroom computers, projectors, and the school's few SMART Boards are unreliable and the school lacks the infrastructure for full utilization. The absence of a certified library media specialist in this city school, an overburdened technical support staff whose members are often unavailable, and a lack of resources to solve problems or make repairs, make implementation of the curriculum even more difficult. A three-year plan to replace and refresh technology is in place but is currently not funded. The loss of the district curriculum coordinator and the librarian along with insufficient staffing levels to offer a more diverse curriculum for all students, negatively impacts the school's ability to meet current educational needs. Without appropriate levels of funding, a long-range plan of technology repair, upgrade, and improvement, resource acquisition, and reinstatement of the library media specialist and curriculum coordinator, implementation of the curriculum in support of the mission and expectations will remain inadequate and many student needs will go unmet. (facility tour, teachers, administrators, Endicott Survey, observations, budget workbook, self-study, school support staff)

The professional staff is not actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving academic expectations although there is some of this taking place for course-specific learning goals. There is currently no system in place to track and analyze data from student performance on tasks intended to measure achievement using the school-wide rubrics to assess the academic learning expectations. Additionally, there is no data-based process to inform curricular decisions and to improve student success at meeting the school's expectations. In most subject areas there

is ongoing examination of curricular needs to prepare for the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) but there has been almost no revision of the curriculum based on the data collected. The science department revised the ninth and tenth grade science curricula to reflect the needs revealed by previous CAPT and Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) data, but the impact of these curricular changes on the performance of the students is not being tracked and there appears to very little improvement on the CAPT. As a result of student need and performance, there are some curricular changes that are being made informally by some teachers for course-specific learning goals, but there are no existing data teams and no common planning time. Time is available during the summer months, but a lack of funding within the district does not allow compensation for the work performed. Except in the cases where teachers share data anecdotally and change instruction individually, there is no change to the implementation of the curriculum, and there is no ongoing formal plan for changes in the written curriculum. A formal and ongoing plan to base curricular decisions to improve students' performance on data collection and analysis of assessment of current students would ensure that all students have a better opportunity to achieve the school's mission statement and academic expectations and might help to improve CAPT scores. (teachers, school leadership team, self-study, department leaders)

Derby High School does not commit sufficient time, financial resources, or personnel to develop, evaluate, and revise the curriculum. Some teachers have been given the opportunity to revise and/or create curriculum although there has been very little use of collected data to drive these efforts. These compensated opportunities have also fallen far short of the evaluation and revision that needs to be done. With no release time, common planning time, or professional development time dedicated to curriculum, there has been some evaluation and revision but it is very haphazard and sporadic. Many of the curricula revised when there was a curriculum coordinator involved little teacher input. Much of it has not been approved by the board of education and is not necessarily being implemented. It is imperative for the school to adopt a formal plan for curriculum review and revision immediately that relates curricula to the academic, civic, and social expectations and allows a thoughtful consideration of what changes will benefit students. The school needs district support to provide a curriculum coordinator, a library media specialist to support the curriculum, and a long-term plan of curriculum evaluation and revision related to student performance data as well as professional development for teachers to use data and the information needed to make effective decisions about the curriculum to ensure student achievement. (self-study, teachers, curriculum committee, curriculum guides, school leadership team)

Professional development opportunities at Derby High School do not effectively support the development and implementation of the curriculum. The school district devotes approximately one school day to professional development, but, because of budget constraints must provide its own professional development programming. These sessions have covered the implementation of technology, current educational theories such as different learning styles, and choice theory which may indirectly affect the implementation of the curriculum but does not support the continued development of the curriculum. Teachers are also allotted approximately seventy-five dollars per year to attend outside professional development opportunities, but this amount limits the number and quality of these opportunities of which they are able to take advantage. A

consultant in Understanding By Design (UBD) was brought in by the former curriculum coordinator to introduce the faculty to the backwards design model, but no further professional development has been made available, and many of the current faculty members were not employed here at the time and did not participate in the seminar. Professional development targeting curriculum implementation and development would ensure that teachers are able to design curriculum that meets the educational needs of all students. Additionally, the absence of a building-wide vision of the curriculum hampers the school's ability to develop and implement a more challenging curriculum, to develop more interdisciplinary connections, and to effectively build connections which would support more rigorous and challenging content. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team, district administrators)

Commendations

1. The math department's inclusion of essential questions and enduring understandings in some of its revised curricula
2. The math department's inclusion of assessment tools and instructional strategies in some of its revised curricula
3. The inclusion of instructional strategies that promote inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking skills and authentic application of knowledge and skills in some of the school's revised curriculum
4. The opportunities provided to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and school campus
5. The extensive volunteerism within the school
6. The assignment of the academic expectations to curriculum areas

Recommendations

1. Review, revise and update all curriculum documents
2. Implement all the most recently revised curriculum and focus on depth over breadth
3. Reinstate the position of district-wide curriculum coordinator to ensure effective curriculum development, revision, and implementation K-12
4. Develop and implement a long-term plan for the evaluation and revision of curriculum based on collected and analyzed student performance data as it relates to the school's mission and
5. Improve and increase the availability of technology in the school to support effective curriculum
6. Integrate all curriculum area documents with the mission statement and academic expectations
7. Provide professional development in data collection and analysis as a means of driving the curriculum evaluation and revision process
8. Develop a common template for all curriculum areas
9. Provide vertical and horizontal alignment of the curriculum K-12 across the district and within the school
10. Examine research on leveling practices and their impact on student achievement and rigor
11. Incorporate higher level thinking and authentic application of knowledge in the curricula of all courses offered
12. Design and implement interdisciplinary connections across the curriculum

13. Develop and implement a plan for the effective coordination and articulation of the curriculum K-12
14. Provide sufficient funding for technology and technology use, replace outdated library materials, and provide current textbooks for all students
15. Raise the academic expectations to create more rigor in all classes

INSTRUCTION

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

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

Conclusions

The Derby High School faculty occasionally uses instructional strategies that are in alignment with the elements of the mission statement and expectations for student learning. As revealed by the Endicott Survey results, the majority of faculty members is not influenced by the mission statement when planning lessons. Eighty four percent of the staff claims to be familiar with the mission statement. Although the expectations emphasize a commitment to technology, there is insufficient meaningful integration of technology in all classes as a result of the school's lack of functional technology. The mission statement is posted in all classrooms as well as throughout the building emphasizing the "ABCs of Derby High School" incorporating academic achievement, appropriate behavior, and fostering responsible citizenship, and almost every student can recite the ABCs of DHS. Most observed relationships between the faculty and their students are cordial and respectful although some students were observed wearing inappropriate clothing, using electronic devices in academic classes, not engaged in classroom lessons, and displaying a lack of respect for their education so that the learning climate can still be improved. There is some high quality instruction and learning taking place at Derby High School, but neither is clearly driven by the mission and expectations. During observed class instruction specific expectations for student learning are rarely addressed by teachers, and school-wide rubrics are rarely appropriately applied to student work. Although there are five school-wide rubrics that address learning areas, the language contained in the rubric is not clear. Additionally, many rubrics in the student work provided, are not aligned with the mission statement and expectations. There is no systematic collection of data reflecting student achievement of the learning expectations, no formal means of employing data to inform instruction, and no consistent approach to providing teachers opportunities to collaborate, other than informally, by either grade level or content area. Inconsistent use of mission-related instructional strategies and reinforcement of school rules that align with all aspects of the mission statement and expectations can reduce opportunities for all students to fulfill the mission statement and expectations and have a negative effect on instruction. The outstanding awareness of the value of self-respect and respect for others and for common goals has improved the learning climate to where all expectations of achievement are believable and possible. (self-study, student work, observations, facility tour, teachers)

Teachers at Derby High School employ varying degrees of personalized instruction, the connections between disciplines, active learning, self-directed learning, higher order thinking, application of knowledge and skills, and the encouragement of student self-assessment and self-reflection are not apparent in some of the classes, however, and must be thoughtfully supported. Evidence for the absence of personalized instruction is supported by the Endicott Survey in which only 31.3% of the students agree that faculty members spend one-to-one time with them. Few teachers use instructional practices to personalize instruction in the classroom although some faculty members circulate throughout their classroom while students complete in-class projects and assignments. Although connections between disciplines are sometimes made in class, as a result of no formal common planning time, teachers are limited in their attempts to develop interdisciplinary courses and sections. Active learning was observed in upper level classes which tend to give students greater exposure to critical and higher order thinking. There is not equity of opportunity for students to participate in teaching and learning instructional practices that emphasize higher order thinking for all students. Very few classes observed

provide an opportunity for students to direct their own learning. The Endicott Survey also reports that 47% of the students at DHS complain to their parents that they are bored with parts of learning. This can happen where there is predominantly teacher-directed instruction with limited opportunity for students to apply knowledge and skills. Students who report boredom in classes sometimes make requests to challenge themselves by changing levels. Guidance counselors' state there is an established pathway for parents, students, and faculty members to request student level changes. In the majority of classrooms student self-assessment and self-reflection was not observed. School-wide rubrics have been created, but they are not used consistently by all faculty members to provide students the opportunity to learn to self-assess or self-reflect in a formative sense. In review of student work, there was little evidence that instruction was personalized to allow for critical thinking or creative thinking for all students at all levels. Although there is student work that showed evidence of higher order thinking, it is not consistent for all student work although 58% of the faculty reports that they believe that departments emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. The inconsistency in utilizing active engaging instructional strategies creates an inequitable learning environment for students, negatively impacting the ability of some students to learn and diminishing student engagement and real learning. The established climate in all classrooms must foster student engagement as "whoever works, learns." Thus, the school must offer professional development in personalizing engaging instructional processes, and the school must foster these in all classrooms at all levels so that students learn how to respond effectively. (guidance counselors, observations, student shadowing, teachers, self-study)

Most faculty members do not systematically or formally solicit feedback from students, parents, or colleagues. The Endicott Survey states that 42% of faculty members uses feedback from students and 30% uses feedback from parents. There is no formal process for all faculty members to solicit feedback in the form of opinion surveys at the end of courses from students or parents directly. Some parental feedback comes during parent teacher conferences, but this is informal in nature, and there is no evidence that teachers use this feedback for improving their instructional practices. A needs assessment from the guidance department was distributed to all students in the spring of 2010. The guidance counselors used the information from the surveys to create a plan to meet all student needs for the 2010-11 school year. Currently, the leadership team provides informal feedback via walk-throughs as well as informal conversations. Teachers state that feedback from the administration has been inconsistent as the current administration team has been together for only one school year. New faculty members are supposed to be evaluated three times per year, and veteran teachers are evaluated once per year. New teachers are not assigned mentor teachers who could observe and offer informal suggestions to the new teachers and department leaders do not informally observe and provide feedback for all department members. Teachers do receive formal feedback from administrators in formal observation reports and end of the year evaluations. Student-led parent teacher conferences would also be an avenue for collecting data which, if used by all faculty members, would be another way to help improve instruction. While there are opportunities for informal feedback on instructional practices, they are not used. A formal process for comments and gathering feedback from parents and students in addition to regular administrative feedback would broaden and improve the effectiveness of feedback for improving instructional practices of all faculty members. (teachers, self-study, administrators, students, observation)

All faculty members at Derby High School are experts in their content area, and most are knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches and reflective about their own practices. Seventy-one percent of the teaching staff holds a master's degree or higher. Faculty members belong to a variety of professional organizations devoted to educational reform; for example, National Science Teachers Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Social Studies and English, and the American Association for Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. Many faculty members are passionate about their subject matter and care about their students. All faculty members are given the opportunity to attend professional development conferences; however, they are responsible for their own registration fees. Teaching based on current research on effective instructional strategies was observed in some classes. Currently, some faculty members are self-reflective about their own practices, but no formal process or available time is in place to reflect or share. The faculty states that its members have not had training in instructional initiatives nor have they used any data collection to drive their instructional practices. Some faculty members have been trained in Choice Theory, Understanding by Design, Professional Learning Communities, and the John Collins Writing Program, but these initiatives have not been entirely embraced by the faculty nor continued by the entire school community. There is a professional development committee for the Derby School District, but input from the committee does not appear to have a positive impact on professional development opportunities that are offered as there is insufficient funding for them. Overall, the faculty is highly qualified, but there is a great need for professional development in current research, effective teaching strategies, and reflective teaching practices. (observations, teachers, interviews, administrators, self-study)

Discussion of instructional strategies at DHS is not a significant part of the professional culture of the school. The faculty cited examples of informal collaboration through discussions with colleagues about student learning and department needs happening during lunch, passing of classes, and during free periods. Faculty meetings take place once a month within departments and monthly as an entire faculty to discuss varied topics. Meeting time is not used to improve instructional strategies. There is no formal common planning time during the school day to form groups to study instructional practices and their effectiveness in the classroom. Some faculty members are concerned with the lack of rigor and low expectations for the students at Derby High School. The faculty has been introduced to Glasser's, Building a Quality School which is fully embraced by the superintendent of schools. The faculty of Derby High School has expressed that this initiative was not collaborative but was a top-down effort to try to help improve instruction, and many have not bought into this effort. In addition, faculty members have been given an opportunity to attend a one week summer seminar on Choice Theory. Formal collaboration time needs to be built into the schedule to provide opportunities for teacher collaboration on instructional strategies to create an institution of continual learning which promotes student achievement and improves instructional practices. Engagement by teachers is fully as important as engagement by students, and broader options for professional development along with teacher participation in choice and opportunities to exchange information and experiences collegiality would make better use of the faculty's expertise. (superintendent, administrators, teachers, Endicott Survey, self-study)

Technology is not fully integrated into the curriculum but is somewhat supportive of teaching and learning. Technology is being used within classrooms, but it is cursory and generally not

integrated in a meaningful way. While the school has two computer labs, laptop carts, four working interactive whiteboards, liquid crystal display projectors and computer access in most classrooms, the availability of these resources is limited by maintenance problems, broken equipment, and unreliable access and ownership issues. The technology components located in the library are not always in working condition, further inhibiting student or classroom use. Insufficient professional development programs have been provided to train the faculty to use technology in the classroom. Only a small number of faculty members can use the computer labs for class instruction because of an inequitable availability of resources or lack of resources. Teachers have expressed interest in using technology on a consistent basis to assist in student achievement but, as a result of the limited use of technology in classrooms, there are limited examples of students demonstrating their learning by producing technology-related products. Examples of innovative uses of technology are too few to have an impact on students in the majority of classes. The majority of the faculty members states that they are not using current and relevant technological practices because of a lack of training as well as the unpredictability of resources. The PowerSchool program is available at the school, but it has not been fully implemented into the total school community. The teachers' inability to integrate technology reliably to support teaching and learning at Derby High School actively hinders the ability of students to use technology to facilitate learning and communication as stated in the mission statement and academic expectations. (student work, teachers, administrators, support staff, observations, facility tour, self-study)

Currently, the school's professional development program is not guided by identified instructional needs and does not provide opportunities for faculty members to develop and improve their instructional strategies. There is no plan in place to assess the effectiveness of professional development. As a result, the faculty reports that professional development opportunities are not centered on faculty needs. Some professional development opportunities that have been planned and presented have been done so with little or no faculty input in their planning and implementation. Only 48% of the faculty believes that the professional development committee uses data and feedback from multiple sources to design the programs to address identified needs. The faculty has expressed the willingness to work with administrators to identify needs for professional development and plan accordingly. With such a diverse student body now in attendance at DHS, personalization of instruction and differentiated instruction must be included in the whole school professional development planning to improve instruction. Unfortunately, all funds for professional development have been cut from the budget for the needed instructional strategy improvements. Instructional practices and strategies need to be enriched by professional development that targets identified priorities such as effective teaching strategies and effective use of technology in the classroom. In addition, teacher involvement in planning these professional development opportunities around improving instruction would create a more positive academic environment for the collaboration of teachers. (teachers, Endicott Survey, self-study, administrators, support staff)

The teacher supervision and evaluation processes for the purpose of improving instruction are utilized by school administration. The supervision and evaluation process addresses instructional strategies and practices through an observation cycle. This process involves classroom evaluations by the principal three times per year for non-tenured faculty and one time per year for tenured faculty. Non-tenured and tenured faculty meet with the principal prior to their

classroom observation to set goals and objectives. The principal gives all faculty members two common goals and asks them to identify one personal goal for the school year. There are two forms that chronicle the observation process. After the observation, the teacher will reflect on the lesson, and the principal will make commendations and recommendations. At the end of the year, the faculty reflects upon the degree to which they have met their goals. In addition, the faculty is evaluated informally by walk-throughs. Seventy-two percent of the faculty reports that their supervisor's evaluation plays an important role in improving their instruction. There is no process in place for department chairs, teaching peers, or the assistant principal to be involved with supervision and evaluation to assist in improving instruction. A formal process to provide teachers with non-evaluative feedback from students, other teachers, and parents as a means of improving instruction should also be developed and used in addition to the formal evaluative process. Continued and consistent use of the evaluation process by all of the school leadership team will increase regular feedback to teachers for the improvement of instructional practices to enhance student learning and meeting student needs. (teachers, principal, self-study, observation forms)

Commendations

1. The faculty is familiar with the school mission statement and expectations
2. Faculty members take pride in knowing almost all students in the school
3. The needs assessment used by guidance to obtain feedback from all students
4. The highly qualified faculty
5. The collegiality of the faculty to one another
6. The faculty's willingness to learn how to integrate technology in their classrooms
7. The faculty is commitment to professional development which will allow for quickly improving instructional strategies
8. The active role of the principal in evaluating teachers to guide improvement of instruction
9. The availability of PowerSchool
10. The many teachers belonging to professional organizations

Recommendations

1. Develop an inventory of instructional strategies fully aligned with and supportive of the achievement of the school's mission and expectations
2. Conduct an audit to determine the degree to which the instructional practices are currently employed by all faculty members
3. Increase the use of instructional strategies in all classes that:
 - * consistently make connections across disciplines
 - * actively engage all students in learning for the full duration of assigned instructional time
 - * engage all students as self-directed learners
 - * involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding
 - * provide opportunities for self-assessment and self-reflection
4. Develop and implement formal processes for securing feedback on a regular basis from students and parents as a mean of improving instruction

5. Design and implement a mandatory professional development program and plan that reflects all teachers instructional needs, differentiation, personalized instruction, curriculum revision, scientific research and best practices, and use of technology in the classroom
6. Provide the funding that will improve technology, technology resources, access, and teacher training in technology use
7. Assure that the teacher evaluation process is used to improve instruction for the purpose of meeting the needs of every student
8. Engage the entire leadership team in various roles in the evaluation and observation process
9. Create and implement an on-site mentoring program that pairs non-tenured teachers with tenured teachers to help improve instruction
10. Develop and implement consistent strategies used by all faculty members that foster higher order thinking for all students in all subject areas
11. Develop a schedule that includes common planning time within and between departments in order to plan instruction and provide collegial feedback
12. Utilize the PowerSchool Program to its fullest to engage all parents in all aspects of student learning
13. Develop and implement strategies to make instruction relevant, student directed, rigorous, and personalized for all students in all areas of instruction
14. Develop strategies to implement common planning time for all faculty members to formalize opportunities for coordination and articulation of curriculum between and among all curriculum areas

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

Derby High School's process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission statement is based on school-wide rubrics and is currently in its initial stage of implementation. Teachers have begun to assess student learning through school-wide rubrics, and all teachers are required to do so twice per quarter to measure academic achievement. School-wide rubrics were developed within departments and were adapted from existing course-specific rubrics, but the current school-wide rubrics lack rigor, authenticity, and clarity when used to assess work in all disciplines, not all teachers use them, and students do not use them as formative tools for learning. There is no meaningful, systematic data collection method for teachers to use when assessing student work. Thus, Derby High School students are not informed regularly about how classroom assessments relate to the academic expectations in the mission statement that they are responsible for achieving. Some teachers have noted a need for training in using and creating rubrics. The five school-wide rubrics do not specifically articulate the standards by which achievement is measured and must be revised, tested, and used frequently by all teachers to be effective in teacher and student use. (self-study, panel presentation, student work, teachers)

The expectations for student learning document does include indicators to assess civic and social success, but there is no tool to measure this success. The school also lacks a formal system to collect and use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations. There is an informal record of student volunteerism which includes peer tutoring and mediation, community service at the Boys and Girls Club, and participation in clubs, but there is no system to gather, organize, and use data to document and assess success in civic and social expectations for all students. While many students are involved in civic and social activities as part of the school's active renewal of school pride, there is no clear connection of these activities to the mission statement, and students are generally unaware of the purpose of the mission statement and the value of social and civic activities. Currently the only systematic data collection is on discipline referrals, and that tends to be negative. Because there is no formal system to gather, organize, and use data in assessing the social and civil expectations in a meaningful way, the school is unable to judge accurately its success in meeting the mission statement expectations, and students are not completely made aware of the real value to themselves and others of their efforts. (panel presentation, student work, school leadership, self-study, students)

Classroom teachers inconsistently clarify the relevance of each learning activity and how it relates to the specific school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals. The mission statement is posted in all classrooms and in the school's breezeway, and printed in students' planners. During the morning announcements, the principal always states the school's mission and the ABCs of Derby. Most students know the mission statement and its academic, behavioral, and citizenship expectations, yet teachers and students had difficulty articulating how the assignment/assessment/or learning activity exemplified the mission's learning goals or specific course-related goals. Directions for assessments did not consistently include an explanation of the connection of the assignment to the school's mission. Few examples of student work included school-wide or common rubrics. Most teachers are not making connections between their assignments and the mission statement or course-specific learning

goals directly. Teachers must relate daily work in the classroom to the school's mission and expectations. (Student work, teacher interview, self-study, student shadowing, classroom observation)

Most teachers include rubrics and/or course specific criteria for assessments and assignments on some classroom learning activities. It is not clear that students always see the rubric or criteria in written form before the activity or assessment, and teachers report that some directions and expectations are communicated orally to students. Some student work samples show that some teachers have specific learning criteria to assess student work; however, this evaluation criteria often emphasize recall of information and does not assess critical and creative thinking. Many such lists resemble the use of scoring criteria rather than rubrics. Existing course-specific rubrics, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) rubrics used in weekly CAPT exercises, and school-wide rubrics are not aligned with the mission statement. There are five school-wide rubrics that assess the following: proficiency in reading and active listening; proficiency in oral and written communication skills; critical application of math skills to solve problems; demonstration of basic scientific concepts and their relationships; and the use of technology and applied arts to facilitate learning and communication. The activities and assessments with the existing course-specific rubrics, CAPT rubrics, and school-wide rubrics do not specifically reflect learning goals stated in the mission statement. Current school-wide rubrics and course-specific rubrics do not effectively assess the critical and creative thinking goals of the school's mission statement. (student work, classroom observation, self-study, student shadowing)

Most teachers at Derby High School ask students to complete a variety of classroom assessments; however, the majority of the assessments ask students to perform lower level recall and comprehension assignments and do not call for higher level thinking skills. Including student work provided in the workroom, students have created posters, PowerPoint presentations, books, portfolios, short stories, oral reports, quizzes, homework assignments, and CAPT simulation exercises. Teachers use tests that contain multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and short essay types of questions. Most of the essays students completed on tests did not have an accompanying rubric, and most of the assessments and course syllabi focused only on understanding and comprehending content. Most teacher feedback to students complimented student work with "good" or "great" in the margins; correct answers were marked as such with a check, or a "C", but there was no informative feedback on the work itself. Most teachers provided feedback to students by indications on the rubric where they circled or highlighted where the students' work met the rubric's standard; however, the student is given little information on why the work meets particular standards within the rubric and is not trained to use the rubric for self-assessment. There is little written corrective or constructive feedback given to the student. Teachers summarize student results on assessments by tallying student results with the strands on the rubric, but teachers do not collect data that allows students and teachers to assess student growth over time. Thus, there is not enough higher level thinking assessed through the consistent use of rubrics, and there is no long-term tracking of student growth, and that data gathered is not factored into instructional reflection personally or school-wide. (student work, teacher interview, school leadership, student shadowing, self-study)

Some teachers meet informally to discuss student assessment results for the purpose of improving instruction, but this is not common practice at Derby High School and there is inadequate time available for curriculum revision. Common planning time is not built into the schedule; because of this, some teachers report that they try to meet informally before, during, and after school to discuss instructional strategies. The principal tries to limit faculty meeting time so teachers can collaborate, but there is little oversight to ensure this happens. The principal reports he trusts his staff to constructively collaborate on teaching and learning, but conversations with many faculty members indicate that department meetings are more focused on day to day strategies to meet student needs and on housekeeping measures rather than on improving instructional strategies. There needs to be a more formal framework and a means of accountability to enhance student learning and teacher effectiveness and to review and revise the current curriculum. Most of the instruction observed assessed recall and retention of content rather than the creative and critical thinking skills in the mission. Because the professional development budget has been cut, many teachers do not have the necessary training to understand how the assessment data collected can directly impact their teaching. Lack of a common planning time prevents formal conversations and the sharing of student assessment results, so that teachers use multiple rubrics which do not necessarily align with the school's mission. Teachers report that there are school-wide rubrics, department rubrics, course and assignment-specific rubrics, and CAPT rubrics used weekly with CAPT like assessments at Derby High School, and each rubric communicates different expectations. The varied rubrics that exist do not support a systematic means of collecting data to improve instruction and are not used by all faculty members; therefore, instructional improvement and curriculum revision based on student performance data also does not take place. (central office administrators, teachers, school leadership team, self-study, student work, student shadowing)

There are no professional development opportunities, and most assessment strategies teachers implement are limited to capturing content and understanding of content. Funding for the school's professional development program has been cut, and teachers have been provided few formal opportunities to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. Some teachers use rubrics to grade papers; many teachers report that the classroom rubrics mentioned earlier are a valuable way to clearly communicate the assessment's expectations. As a result of a lack of funding for professional development opportunities, however teachers have not learned how rubrics can be used as the basis for collaborative conversations for developing a broad range of assessments, and students are not exposed to a broad range of assessments designed to develop the creative and critical thinking demanded in the mission. (central office administrators, teachers, department leaders, principal, self-study)

The teachers at Derby High School have a limited number of communication methods to communicate student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families and/or to communicate the school's progress in achieving school-wide expectations to the community. Some teachers inform students of their successes via school-wide rubrics requirements with teacher-made and school-wide rubrics that help teachers and students assess the degree of success on a specific assignment. These rubrics communicate the specific expectations on an assessment; this gives students a clear picture of how to complete the assignment's requirements. The school does have the software program PowerSchool available, but it has not been fully instituted for full parent involvement. The school does maintain an up-

to-date website that is accessible to all who have a computer. The website includes relevant information including individual teacher pages, curriculum information, and also the school mission statement. Parents can also communicate electronically with teachers if the need arises. All students are given a DHS Handbook on the first day of school, and parents must sign off saying that they are familiar with its contents. Incoming freshmen and their parents have an orientation meeting before school starts in the fall, and there is an open house scheduled for all parents to meet with the son/daughter's teacher. Parents are mailed mid-quarter progress reports, and report cards are mailed at the end of each quarter. The school also holds an open house for the end of the art exhibit where parents and the community are invited. However, there currently is no formal method that ensures members of the school community have clear information about the school's progress in meeting the school-wide expectations expressed in the mission statement nor of student progress in meeting the expectations. (principal, self-study, teachers, website, students, parents)

Commendations

1. The development and use by most faculty members of five school-wide rubrics
2. The implementation of two assessments per quarter using school-wide rubrics to assess the mission's academic goals
3. The creation of course-specific rubrics for assessment of student work
4. The reading of the mission statement and its ABCs during the daily announcements
5. The availability of the PowerSchool Program to report assessment results
6. The variety of assessment strategies used by most teachers
7. The use of weekly CAPT exercises

Recommendations

1. Provide all students with a written copy of the rubrics or criteria to be used in assessing assignments
2. Revise school-wide rubrics for rigor, authenticity, and clarity, to accurately assess the five school-wide academic goals and use them in all classes
3. Provide professional development for the creation of rubrics, their use by teachers and students, and their interpretation by teachers
4. Provide professional development opportunities to train all teachers in the collection, evaluation, and use of assessment data to revise and develop curriculum
5. Develop departmental common assessments and rubrics to promote consistency in assessment practices
6. Report student progress on performance and other data to students, parents, and the public on a regular basis
7. Base grading and reporting practices on specific learning criterion that is tied to the school's expectations for student learning
8. Provide professional development in a variety of assessment strategies including the creation of authentic assessments and the design and analysis of rubrics
9. Develop and implement a procedure to record and track student progress in mastering expectations as assessed by school-wide rubrics

10. Develop systems to show the connections between teachers' assignments and the school's mission statement and course-specific learning goals

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SCONDARY SCHOOLS**

**SUPPORT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS**

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

5.

Support Standard

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

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

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

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

Conclusions

The board of education and superintendent have ensured that the principal of Derby High School has sufficient autonomy and authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. Derby High School has had four principals in the last five years, and the school has needed consistent leadership with a common shared vision known to all. The current principal is in his third year and has been well received by parents, students, and faculty members. The board of education, consisting of nine members, must be given all information of the school's needs and activities undertaken to improve teaching and learning so its members understand what it can do to support the school. Daily operations at Derby are under the direction and control of the principal. He has provided leadership and direction by revising the mission statement, increasing instructional time, creating a monthly calendar, publishing a newsletter, communicating to staff members with "A Week Ahead" report, reaching out to the parents and community by offering coffee hours, and utilizing Connect Ed to keep the community informed. The principal is involved in policy and budget development, but the priority of how money is allocated is a source of tension in some circumstances between building administrators and central office. The principal is responsible for guiding the faculty toward attaining goals driven by the DHS Mission Statement. With very limited funding, professional development opportunities have been provided within the building. The principal works with department heads and the assistant principal and is responsible for teacher evaluations. Given the sufficient amount of autonomy, the principal is able to effectively support the advancement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning and direct such aspects as an effective climate improvement within the school and support for school pride that makes change possible. (panel presentation, self-study, district administrators, building administrators, school board)

The principal provides leadership in Derby High School by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning. The principal has an open door policy and is visible in the school to faculty members and students between and during classes. Students and faculty and staff members feel comfortable approaching the principal regarding school improvement. The principal recognizes teacher strengths, and, in a small school where everyone knows each other, the trusted principal is a respected leader. He is known to follow through and is honest about current challenges. The principal communicates well with the faculty and staff and sends out "The Week Ahead" updates. The principal and his assistant work tirelessly to see that their vision is shared by all stakeholders. Students and teachers report that they are aware of the school's mission and expectations because the document is posted throughout the building, is read aloud during daily announcements, and exists on every correspondence sent by the school. Many of them, however, do not clearly understand the principal's goals for the school. The principal meets with the faculty weekly although most of these meetings at the beginning of this school year have been to prepare for the accreditation visit. The principal meets with department heads regularly and has informal discussions with faculty members along with his weekly email update. The principal has recently met with the physical education department to discuss the policy regarding participation and grading procedures and there is a weekly meeting with the guidance department to discuss student concerns. The principal is also very visible at non-academic functions. He usually attends all home athletic contests, the art show, and concerts

given by the music department. In this way, he is modeling behavior which is part of the DHS Mission Statement of being appropriate, respectful, and positive. Additional efforts by the school to engage parents in sharing the vision would enhance communications in the school and community. The communication of the mission and the Academic, Behavioral, Civic expectations (ABC s) of DHS has generated increased understanding of the school's mission and expectations, and this active improvement in school climate is a direct result of the number of informal opportunities to communicate with the school leader. (self-study, teachers, observation, panel presentation, administrators)

Teachers, the assistant principal, and guidance counselors as well as the principal provide leadership essential to the improvement of Derby High School. There are specific leadership opportunities for teachers and the assistant principal. The assistant principal's position is currently a ten-month position, much like a teacher's contract length. Having the assistant principal's position become a full-time administrative position would certainly help in the smooth operation and provide essential leadership in the school. Department heads have been assigned to lead their disciplines, and teachers have been assigned to a standards committee for the accreditation self-study process. The assistant principal and ESL teacher assumed leadership positions by assuming the roles of co-chairs for the NEASC self-study process. All certified and non-certified staff members lead an advisory program which has promoted a safe and comfortable environment for students to share school-wide concerns. Although there is an organizational flowchart of leadership roles, the responsibilities of each role player are not yet clearly defined. The lack of common planning time hinders teachers from aligning curriculum and improving instruction, which would be another area where teachers could show their leadership abilities. It is essential for faculty members and other staff members beyond the principal to provide leadership to implement and sustain school improvement. This will be made possible through discussion and clearly defined, well-communicated roles of leadership and responsibility. (self-study, teachers, administrators, panel presentation)

The organization of Derby High School and its educational programs promotes the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Transitioning in January 2010, from sharing space with the middle school has allowed for organizational restructure. An example of the improving organizational structure is the appointment of department heads in the high school. At the time when the middle school also occupied DHS, there were two principals, two different daily schedules, and two different sets of bells ringing, causing confusion and frustration on the part of many of the students and staff members. Another positive result of the separation from the middle school is the amount of available unused classroom space. The school has adopted an advisory model where issues such as school lunch concerns and class sizes have been addressed and rectified through student discussions. Although the academic resources for student achievement are limited, most teachers make themselves available after school twice a week to provide additional help to students. The clearly defined behavioral expectations have been received well by all. This policy, reinforced in advisory, has led to decreased student conflict. Similarly, the addition of the one-minute warning bell has helped students get to class on time. Teachers continue discussions of behavioral expectations outside the classroom, reinforcing the civic and social expectations of the mission. For example, a teacher in the hallway during passing time addressed a student about the appropriateness of conversation that took place in the classroom, thus reinforcing the "B" in the behavioral piece of the mission statement. With the

help of many, the school is becoming a safe place to be, and the way has been prepared for a more intense approach to the academic standards that is also necessary. Continued reinforcement of the school's mission statement and the social and civic expectations will result in student stability and achievement and the realization of the school mission and academic expectations. (panel presentation, teachers, students, administrators, observations, self-study)

Derby High School's current student grouping patterns do not reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research or best practices, or support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations. The student body of Derby High School is very diverse in ethnic, racial, and cultural composition. The school currently consists of 63.5% white students, 17.8% Hispanic students, 15.3% Black students, 2.7% Asian American, students and less than 1% of Native American students. This is a major change as ten years ago the make up of the school population was 80% white students and 20% minority students. The average number of students attending Derby has not changed but the population has become increasingly transient and the diversity has changed. While this major change has taken place, it is not apparent that the school structure has changed to meet this dynamic challenge, and as a result, the school must work to support students achieving the school's mission and student achievement. According to the program of studies, the only class that is heterogeneously grouped is physical education. In its self-study, Derby High School reports three academic levels: academic, college preparatory, and honors, but the 2010 program of studies defines additional levels such as advanced placement, early college experience, and general. General is the term assigned to courses specifically designed for most special education students. At the current time, the faculty has not explored current educational research regarding the effects of grouping and leveling procedures on student achievement. Some students state that some of their courses are not challenging, and there was very little differentiated instruction observed nor many instructional strategies for personalization. In these situations, classroom observations have not revealed student work or students mastering higher level thinking processes within curriculum, being further challenged, or having high quality interactions with their peers. Students can take a variety of leveled courses and are encouraged to move on to more challenging classes if desired. Observation reveals that high expectations are not the norm in all classrooms at all levels, in fact, several students said they didn't need to bring texts to the class and they could still get an "A" for a grade. The current system of grouping and leveling students heightens underlying concerns around diversity and equality of opportunity and frequently results in de-facto tracking which has an adverse effect on student learning and on the school's learning climate. (classroom observation, district administrators, self-study, teachers, students)

The schedule does not completely support the Derby High School's mission and expectations for student learning and is limited in the support of effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Derby High School uses a straight seven period schedule, which creates consistency and predictability. Each period is 47 minutes with the addition of a modified schedule to allow for a 19-minute advisory period which meets twice a month. The current schedule accommodates inclement weather, early dismissals, and student half days. Many teachers express the opinion that instructional strategies would improve if additional time were added to periods to fully integrate higher-order thinking activities, model problems, discuss results, and allow students to work independently. This would be more effective, they believe, in the higher level courses. The elimination of homeroom was a unanimous decision which has

increased attendance to classes at the beginning of the school day; however, the lack of a rotating schedule means there is the same first period class each day. Although most teachers want common planning time, some teachers use informal opportunities to collaborate before, after school, and during lunch waves. Once every six weeks, the school releases students early so teachers can participate in professional development activities, most recently the NEASC self-study. The newly formed, pull-out program in the learning center, which addresses four students in need, is a promising start. Building time into the daily schedule to increase access to academic resources and ensuring awareness of these resources will create more support structures along the continuum of services to serve the needs of the majority of learners through a tiered intervention approach. To some degree, Derby High School's schedule supports the school's mission and expectations for student learning, but it may benefit from integrating a formal data-driven, goal-oriented, structured meeting time for teachers into the schedule to further the school mission and expectations for student learning and to facilitate teachers' efforts to improve instruction. An alternative schedule(s) should be investigated to see if it would further support the achievement of the school's mission statement and objectives. Students say that lunch is offered too late in the day, making for hungry and sometimes tired students. A schedule structured to support the unique needs of the school will allow for collaboration for professional dialogue and serve the physical and educational needs of students. (panel presentation, students, observations, tour, self-study)

Meaningful roles in the decision-making process are accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. With all of the leadership changes at Derby High School, the principal has created an atmosphere that is positive and collegial. The small school setting has allowed teachers, administrators, and students to have positive, respectful working relationships with limited formal decision-making bodies. The administration put a high priority on getting the school climate under control so that Derby High School would be safe and orderly. The principal has created an environment where ideas about school improvement can be shared openly. Teachers raise issues and feel that the high school administration is responsive. Students also feel they have a voice through the advisory program. Increasing instructional time through the elimination of homeroom is an example of responsiveness by the administrator to concerns raised by students. The parent/teacher organization (PTO) presents opportunities for parental participation in the decision-making process and has been responsible for the organization of post-prom activities and bringing in speakers to present on important topics. Though there are opportunities for involvement, it is evident through the self-study process, that parents are still minimally involved, though those present do feel empowered and heard. An example of non-communication to parents prevented parents from attending a school budget meeting that might have prevented a recent budget cut. Even though students comment that they did not have input in creating the mission statement, it appears that the mission statement has become an accepted, even valued, part of the culture. There is a student leadership team, consisting of four students at each grade level. Though the group consists of only academically strong students, the student population is aware that there is such a group in addition to advisory to represent them directly and share concerns. Well-publicized school-wide organizational participation by all stakeholders in the decision-making process establishes a sense of ownership in the process and all decisions, thereby supporting the school's mission and expectations. (self-study, students, school publications available, parents, teachers, administrators)

Each teacher has a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students; however, inadequate resources prohibit some classes from having a full set of textbooks. Faculty members teach five instructional periods per day and the average class student to teacher ratio is 23 to 1. This suggests that teachers have a student load that is manageable and enables them to meet the learning needs of individual students. Many students state that teachers are willing to meet with them on an individual basis either before or after school. In some cases, however, teachers express concerns over class sizes and the acquisition of sufficient materials to meet the needs of their students. For example, science teachers with 23 students in a class describe not having enough working materials for students to complete lab work. English, history, and world language teachers report that they do not have enough texts for all students, and many of them spend time copying textbooks so that all will have one. Many classrooms do not have technology available or in good working order to support instruction. This shortage of supplies and technology results in students being unable to complete assignments or fulfill all of the school's expectations. (teachers, budget document, administrators, observations, self-study)

There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to a school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning. The advisory program was established two years ago by the current principal for the stated purposes, and the advisory meets for a special 19-minute period twice per month. Every member of the faculty, staff, and administration is assigned an advisory group. Part of the advisory mission is to strengthen the connection between students and teachers and foster positive relationships among small groups of students. Students and parents report that the advisory program is a positive experience that guarantees each student is given personal attention centered on learning and behavioral expectations. The program has allowed students to have an adult mentor in the school who knows them and can be a source of advice and support during their four years as a student at Derby High School. The experiences provided within the advisory classes vary greatly depending on teacher level of comfort, knowledge of topics, and desire to be connected with students. Advisory activities encompass such topics as social skill development, conflict resolution skills, and assistance with the college search process. The principal has provided suggested activities relevant to specific grade levels, to accommodate the needs of all students. This is an effective program, and it is important that it continues to grow in a way that supports all students through developmentally appropriate discussions. It should be supported by school-wide planning and discussion or professional development and some form of curricular documentation. (students, administrative team, observation, teachers, self-study)

The professional staff does not have a formal means of collaboration within and across departments in support of learning for all students. There is no time during the school day for faculty members to examine student work, plan interdisciplinary activities and work as part of a well designed professional learning group. Many teachers informally discuss student issues with colleagues during lunch, before or after school, or in passing between classes. While staff members meet during monthly department meetings, there are no procedures in place for formal collaboration among teachers within departments or across departments to discuss student

learning outcomes. For example, there is no current system in place for the collection and analysis of student data through a data team process. While some teachers cite examples of teacher collaboration, there is no scheduled common planning time. If common time occurs between teachers, it is simply a coincidence of the master schedule. Once every six weeks, students are dismissed on a shortened day, and this time could be utilized by the staff of Derby High School for collaboration and professional development as they go forward improving teaching and learning. Faculty meetings are held approximately monthly while department meetings take place once monthly, and the administrative team meets with department heads once per month. These meetings do not include a process for supporting learning for all students and expanding teachers' skills. The administrative team does envision moving in the direction of establishing professional learning communities and/or data teams. The absence of formal collaboration leads to a lack of accountability for student learning. In support of the school's mission and academic expectations, there is a clear and evident need to formalize the process of bringing teachers together as collaborators to improve instruction through the examination of student work, assessment data and best practice. (teacher interviews, teachers, administrators, self-study, program of studies)

The faculty and staff at Derby High School are genuinely concerned with promoting the well-being and learning of students. Administrators, guidance counselors, the school social worker, and teachers meet periodically in various configurations to discuss student academic, emotional, social, and physical needs. Other personnel such as the school and guidance secretaries, custodians, paraprofessionals, and the library clerk promote students' well-being and learning through daily assistance and direction. The guidance department has developed a document called an individual student profile portfolio. This is to serve as a checklist to track credits earned, document contact time with counselors, and serve as a task list for counselors to keep track of each individual student. Additionally, the guidance counselors have instituted a ninth grade transition program with a curriculum designed to support these students with a goal of decreasing ninth grade retention rates. In order to access each ninth grader while minimizing disruption to core classes, counselors go into individual health classes for six weeks to teach a specific unit of instruction. The faculty and staff is also involved with students in co- and extracurricular activities, allowing teachers to see students in a venue other than academics. The advisory program is another example of an effort by Derby High School, to make sure that each student is connected to a trusted, caring adult in the building. The advisory program has also brought about a mutual respect for student and teacher relationships which has undergone a notable improvement over past years. The ninth grade transition program and the advisory program are utilized, in part, to present topics to students that are relevant to their social and emotional well-being. When all stakeholders in the school community demonstrate genuine concern for the well-being and learning of students, the mission and expectations for student learning can be more readily achieved and all participants benefit. (students, observations, guidance, secretaries, student shadowing, teachers, parents)

Student success is acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed on a limited basis. Student work is inconsistently displayed in classrooms. In some classrooms, student work samples are posted, showing a range of success on various assignments. In other classrooms, no student work is on display. The hallways, while showcasing many athletic awards of the past and present, are not showcases for academic success. Does the school treat student athletic accomplishments as more

significant then academic accomplishments? The "breezeway" area would be the perfect place for these academic celebrations to be honored. In the guidance area, there are several placards that display the names of scholarship recipients, but visual displays such as honor rolls, membership in National Honor Society, or students of the month are not obvious. There are numerous art exhibits, including murals, throughout the building and in common areas and hallways. Recognition of student accomplishments in the academic, fine arts, and athletic areas instill pride in students and having a diversity of celebrations would recognize a wide range of student achievement. There is an annual banquet held at the end of the year to celebrate students who make honor roll three marking periods, a scholarship banquet, and the end of season sports banquets throughout the year so that there is documentation of student accomplishment. Continually acknowledging, celebrating, and displaying student successes in both the academic and athletic areas supports an atmosphere of success that serves to motivate students and make everyone in the school proud. (classroom observations, facility tour, student shadowing, self-study)

The climate of the school is generally safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership, but school rules and policies are not consistently applied by all stakeholders. Over the last two years, the climate of the school has significantly improved as a result of stabilization within the school's administrative team. The current principal and assistant principal have worked together for one year as of the date of the NEASC visit, and they have established control over security issues in the building. A Derby police officer works as a school resource officer (SRO) traveling between the middle and high schools. He is a member of the Derby Police Department and has a close working relationship with the police department keeping the faculty apprised of various situations that might arise regarding safety issues. All students are supplied with a Derby High School Handbook which lists an offense and consequences procedure and rules and regulations that focus on student safety and respect. The administrators of Derby High School also utilize a safety monitor as an added measure of security. In addition to his duties as a monitor of the in-school suspension classroom, the safety monitor supervises the corridors. This heightened supervision in non-classroom areas of the building has led to decreased class cutting and decreased misbehavior at Derby High School. In addition to orderliness and discipline in the hallways, an increased sense of safety comes from moving the middle school to its own building across the street. At the front door, there is a buzzer system to allow access to the school building after identifying oneself, but there are no outside or inside video safety cameras in use, and there are still many unsupervised areas, which causes a safety concern. All guests are required to sign-in when entering the building and are greeted by a student greeter. The building, classrooms, bathrooms, and hallways are clean and free of graffiti. There is however, a tolerance of inappropriate classroom behavior that is disrespectful to teachers and students (side-talking, out of seat behavior, head down, electronic devices that are visible and in use). There is observable inconsistent disciplinary enforcement of school rules by faculty and staff members. Inconsistent application of school regulations, practices, and policies creates an atmosphere of tolerance for behaviors that undermine good order, safety, and security and a necessary focus for learning. (facility tour, classroom observations, safety monitor, self-study, teachers)

The board of education supports the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. However, it appears that anything that will cause fiscal increase might not be

accepted by the board of education. After final approval by the faculty of the school's mission and expectations, the document was submitted to the school board for approval and the school board members supported it. The principal is given the autonomy to implement the mission and expectations for student learning in all aspects of Derby High School as long as there is no fiscal impact. The implementation of the advisory program and the revised attendance requirements are efforts by the school to improve Derby High School. While this seems to demonstrate support of the school's efforts, the board did not support the establishment of an alternate learning center because of funding constraints, even though this was projected to generate revenue and reduce the cost of out-placing students in the long term. Other examples of financial hardship include teachers with no money to purchase supplies or books, the technology system that is in dire need of repair or replacement, the lack of a certified media specialist, and the loss of the curriculum coordinator. The 2010-11 budget figures are available on the school-website, and there is a proposed increase of about \$1.7 million dollars including restoring the curriculum coordinator's position. All of this falls into the hands of the Derby Board of Apportionment & Taxation. The constrained plans and funding decisions of the board of education in regard to the school's needs thwart a positive, working relationship between the board, city, and school and are not fully supportive of the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (teachers, administrators, budget form, self-study, board of education members)

Commendations

1. The principal's autonomy to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning
2. The principal's effective leadership and openness to student, parent, and teacher input
The principal's open communication with faculty and staff members, students, parents, and the community
3. The teamwork and collegiality of the administrators
4. The school community's opportunities to participate in the decision-making process
5. The advisory program that allows students to connect with an adult in the building other than the guidance counselor(s)
6. A caring and dedicated staff
7. The dedication of all personnel to the growth and development of the students
8. The improvement of the school climate
9. The principal's use of resources such as time and staff to meet the needs of the students
10. The use of weekly e-mail and the universal e-mail system for communication with the entire school community
11. The safe learning environment
12. The continued support of the safety monitor and SRO programs
13. The administrators visibility at school and community events
14. The examples of teachers taking leadership positions

Recommendations

1. Increase the school board's investment in the school's initiatives by creating a common vision that includes all stakeholders

2. Improve the communication between the central office, building administration, faculty, parents and community
3. Clearly define teachers leadership roles
4. Examine the effectiveness of the schedule, utilizing all stakeholders, and explore alternative scheduling to better achieve the school's mission and expectations
5. Provide common planning time for all teachers to provide for inter-department collaboration across all areas
6. Examine and justify student grouping patterns to ensure they reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research, and best practices
7. Develop strategies that will enhance the school budget to acquire more academic resources for all academic areas
8. Increase the showcasing of student academic achievements in classrooms and throughout the school
9. Increase teacher participation in decision-making and teacher leadership opportunities
10. Integrate students into the decision-making process
11. Create a structured, goal-oriented advisory curriculum
12. Provide safety cameras to ensure a continued safe learning environment
13. Develop strategies to include the board of education that will enlist them in becoming more aware of the daily happenings and specific needs of DHS
14. Develop a plan that increases the collaboration and cooperation of the high school principal, superintendent and board of education
15. Provide adequate funding to support the assistant principal's administrative position to become full-time

6.

Support Standard

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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

All Student Support Services

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

Guidance Services

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

*appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

Health Services

9. The school's health services shall provide:

- * preventive health services and direct intervention services;
- * appropriate referrals;
- * mandated services;
- * emergency response mechanisms;
- * ongoing student health assessments

Library Information Services

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

Special Education Services

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

Conclusions

The school's student support services are consistent with the spirit of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. These services rely on the student initiative to access available support services. The health service staff support the mission statement and expectations by working with students, staff, and parents to ensure that the students are healthy and able to participate in academic learning and appropriate behavior in the school and outside community. The guidance department meets with students to aid in decision-making, coping with personal problems, and other school or personal situations. Guidance counselors break down barriers to student learning, so that positive contributions can be made to the learning environment. The special education department acts as a liaison between a student's regular education teachers, parents, and community agencies. Special education services are designed and structured to assist identified students with special needs in meeting/exceeding their academic and social expectations. The school planned for an alternative education program, but it was cut from this year's budget. The library media center promotes civic expectations through providing students with an opportunity to volunteer and provide a positive contribution to the school community and a quiet study environment and some reading materials. The support services staff members are supportive and caring and instrumental in creating a sense of belonging in students which is critical for their academic success. The school also supports the position of a school resource officer, social worker, and a school safety monitor. Having support services personnel and programs in line with the mission and expectations for student learning enables support services to increase their effectiveness. (self-study, support staff, observation, guidance, teachers)

The school does not allocate resources, create programs, or provide services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. Community resources that are in place to support the school's expectations for student learning through special education include Boys and Girls Club, Parent Child Resource Center (PCRC), and the Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES). The Transition Program Learning Center (TPLC) has a four to one student-to-teacher ratio, helping developmentally/ intellectually disabled students get the assistance they require. The Learning Center provides a transitional environment for these students when entering or leaving Derby High School (DHS) to or from an out-placement center. Through the use of study teams, the crisis team, and the advisory program, support services personnel and administrators identify students who may be in need of extra assistance. The guidance department provides a variety of programming including informational assemblies for each class at the beginning of the year and four parent-student events addressing student goals and future planning. The social worker's day is split between the high school and middle school, thus limiting the social worker's effectiveness at DHS. Currently, there is no certified library media specialist (LMS) at Derby High School, but the library clerk provides the school with a very supportive and student-oriented working attitude. The lack of technology in the resource rooms does not allow students access to special education adaptive assistance. Support services needs updated and working technology to assist students through programs such as AIMS web and Naviance. The use of this software would greatly increase student achievement by impacting student assessment and career planning. An alternative education program within DHS has been proposed, but this proposal has been put on hold because of budgetary constraints. The proposed alternative education program has the

potential of saving the district a significant amount of money that is currently being spent on out-placing students who could be educated at Derby High School. In addition, several surrounding communities who don't have an alternative program might send their students to Derby, making the program profitable for the school district. Other academic programs offered to students include: partnership with Housatonic Community College, University of Connecticut (UCONN) courses, Valley Regional Adult Education Program, Bridges College Readiness Program, CAPT alternative assessment classes, IEP directed modified curriculum, and 504 plans. Inadequacies in staffing and the lack of suitable technology limit the resources, programs, and services in place at Derby, impeding real opportunities for all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. (support staff, self-study, observation, evidence box, teachers)

Student support personnel enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of the students. Student support personnel work cooperatively with professional and other staff members. All faculty and staff members, administrators, and parents are able to refer students who may be in need of assistance to the child study team (CST). This program meets every week. Students may also refer themselves or other students. Parent meetings include 504 meetings and planning and placement team meetings. Meetings with parents, teachers, students, and relevant support personnel are scheduled as needed when there is a concern about individual students' social, emotional, health, or academic needs. The library clerk works cooperatively with faculty members, staff, and support staff by supplying available resources to students and teachers. In addition, the library clerk works with the two local town libraries and utilizes the inter-library loan program to provide students additional resources to supplement the collection located in the high school library. Student support personnel utilize additional resources to address student needs. These resources include outside social workers, Intensive In-house Child/Adolescent Psychiatric Services (ICAP), Umbrella Group, PCRC, Department of Child and Family Services (DCF), Milford Rape Crisis Center, ACES, and Yale Child Study Center. The opportunities for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to receive guidance services in school are available but limited. Expanding services to students of all grade levels in school would increase the guidance department's effectiveness. The cooperation of staff members at Derby High School creates a positive and effective environment that addresses the needs of the majority of students. (observation, support staff, steering committee, self-study)

Student support services for learning are not regularly evaluated or revised to support improved student learning. The high school administrators or special education director evaluate student support personnel, but there is no formal evaluation of the school nurse. The school is currently working on ways to provide more structure to improve evaluation models which differ from faculty evaluations. The guidance department will be sending to all students an opportunity to evaluate its services form to be used to improve services. Special education faculty members are evaluated by the special education director. Health services are evaluated on the ability to ensure confidentiality of student records. The library program does not currently get evaluated, but this year, a formal feedback survey will be given to students, teachers, and parents in an effort to improve the effectiveness of the program. In addition to a dramatically reduced budget, Derby High School has had to overcome many obstacles because of a high staff turnover and consequential loss of continuity and documentation. Now that there is stability within the school

leadership, the high school is working toward formalizing and instituting effective evaluation procedures. Lack of formalized support services procedures and evaluation models lead to a deficiency in accountability for student learning needs. (support services, teachers, administrators, self-study, support staff)

There is an ongoing system of communication with students, parents/ guardians, and school personnel designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and about identified student needs. Systems for communicating with students, parents guardians, faculty members, and staff members are only somewhat effective. The guidance department's communication methods include a big school calendar in the main office, daily announcements, mailings with progress reports, student advisory programs, monthly e-mails to students, and phone calls that take place on an individual basis. In addition, the up-to-date DHS website has improved student and parent/guardian contact opportunities. DHS informs school personnel about available services and identified student needs through e-mail and face-to-face contact. The support services personnel ensure that all members of the school community know how to refer students for services through the CTS. Impediments to staff communication include unreliable technology that is occasionally off network, rendering e-mail to faculty members, students, or parents useless. Instruction is needed to train staff to operate the DHS phone and voice e-mail system. DHS struggles with contacting some parents in the district, because the parents may not have a permanent address, accurate phone numbers, or access to the Internet. Other methods of contacting parents is through a freshmen orientation program, open house, junior and senior nights, financial aid meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. The school social worker, SRO, and youth services coordinator work cooperatively with the guidance department. Communication channels are available, but a lack of training and the unreliability of the technology system hinder communication at Derby High School. (support staff, guidance, self-study, observation)

Student records, including health and immunization records, are maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law. Student health records are kept in locked cabinets, none of which are fireproof. Additionally, the nurse inputs all new student health records and immunizations into the district educational operating system. Health records must be kept for fifty years according to state law. The guidance department files are kept in the guidance suite in locked cabinets which are not all fireproofed. Graduated student transcripts are kept in the guidance suite in locked fireproof cabinets. Special education (SPED) files are kept in locked cabinets that are not fireproof. Original copies of all documentation for all special education students are kept in the Derby public education central office. The guidance secretary is responsible for ensuring that student records are kept in accordance with state and federal guidelines. Since the records are kept confidential and secure, confidentiality is maintained, but most records are stored in non-fireproofed cabinets. (nurse, guidance counselors, observation, support staff, self-study)

There are sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education services, except in the library media area. The LMC area is not staffed by the certified library media specialist (LMS) to serve the faculty, staff, and 400 students at Derby High School. Currently, the social worker is part-time, serving the middle school as well as high school students. The school also lacks a full-time dedicated IT staff member to address

the many technology issues that currently exist or as they arise at the high school. The tech services manager and his twenty hour a week part-time assistant are splitting time among four schools in the district creating a negative impact on student learning and hindering teachers from using technology as a dependable part of teaching and learning. The availability of only a half-time social worker and school psychologist limit the counseling available and necessary to the high school students. A part-time out-of-district speech pathologist also provides services for students. The guidance department consists of two certified school counselors and one secretary. Two full-time special education teachers and three paraprofessionals serve those students who have been identified as having special needs. Additional academic support personnel, particularly in the library and special education areas, would help improve student achievement. Providing a full-time social worker's position and increasing the academic support staff would enhance the learning of all students. In addition, the lack of a certified LMS greatly hinders student learning, particularly in research and technology use, a separate expectation, and sets a negative precedent for diminishing services in all areas including curriculum and instruction, directly hindering the student's ability and opportunity to meet the school's academic standards. (observation, support staff, teachers, evidence box, self-study)

Guidance Services

Derby High School provides an adequate range of guidance services for its students. The services provided by the guidance department include personal, educational, and college and career planning. Currently however, the two guidance counselors do not meet individually with every student in every grade, 9-12, and all students do not meet individually with counselors on a regular and ongoing basis for all four years. The program includes classroom presentations, help in course selection, referral to appropriate help groups, parental information nights, and student group meetings. There is a planned group activity with each class throughout the year. In addition, counselors, administrators and department heads meet with eighth grade teachers and students to discuss course selection and appropriate leveling. Most contact with the guidance counselors takes place during the student's senior year. This year, students are engaging in a post-secondary planning program called "*Bridges*" in conjunction with Housatonic Community College. Currently, students meet with guidance counselors beyond their initial assembly only if they initiate contact with counselors. The guidance staff is often unavailable to meet one-on-one with students because of other guidance responsibilities which include responsive/crisis services and intervention. The two certified counselors, are each assigned a caseload of about 200 students. Counselors make themselves available to students, both before and after school. Appointments that are made are usually kept in a timely fashion. Counselors, the social worker, and school psychologist provide transitioning services, testing, and counseling when needed. Counselors also meet with special education teachers and help set up IEP meetings, discuss scheduling needs, assist in appropriate planning, and collaborate with appropriate outside agencies. According to the Endicott Survey, more than half of the parents answering the survey trust their son's/daughter's guidance needs will be met. Although counselors communicate with students, additional efforts must be undertaken to increase the communication effort for parents. Although adequate services are provided, these services should be more directly linked to the mission and expectations of the school through a written curriculum. Although the guidance department meets with most of the students attending Derby High School when needed, individual meetings with all students in grades 9-12 should be scheduled each year and the

college planning process should be started earlier in the guidance protocol of services rendered. (guidance councilors, students, parents, handbook, program of studies, observation)

Health Services

Derby High School's health services provide: preventative health and direct intervention services; appropriate referrals; mandated services; emergency response mechanisms; and ongoing student health assessments. The nurse is not currently involved with health curriculum development at the high school. The full-time registered school nurse focuses on direct care, health and vision screening, teacher referrals, and the promotion of healthy living habits. Mandated services include providing records of immunizations, physicals, and maintaining sports physicals. She also counsels students one-on-one about birth control and nutrition when necessary. The nurse certifies all staff members in cardiac pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid training certification emergency response mechanisms. Ongoing student health assessments include epi-pens, inhalers, and other medical needs, which are documented and disseminated to the staff in case of emergency. There are forms and procedures available to allow students to access backup services not provided by the school as appropriate. The school nurse is able to obtain community health services for students, often in the form of available, appropriate referrals to different agencies. The health service is Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliant. The school nurse is kept in constant communication via walkie-talkie and can be immediately notified in case of an emergency. She also will make the decision to call 911 for emergency medical assistance if necessary. There is an athletic trainer available for athletes after 3:00 pm, who is also available at all home athletic events where an ambulance is also available as per the direction of the athletic director. A majority of the parents surveyed are comfortable with the school's procedures in the event that their child becomes ill or is injured. As a result of an adequate health services program, students at Derby High School are effectively served by the services provided. (observation, nurse, teachers, students, self-study)

Library Media Services

The library/information services program and materials are not fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. Information and literacy skills are not integrated throughout the curriculum, and the library media center is not staffed by a certified library media specialist (LMS) trained in implementing information and literacy skills. While some Derby High School faculty members use the library for their research and information needs, the library clerk is not able to provide professional support by collaborating and assisting in the creation of lesson plans. The library clerk does, however, assist with implementation of the library to help with curriculum enhancement. There has been no money budgeted for library material purchases for several years, leading to a lack of current material and technology upkeep to support curriculum. Although the library clerk has no formal library/media training, she has been productive and helpful and makes every attempt to support the students and teachers. Because she is not certified, she is not able to appropriately collaborate with teachers on curriculum issues, including but not limited to, the review and revision of curriculum. The library clerk's participation is limited to supporting teachers and staff members when teachers request class use of the LMC. Teachers and students on occasion request materials for purchase, but a lack of available funding discourages the requests as they are rarely fulfilled. The lack of a certified

library media specialist and sufficient annual funding prevent the maturation of a comprehensive library media program to be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program to provide all students an opportunity to fulfill the school's technology expectation. (teachers, support staff, students, observations, self-study)

Library/information services personnel are limited in their knowledge about the curriculum and limited in supporting its implementation. There is currently no process in place to ensure that the library clerk is knowledgeable about school curriculum. The library is currently without a certified LMS and is therefore not in compliance with NEASC guidelines. There can thus be no way to initiate conversation about imbedding information literacy skills into classroom research activities. Sporadic one-on-one communication with teachers via phone, e-mail, or during class visits are the only ways for the library clerk to gain an understanding of the curriculum. A limited number of school faculty members uses the LMC with any consistency, further limiting the library clerk's ability to keep up with curriculum demands. However, the faculty feels that the library clerk is approachable, helpful, and well intentioned and that she does an excellent job considering all the circumstances surrounding the cutting of the LMS position. Currently, the library clerk has no involvement in the implementation, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. The library clerk provides one-on-one support during study hall, student visits, or when in a class. IConn databases, free to all Connecticut state residents, appear to be underutilized. With no certified LMS to provide promotion, instruction, or training in the use of the iConn database system for students or staff members, a valuable asset can not be utilized. A freshman library orientation program was conducted up until recently when the LMS position was eliminated. Professional development opportunities offered to the current library clerk would help overcome some of the school's failings. Without a library media specialist available for DHS, the library media program is unable to effectively support Derby High School's student learning or provide support for the school's curriculum. (library media personnel, teachers, self-study, students, observation)

A limited range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services are available to students and faculty and are underutilized in improving teaching and learning or responsive to the school's student population. The library media center (LMC) suffers from a lack of current print materials that would adequately support student learning needs. There are about 7,200 volumes in the library or roughly eighteen books to every student. The library currently subscribes to thirty-two periodical titles. Three computer stations are available for student use, often supplemented by the library media center's circulation personal computer, as need arises. The library catalog Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) is available only on two of these stations. No other access to the OPAC is available. The LMC is supplied with a laptop cart with twenty-two computers, but it is currently not operational. There is also a laser printer, scanner, digital video cameras, and overhead projectors available for classroom use. The media collection is automated and accessible through an online catalog, but only the media center's PC is available for its use. Non-functioning computer workstations, printers, and laptops are a common problem, not just in the LMC, but throughout the school. The IT personnel are approachable and willing to help, but the lack of enough staff and outdated equipment make the department ineffective, and as a result, students do not have adequate means to access online content. Free online resources provided by the state (iCONN) are underutilized. The library budget is approximately \$1,500.00, earmarked for periodicals subscriptions and continued

licensing and support of library software such as the OPAC and the Follett Circulation Catalog system. This budget therefore leaves no means for collection development to be undertaken to reflect the growing diversity in school population. A small audiobook collection has been maintained to support struggling readers in the school but does not include all titles of books found in the curriculum. Library materials are further supplemented by video content recorded by the library clerk and stored in the LMC for teacher use. The library clerk makes efforts to pull print materials for classroom teachers who visit the library. Insufficient funding and unreliable technology inhibit the library media center's effectiveness in providing the necessary basic resources for instruction and learning. (IT personnel, library media personnel, self-study, observation, teachers)

Students, faculty and support staff have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs before, during, and after the school day. The library is open for student and faculty use from 7:15AM to 2:25PM on Monday through Thursday and 7:15AM to 1:55PM on Friday. Teachers can sign up to use the library for classroom space and/or laptop use. There is also a conference space available in the library that is beginning to be used more by classroom teachers. Although the library is more frequently used when the laptops are operational, they are not currently operational. The library clerk is further responsible for managing sign-ups for two additional computer labs in the building. Students from study halls have a difficult time finding access to computers when classes are visiting the library media center, but ample space is available for studying, reading, or small group discussion. In any given period, ten individual students from study halls may visit the library at any time throughout the day with an appropriate pass. Students may come from study hall, lunch, a class, or with a class. Procedures for obtaining passes are clear, simple, and well established. The library is never closed during school, and there are currently students who assist the library clerk during various periods of the day. Recently, the library has become more popular under the new direction of the library clerk who, in consultation with the principal, has established a new philosophy emphasizing a more welcoming social environment. Access to the library media center adequately allows students and faculty to use the available LMC resources. (library media staff, self-study, observation, teachers, administrators, students)

The library/information services program fosters limited independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies that are available. The library media center provides some print resources and Internet access to students and staff on the three computers that are available in the library. However, the library media program does not provide students with training in information and research skills. Students report that they receive little instruction on information literacy skills. Teachers report that they must take responsibility for assisting students with their research, and some require students to use print and non-print materials to complete research projects. Teachers further indicate that they are not familiar with website evaluation or database search strategies, nor do they have extensive knowledge of reference works. Furthermore, the faculty has never received professional development in instructing information literacy because there is no certified library media specialist available. Faculty members are aware of the range of reference sources currently existing in the LMC but not the vast array of reference sources that are available for purchase. There is a professional collection of books and journals relating to education located in the library. Knowledge of and expansion to a greater range of information

resources has been impeded by a lack of funding over a number of years. It is also apparent that a vast array of free, online resources is underutilized and unknown to faculty members and students at Derby High School. The LMC clerk will be implementing a freshman orientation program in the near future to include information on how to search the Internet and how to use the online catalog. The absence of a library media specialist to implement research skills and develop a strong reference collection impedes development of information literacy skills and the fostering of independent inquiry. (students, teachers, self-study, observations, support staff)

Policies are in place for the removal of information resources, the use of technologies, and the Internet but are not in place for the selection of information resources. The library media program has a weeding policy in place for the removal of print materials from the library collection that has not been approved by the board of education. The library clerk, however, does not have a policy in place for the selection of materials to be added to the collection. Derby High School requires all students to read and sign an Acceptable Use Policy every year. New staff members are also required to sign the policy upon hire. The policy clearly delineates the expectations and appropriate use of the network and Internet resources. Parents must sign an additional form giving consent for their child to use the Internet. The Connecticut Education Network (CEN) filtering provides screening of the most objectionable material on the Internet and is managed by the district information technology manager. Currently, there is no school board approved policy establishing a process for material challenges. The lack of a collection development policy and materials challenge policy leave the library program vulnerable to unconventional policies to be informally set by precedent. (library media personnel, school documents, self-study, observation, IT personnel)

Special Education

The school provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students through the child study team program in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. School personnel are involved in the identification and referral processes for students who may require special education services. There is a formal referral process for crisis intervention that is in place and utilized. This referral process abides by state and federal law. The school ensures that special education student progress is being monitored by the special education department (SPED) through working closely with teachers and providing evidence through the pupil placement team (PPT) process. The school employs early intervention/pre-identification processes for students who do not meet expectations for student learning through the child study team/crisis intervention team. The special education department is working on the process and developing criteria that will allow standardization of process and procedures. Special education services provide support to students in the program and help them meet expectations for student learning through use of paraprofessional support, resource room, inclusion classes that are co-taught, and a new learning center for transitional students. There is no alternative education program to provide services to students who are not successful in the regular education setting. As a result of special education services, students at DHS are effectively served. (self-study, support staff, standards committee, central office)

Commendations

1. The hard work of the current library clerk
2. The hard work of the support staff to make the most of dealing with the limited resources in staffing, technology, and materials
3. The support staff's success in creating a secure and caring atmosphere for the student body
4. The support staff's work and positive and cooperative relationship with the school community
5. The awareness of the support staff for its need for improvement and commitment
6. The hard work of the information technology manager
7. The positive change in the library created by the library clerk
8. The availability of a part-time social worker and school psychologist
9. The clear and concise technology policies
10. The range of services provided by the guidance department
11. The school's informative and up-to-date website
12. The availability of a full-time trainer at all home athletic events
13. The special education department's attempts to improve the range of services offered to students with disabilities

Recommendations

1. Immediately provide the library media center with a full-time certified library media specialist
2. Provide an adequate and consistent level of funding to the library media center to expand the print and non-print collections and to support the academic efforts of students, faculty, and staff members in meeting the school's mission statement and expectations
3. Hire a full-time social worker to provide increased support in the guidance area
4. Fund the alternative education program at the high school
5. Hire additional support personnel in academic areas for remediation
6. Increase the technology budget to purchase, upgrade, and repair technology to support the academic needs of the students and faculty
7. Hire additional technology workers to support technology in the district
8. Improve the structure of written evaluations and procedural models for all support staff areas
9. Reassign the additional administrative responsibilities of the guidance counselors to make more time for meeting one-on-one with all grade 9-12 students
10. Develop, implement, and have approved by the board of education, a school materials challenge policy
11. Have the current weeding policy approved by the board of education
12. Include the school nurse in curriculum development in the areas of health and staff development
13. Provide fireproofed and lockable cabinets to all support service programs
14. Integrate library skills across the curriculum
15. Include the certified librarian in the development and revision of all curriculum areas

16. Replace, repair, and upgrade all technology in the library media center
17. Allow parents to have complete access to PowerSchool in the areas of their concern
18. Develop and implement an information skills curriculum, integrating it with the core course curriculum
19. Implement the currently written three-year technology plan

7.

Support Standard

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

Derby High School parents and families are engaged and are encouraged to participate in all school programs as partners in their student's education. Parents indicate they feel informed through a variety of means such as receiving four sets of progress reports mid-way through the quarter, four report cards at the end of the ranking quarter, the Connect-Ed parent communication call system, open house, freshmen orientation, student handbook, school website, and frequent mailings from the school. A new telephone system which has recently been installed will enable parents to speak directly to teachers and leave messages. Parents have expressed great optimism about the school's new PowerSchool Access capabilities which will allow parents and students to be able to directly access student's individual grades and assignments from each teacher. At the present time, this capability is accessible only at the middle school level, and parents hope to have it available soon at the high school. The parent teacher organization (PTO) is a small but committed group of approximately ten involved parents. The organization has indicated the need to grow, expand, and become more diverse to meet the needs of the school's diverse student population as well as to provide support for the need to have approval of adequate school budgets in support of their children's education. Other organizations such as the band parents and athletic team supporters assist in raising much needed funds for school activities. Parents have shown strong support of the school and programs by their attendance at extra-curricular activities such as athletics and theater. The school is actively working to strengthen connections between the school and families through its efforts to increase more participation and involvement. (students, parents, school leadership, self-study)

The school actively fosters productive business/community/higher education partnerships to support learning. Students have numerous opportunities to become involved in community and higher education experiences through a variety of partnerships. Many students are provided opportunities for community volunteerism and community service through involvement in organizations such as the Lions Club, Rotary (Interact Club), National Honor Society, connections with Red Cross blood drive, Harvest House, and Griffin Hospital, Boys and Girls Club, and the Derby Youth Services Bureau. Derby High School also provides the opportunity to earn credits in the school by performing service to the school community. The school also makes ample use of local college and university partnership programs to enhance student learning. A substantial number of Derby students is involved in University of Connecticut courses called Early College Experience (ECE) which enables them to earn college credit at the Derby High School site. Some of the teaching staff members have been certified to serve as adjunct professors in order to provide this service to students. Colleges and universities also place student teachers and guest speakers at Derby High School. Students have the opportunity to visit with and listen to guest speakers from colleges as set up by the guidance department. Students do have the opportunity to do some career exploration with local businesses, but the school needs to do more active outreach and develop partnerships with them. Derby High School's partnerships with business, community, and higher education have helped to enhance students' real world experiences as well as to provide academic rigor. (self-study, panel presentation, students, administrators, teacher, parents)

The Derby High School site and plant does not adequately support and enhance the educational program and support services for student learning. The school has used grant funds to accomplish a recent renovation of science labs and a business instructional area with updated

furnishings, fixtures, and some technology. However, there are glaring problems in key support areas directly connected to a lack of funding. The library media specialist's position was cut due to budget constraints, leaving the library without a certified library media specialist. This is not only contrary to New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) student services standards but also inhibits the ability of the library to provide appropriate support to the DHS curriculum and instructional programs. Library technology is also inadequate to support student research through up-to-date technology. There is a significant shortage of useable textbooks for student use. There is little or no funding for the replacement or purchase of textbooks, causing numerous classrooms to resort to the use of class sets of books without the benefit of providing texts to every student for home use. As a result, the faculty has resorted to an over-reliance on copying of materials. In addition, Derby High School's professional development budget has been eliminated with severe adverse affect on future professional development training for the staff. There has been little, if any, professional development for the faculty and staff in dealing with a very diverse student population. The Derby Public Schools have a 2009 Educational Technology Plan Template which has been filed with the state. Nevertheless, there is widespread dissatisfaction with Derby's lack of sufficient technological infrastructure and support systems. The school's server capacity requires a major upgrade which has not yet been accomplished. This has caused significant frustration on the part of students and faculty members when trying to utilize computer technology. The newly-installed phone system, which has outstanding potential for improving internal and external school communication, is currently ineffective due to a lack of faculty and staff training in the operation of the system. The classrooms and related facilities do not adequately support or enhance the daily instructional practice and will require a major renovation of the building in order to bring the 42 year-old facility into the 21st Century. The long-term renovation plans have yet to be adequately funded to bring about this transformation. There is also a three-year technology plan, but a lack of funding has prevented its implementation. Derby High School has a substantial amount of empty space following the move of the middle school from the facility: This provides an opportunity for long-term planning to make effective use of this space to realize financial savings for the school and the system. These unoccupied open spaces could be cause for concern in the matter of school safety and security, however. The lack of adequate funding for the improvement of Derby High School's site and plant has had a substantial negative impact on the educational and support services for student learning. (administrators, self-study, support staff, facility tour, district staff)

Derby High School's physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with the local fire and safety regulations. The school has made progress in addressing all fire codes after correcting issues around stairwells and communication safety systems in the auditorium and the gymnasium. The fire marshal's certificate of compliance is expected to be forthcoming and needs to be documented with NEASC. The school has followed all Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations for health considerations and has promoted appropriate compliance with lock down drills, fire safety drills, and all other safety precautions prescribed by code. It has also improved handicapped accessibility through the installation of ramps and a handicapped refuge area at the top of the stairwell. Science labs have been refurbished and upgraded with approved plumbing for gas and water fixtures and have portable, appropriate eye wash stations. A new safety shower has been delivered and needs to be installed. While the school doesn't currently have any asbestos violations, the floor tiles will

present a problem in the future, and the facilities manager is currently working on a long-term plan for their replacement. Staff members have reported significant problems with heating and ventilation (HVAC) which need to be addressed through major renovation. There remain both short-term and long-term challenges for the future. However, code and safety improvements have been done in the recent past. This has enabled the school to comply with fire, health, and safety standards. (school support staff, central office staff, facilities manager, facility tour, panel presentation)

At Derby High School equipment has been adequately and properly maintained and replaced when appropriate, but the cataloging of equipment, supplies, and maintenance procedures is inconsistent. The district facilities manager appropriately monitors and supervises the purchase and maintenance of equipment. As part of this effort, he has recently hired an additional staff member with appropriate credentials to oversee the HVAC system and equipment. He and his staff perform regular routine maintenance on all building equipment requiring attention. The storage and security of chemicals in the building is properly managed, but the school lacks a master list of all chemical agents in the building and needs to address this oversight. The maintenance department has inventoried equipment and parts with values over one thousand dollars but does not currently have a system in place to track equipment and parts of lesser value. There is currently no ordering or tracking system for maintenance requests for work or supplies. Derby's equipment remains in good working order due to the diligence of the maintenance department, but there is still a lack of tracking for work orders and supplies. (self-study, facilities manager, facility tour, school support staff, teachers)

Derby High School has adequately funded the building and site management to accomplish the basic maintenance, repairs, and cleanliness of the school plant. The maintenance department has been able to access adequate supplies for its maintenance, repair, and cleanliness needs; and the building manifests overall cleanliness. However, staff cuts and continued budget limitations along with other financial constraints have increased the challenge of attaining the highest levels of maintenance and cleaning standards. The maintenance department reports that the Connecticut School Buildings and Grounds Association sets a guideline for appropriate maintenance funding at five dollars per square foot, but the allocation for Derby is currently eighty cents per square foot. The existing staff has performed admirably in rising to the challenge. It should be noted that there is no documented, formal, weekly or monthly maintenance repair and replacement schedule. The existing program that would refurbish two classrooms per year, was suspended due to a lack of finances. Despite very limited staffing and funding support, the Derby High School building has been managed to insure rudimentary maintenance and cleanliness. (self-study, building tour, survey information, facilities manager, support staff)

There is no coordinated planning between the principal and central office managers regarding the future programs, enrollment, staffing, facility, and technology needs or capital improvements at Derby High School. Derby High School has implemented the PowerSchool Program which will help improve their ability to conduct long-range planning for future enrollment and related issues. However, there is a lack of coordinated planning between the school, administration, and staff and the central office management to plan and manage facility, technology, and capital improvement needs. There is no formal process to include valuable input from the Derby faculty

and administration in addressing these long-term needs. According to the Endicott Survey, less than a third of the students and faculty responding think that the educational equipment provided is adequate to meet their educational needs. As a result, the high school instructional and curricular program needs are not properly aligned with long-range financial plans. (facility tour, self-study, department leaders, school leadership team)

The community and district's governing bodies have not insured an adequate or dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning. The per pupil costs for the district ranks near the lowest 10% of the state (196 of 219). It also lags significantly in the state per pupil expenditures by approximately \$1,300 dollars. The historical underfunding of school programs and facilities continues to adversely affect the high school. There have been significant cuts in expenditures for maintenance staff, repair, and replacement of equipment. Currently, the district has an Educational Technology Plan that includes high school instructional technology; in addition, there is a five- year Capital Improvement Plan to replace the heating system (HVAC), roof, windows, ceilings, and outside doors; but there is currently no funding plan in place to support these critical needs, and there are no contingency funds available should a major catastrophe occur, such as a boiler breaking down or part of the roof be damaged. Parents, faculty, and staff have indicated their belief that the board of education and the city aldermen have not demonstrated financial support for the high school. Many of the district money decision-makers are believed to be embedded in the past and have little understanding of current student needs. The current make up of key positions within the city government does not address the very diverse city or school populations. The lack of meaningful communication and understanding among the parents, faculty members, administrators, superintendent, board of education, the city aldermen, the tax board, and other city officials has perpetuated the inability to provide adequate, long-term financial support for schools. Derby High School will continue to be unable to meet the challenges of educating all of its students without dramatic changes in the community's commitment to adequately fund the school in meeting the school's mission statement and expectations. (self-study, parents, central office, school support staff, teachers, evidence box)

Derby High School does not have a defined process for including the faculty in active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. The high school faculty and leadership team members have indicated little or no involvement in the development and implementation of the school's budget. The formation of the budget through individual or department requests or deciding the areas that have to be reduced does not happen, and many faculty members comment that departmental budgets have received no money for the current school year. The faculty has cited substantial cuts which have had adverse impact on their educational programs in all departments of the school while having virtually no input into these decisions. There is no formal plan to be put into place in case of continued major budget reductions. The lack of a collaborative process in developing a budget for the school undercuts the school's ability to operate. (self-study, teachers, budget information, administrators)

Commendations

1. The parent communication system which includes Connect-ed, new phone system, and PowerSchool
2. The up-to-date district website with a link to Derby High School that is user friendly and informative
3. The students' involvement in the community through numerous organizations
4. The high level of challenge through a higher education partnership with University of Connecticut
5. The renovation of the science labs and business instructional area
6. The compliance with the handicapped, health, and safety code regulations
7. The cleanliness and maintenance of the building with the resources available
8. The safe storing and securing of chemicals in the building
9. The introduction of PowerSchool as a basic management tool
10. The up-to-date, but not activated, five-year capital improvement plan
11. The work of the technology staff despite a lack of adequate funding
12. The willingness of parents to work to support an adequate school budget

Recommendations

1. Fully implement PowerSchool capabilities for parents at the high school level
2. Develop and implement strategies to help expand the numbers and diversity of the PTO
3. Increase the quantity and quality of textbook accessibility for all students in all classrooms
4. Restore funding for a certified full-time library media specialist as well as improved library research technology
5. Develop and implement professional development opportunities with faculty input
6. Improve the technology infrastructure and support capabilities
7. Provide instruction and training to staff in the operation of the newly installed phone system
8. Restore funding for the annual renovation of classrooms as stated in previous budgets
9. Adequately fund the five-year capital improvement plan to include HVAC, roof, windows, doors, and ceilings
10. Establish a long-term plan to replace the asbestos floor tiles
11. Collaborate with the school district administration to create an efficiency plan for use of the empty classrooms and space
12. Secure the fire marshal's certificate of compliance for issues that have been addressed
13. Install the new safety shower in the chemistry lab
14. Create a school master inventory of all chemical agents with their locations
15. Establish a tracking system for maintenance, work orders, and supplies
16. Establish a formal, weekly or monthly maintenance repair and replacement schedule
17. Incorporate a formal process to include the Derby High School faculty and administration in long-term financial planning
18. Develop and implement, with an appropriate time-line, ongoing communication among all stakeholders in the budget process to devise a system for funding to support Derby High School's needs

19. Involve the high school faculty in the budgetary decision-making process
20. Implement the three-year technology plan
21. Develop a plan that establishes priorities for budget purchases in anticipation of further budget shortfalls
22. Provide professional development to faculty and staff members for dealing with a diverse school population
23. Develop and implement a plan that addresses security concerns in all areas of the building

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 79. 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 to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The visiting committee wishes to thank all who participated in the self-study writing, and express satisfaction with its contents. Many thanks to members of each standard committee, the principal, and members of the steering committee. The co-chairs of the steering committee were excellent, always willing to answer questions or provide insight into any questions the visiting committee had, either before or during the visit. They are commended for their efforts and diligence in helping to make the visit a very enjoyable educational experience for the visiting committee. Thank you also to all participants of the opening day panel presentation and the school chorus members who also performed. Thank you also to the fourteen dedicated educators who served on the visiting committee. We would also like to formally thank the students we shadowed and came in contact with during our visit. Derby High School can be very proud of each and every one of them !!!

The visiting committee also wants to thank the entire Derby school community for all of its help during our visit. Everyone was cordial, helpful, and informative during the entire visiting committee stay. There is a caring attitude at the school that generates respect between teachers and students and the continual building of a positive learning environment. The school has come a long way in the past three years, and it will continue to improve with the cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders.

APPENDIX A

Derby High School Visiting Committee Roster

Peter J. Brown-Chair
PO Box 58
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Ellington, CT 06029

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Attleboro, MA 02860

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Stafford High School
Stafford Springs, CT 06076

Brett Nichols
Newton High School
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Sharon Mattingly
Marlborough High School
Marlborough, MA 01752

APPENDIX B

Substantive Change Policy

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

- Elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- Diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- Significantly reduced 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
- Changes in 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
- Increase in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- Takeover by the state
- Inordinate user fees