

# **New England Association of Schools and Colleges**



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

## **Report of the Visiting Committee for Woodsville High School**

**Haverhill, New Hampshire**

September 23-26, 2012

Paul MacMillan, CHAIR

Robert Sampson, ASSISTANT CHAIR

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

The prime concern of the visiting committee has been to assess the quality of the educational program at Woodsville 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 committee.

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## INTRODUCTION

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of 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

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

### Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the 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 shows 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 Woodsville High School, a committee of seven (7) 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 the principal, the assistant principal, the chair of the steering committee, a guidance counselor, and the district director of curriculum.

The self-study of Woodsville High School extended over a period of 20 school months from October 2010 to September 2012. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, parents, and school board members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Commission, Woodsville High School also used questionnaires developed by The

Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

### **The Process Used by the Visiting Committee**

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

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 50 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 18 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 25 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on the report was agreed to by visiting committee consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the visiting committee's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet 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 Woodsville 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. The self-assessment documents provided to the visiting team by Woodsville High School (WHS) were thorough while candidly noting strengths and needs. Each of the visiting committee members received a well-organized self-study notebook that included all the reports from the seven different standards. This enabled the committee to carry out their work in a very organized manner. The well-organized self-study notebook presented to each of the visiting committee members included all the reports from the seven different standards needed to carry out their work in a very organized approach.

The teaching and learning at Woodsville High School are focused on core values and beliefs about learning and are drawn from current research-based best practices and informed by professional development. The school's core values and beliefs are informally imbedded in the culture of the school, but they have not yet been fully adopted. WHS must commit to implementing its core values and beliefs within the school community, and must allow them to drive curriculum, instruction and assessment. Going forward, WHS must develop and commit to a regular review process for the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The school needs to review and revise school-wide rubrics that assess a continuum of sophistication and complexity of student work that measures the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Finally, based on this review, the school must fully develop and implement measurable school-wide rubrics and use this data to make changes to the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

In curriculum, the school has a common written curriculum format that includes units of study with concepts, content and skills, and instructional strategies and assessment practices that include course-specific rubrics. WHS has initiated curriculum alignment and incorporation of competencies; the faculty recognizes they are at the beginning stages of integrating the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations within the existing curriculum. To enhance depth of understanding and application of knowledge in all departments, WHS, with the assistance of a New Hampshire Department of Education (DOE) Literacy Coach, is now emphasizing writing/literacy in all content areas. Many departments at WHS ask students to use inquiry and problem-solving strategies. An area of concern expressed by the WHS teachers is that little evidence of clear alignment exists between the written curriculum and what is being taught in the classrooms. The newly hired part-time curriculum coordinator has proposed vertical teaming with a focus on continuous revisions rather than an overall large revision of curriculum. Curricula data must be reviewed to provide evidence of depth of understanding and application of knowledge while creating and implementing curricular coordination and vertical

articulation with all academic areas. The curriculum will be enhanced with the addition of the part-time curriculum coordinator working with the school's Curriculum Advisory Council (CAC) in developing a designated curriculum coordination process and by developing a curriculum review process using assessment data.

In instruction, the district commitment of time and resources to "Research for Better Teaching" is noteworthy. The teachers reported this professional development added value to their instructional practices by offering them an opportunity to examine their practice. The district has also invested in "Teachscape" which requires teachers to observe their peers' instructional practices. The evidence collected using this program shows that teachers are conducive to improving their instructional practices to support student learning. The dedication of the school community to professional development and to the continuing education of teachers, the high degree of teacher accessibility to students, and the dedicated faculty speak volumes to the value placed on instruction. However, only 37.2 percent of students reports in the Endicott survey that their teachers make learning exciting and interesting. Several students interviewed also report that they do not feel sufficiently challenged in their classes. There is a need to provide teachers time to work collegially and collaboratively in reviewing student work, assessment data, and best practices in instruction. To continue instructional growth, the school must provide strong leadership to guide instructional improvement and to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into everyday practice.

In assessment, WHS employs effective communication about student achievement to students and parents using PowerSchool, their student information management system and Alert Now, their phone communication system. Using the PowerSchool system, students and parents can keep track of classroom assessment data and homework assignments. However, it is necessary to implement and articulate the school's plan to ensure that school-wide rubrics are implemented to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. To

accomplish this, the school community must design and implement a formal process to communicate individual student and whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. To begin this process, develop a system-wide-approach that involves all stakeholders to coordinate the ongoing assessments used to measure student progress and design a process to analyze the data collected that involves and is understood by all stakeholders. The school must develop common formative and summative assessments to measure 21<sup>st</sup> century student learning expectations. Finally, the school must develop and implement a consistent school grading and reporting practice that is aligned with the school's values and beliefs.

The school culture in support of teaching and learning at WHS has a commendable and pervasive sense of pride and shared ownership throughout the school that supports a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive learning community. The faculty and administration demonstrate tremendous care and concern for their students. Students and parents speak extensively about how the school embodies the values of the town and obviously take pride in the school and the educational opportunities it provides. The community makes great effort in this difficult economy to maintain small class sizes to provide optimum student learning, and the administrators maintain an open door policy that allows all to be heard. However, according to student and teacher interviews, discipline appears to be inconsistent with some students feeling they are labeled and that discipline differs depending on the students. Moving WHS forward, the school board and superintendent believe in the principal and provide him autonomy to lead the school. The school is starting to address heterogeneity in core classes starting with the class of 2015. The students in this class working toward a WHS diploma are enrolled in at least two heterogeneously grouped core classes through the participation in the school's Freshman Academy. It is also commendable to note that the guidance department and administration reviewed freshman assessment data and were concerned with the high failure rate and established a Freshman Academy to help these students transition into high school. The school community is

reviewing the advisory program to strengthen the partnership between adults and students to help students reach their academic goals.

The school's resources to support student learning are effective. There is outstanding collaboration between the library/media center and teachers. The faculty and the guidance department offer students flexibility of course offerings utilizing independent studies and virtual learning opportunities. WHS also utilizes technology to deliver a range of coordinated services for each student. Although it is clear technology is available at WHS, teachers and students interviewed expressed concerns about the technology infrastructure and the integration of resources. All the support services and programs that WHS offers students such as Jobs for American Graduates (JAG), the Freshman Backpack program and the King Street School are notable. Along with supportive services, inclusion of all students is a priority for the administration and faculty. Developing a review process for all the student support services offered at WHS will help ensure that all students benefit from the available resources to achieve the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

The community resources for student learning have dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services. WHS has developed productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. A nationally recognized program that was started and has been sustained by student interest is the Cross-Age Mentoring Program in which pairs of WHS students work with elementary students. Parents participate in Friends of Woodsville and the Woodsville Booster Club to support student activities and programs. The community has funded programs due to enrollment changes, staffing, and technology needs, but the facility needs and the lack of a capital improvement plan are evident and are not being addressed in the current budget. The historic school site does not support the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The lack of handicap accessible facilities restricts students from access to multiple programs and services

such as access to third floor classrooms, band room, and learning lab. The nurse's office, faculty work space, and the main office are small; this lack of space prohibits privacy or confidentiality when dealing with students, staff, parents, or outside agencies. Many of the classrooms and office areas lack electrical power sources, which limit technology use in support of student learning. The major concern in this area is Woodsville High School's non-compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations. WHS has been working with the local fire department to address a number of issues. The school recently completed an upgrade of the fire alarm system throughout the building and installed a new sprinkler system in the gymnasium. They have also improved the air quality in the buildings. However, the third floor egress has not been addressed in order to be in compliance with federal and state laws. The school will benefit from a long-term plan to address anticipated needs of the school community and the anticipated long-term capital investment.

## SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Woodsville High School is located in the township of Haverhill, New Hampshire in Grafton County. It is a regional high school serving approximately 285 students in grades 9-12 from rural towns within a 20-mile radius bordered by the Connecticut River and New Hampshire's White Mountains. Currently, students attend Woodsville from the towns of Haverhill, Benton, Bath, Piermont, Warren, Monroe, Wentworth, and Landaff. There are 142 tuition students. The high school is specifically located on King's Plain in the community of Woodsville.

For many years before and after 1900, Woodsville was an important railroad center. The oldest covered bridge in New Hampshire connects Woodsville and Bath. West-central Grafton County is rural, and the economy is primarily blue-collar and service-oriented. Some of the larger employers in the area are the Grafton County Complex, Upper Valley Press, the Haverhill School District, Cottage Hospital, Wal-Mart, and Shaw's Supermarket. Also contributing to the work force are a number of construction businesses and car repair shops. Many residents work out of town at manufacturing businesses in Lisbon, Littleton, and St. Johnsbury or at Dartmouth-Hitchcock in Lebanon, New Hampshire or Littleton Regional Hospital.

The communities are economically, racially, culturally, and ethnically similar, with a combined population of approximately 4,650, which remains relatively stable year round. The unemployment rate in Haverhill is one of the highest in Grafton County at 7.0%; the county average stands at 5.6%. According to Sterling's Best Places, employment is on a 2.36% downward trend. According to the SAU district records, of the 770 students enrolled, 44% are eligible for or are receiving free or reduced meals.

In 2009-2010, the average expenditure in New Hampshire was \$12,036.00 per high school pupil, while Haverhill Cooperative's expenditure was \$15,741.93. Tuition was set at \$13,899 for 2011. As is typical

throughout New Hampshire, educational funding is obtained through local property taxes. As published in the 2010 Town of Haverhill Annual Report, the assessed valuation of all land and buildings within the town is \$6,447,961.52 with a tax rate of \$19.88 per \$1,000 valuation (100% valuation). Tax rates calculated to be 58.9% toward local schools' tax and 10.8% toward state education. The remaining taxes funded local town and county government.

There are a number of non-public schools receiving district students. These schools include preparatory schools (St. Johnsbury Academy), and alternative schools such as The Olivarian School, Virtual Learning Academy Charter School, Connecticut River Academy, Mt. Prospect School, New England Center for Autism, Hunter School, Cedar Crest, Wediko, and North Country Charter Academy. There are also 39 home-schooled students.

On November 1, 2010 the total enrollment at Woodsville High School stood at 285 with 148 males and 137 females. Student enrollment indicates a level of slight decline in enrollment. No single, identifiable minority group represents more than 1.5% of the student body, the overwhelming majority of which is Caucasian. WHS occasionally enrolls a foreign exchange student; this year there is one from Germany. The two-year average dropout rate is 1.6% with a 1.6% four-year cumulative rate. The average daily student attendance rate is 94.4%, which does not include co-curricular absences. The average daily teacher attendance rate is 95.7% including sick, personal, and bereavement days.

There are 36 full and part-time teachers at WHS, creating a student-to-teacher ratio of 8:1. Individual teachers carry an average load of 41 students per semester with an average class of 13. Students attend school for 180 days.

All freshmen are placed in a Freshman Foundations class, which includes components in keyboarding, physical education, career exploration and study skills. Next year, freshmen will be heterogeneously grouped in the Freshman Academy. Foundations will be discontinued. All students are required to take four units of English, three units of mathematics, social studies, and science, and one unit of physical education, vocational education, and computer applications. WHS currently employs a three-tiered diploma system, thus, requirements vary depending on diploma type. Approximately 41 students or 15% are enrolled in honors classes, 35% in college preparatory courses and 15% in Advanced Placement or college credit courses. Approximately 14% of the students receives special education services. Around 63% of students participate in athletics and 54% in non-sport clubs and organizations.

Of the 54 students in the most recent graduating class, 45% was accepted to attend four-year colleges and universities, 20% to two-year or vocational institutions, and 35% went directly into the military or the work force. Graduates and undergrads take advantage of local educational opportunities such as Lyndon State College Upward Bound, St. Paul's Advanced Studies Program, White Mountain Community College, and Granite State College. WHS also maintains a relationship with Lesley College, Riverbend Vocational Center, Dartmouth College School and Community Outreach program, Operation Running Start and Plymouth State College.

Established partnerships exist with local businesses that support programs at WHS. There have been job-shadowing experiences, fundraising for local causes, children's books for new mothers at Cottage Hospital, musical performances at two local nursing homes, internships at Cottage Hospital and Newspaper in Education partnerships.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments through a quarterly honors assembly, class night, art and music festivals, all-state music festivals, NHIAA scholar-athlete awards, Jobs for American Graduate programs, Athlete of the Week in the local newspapers, Special Olympics, National Honor Society, FBLA conferences, the Youth and Government program and the Poetry Out Loud Competition. In addition, the Haverhill Academy Corporation sponsors monetary awards and gift certificates to local businesses for students achieving the principal's list or honor roll each quarter. Each spring the school honors students in awards assemblies recognizing student achievement in academics, music, vocational, drama, athletics, and community service.

## **Woodsville High School**

### **Mission Statement**

In keeping with its century-old tradition and sense of community, Woodsville High School values all students and provides them with diverse opportunities and a well rounded education to help prepare them to become responsible, productive citizens in an ever changing world beyond high school.

## Woodsville High School

### CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

#### Core Values

The community, students and faculty believe these to be our core values and beliefs about what is most important in every student's education at Woodsville High School.

We are committed to the following beliefs about learning:

1. Students need to be able to apply knowledge that they have gained over their years of education to become:
  - o Effective problem solvers, who utilize creativity and critical thinking skills to reach solutions.
  - o Respectful and honest individuals who take responsibility for their actions.
  - o Effective communicators in speaking and writing.
  - o Individuals who understand their role as socially responsible to the world around them.
2. All students will have an opportunity to be successful in their learning when
  - o The school provides a safe and friendly atmosphere in which to learn and grow in all areas.
  - o Our challenging curriculum provides opportunities for diverse experiences with high expectations for all students in all areas.
  - o Our school provides opportunities to apply new knowledge to life opportunities and situations beyond the classroom walls.

#### Academic Expectations

All WHS graduates will...

1. Demonstrate skills in critical thinking and problem solving, who can gather, assess and use information to make connections.
2. Be effective communicators, who will be able to use a variety of modes to express ideas.
3. Be practical learners who can recognize when and how to use current tools and technology.

#### Civic Expectations

All WHS graduates will...

1. Understand the concept of taking responsibility for one's own actions.
2. Contribute in a positive way to the school and community around us.
3. Understand the rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a democratic society.

#### Social Expectations

All WHS graduates will...

1. Demonstrate honesty while valuing and respecting others.
2. Demonstrate self-respect and self-advocacy.

**COMMISSION ON  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**



Founded in 1885

**TEACHING AND LEARNING  
STANDARDS**

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

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**CURRICULUM**

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**INSTRUCTION**

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**ASSESSMENT**

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# 1

## Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

## CONCLUSIONS

WHS has engaged in a dynamic, collaborative and inclusive process that is informed by current research-based best practice to identify its core values and beliefs about learning; however, they have yet to commit to the core values. The writing of Woodsville High School's Core Values statement began in the 2007- 2008 school year with the creation of a new mission statement. However, NEASC changed this standard to include core values, beliefs and learning expectations, requiring the committee to reconvene and rewrite their mission and core values. The statement was rewritten by a committee consisting of a diverse group of faculty, a school board member and two students, but no parents of students that were not employed by the school district. The school made a concerted effort to recruit parents for this process. Parent feedback was gathered at two open houses in the fall of 2007 and 2009. The parents' role in writing the core values was limited. Each open house was advertised in the local newspaper and the Alert Now system was used to notify each household directly of the forum. However, turnout at each forum was low, and the parents who were interviewed during the parent panel were unable to identify or explain the role of the core values in the school's decision-making process. The Friends of Woodsville (a parent organization) did not consider the mission and core values until February of 2011 after the school board had approved them. The core values and beliefs document was discussed in students' advisories, and student input was incorporated into the new statement. Student interviews reflect the students' belief that their input was included in Woodsville High School Mission Statement, Core Values and Beliefs about Learning, and Academic, Civic and Social Expectations. The WHS self-study referenced several research-based resources used in the formulation of their core values. The faculty approved the revision on December 14, 2010; the school board approved the revision on January 10, 2011. While rubrics were written to measure the learning expectations, the rubrics have yet to be approved by the school board and through interviews with school board members, faculty members, and the Core Values Committee it is apparent that the

rubrics are not on the school board's agenda. Teacher interviews also indicate that a rubric to measure a proposed community service requirement, suggested by the Friends of Woodsville, has not been written and the responsibility to create one has not been assigned. WHS engages in a dynamic, collaborative process, with limited inclusiveness due to lack of parental or community involvement, that is based on research and best practices; however, all stakeholders are not fully committed which leaves decision-making unfocused. (self-study, Core Values Committee, teachers, parents, students).

WHS has 21st century learning expectations for all students, which address academic, social, and civic expectations that appear to be challenging, but not all rubrics are analytical, making it difficult to gauge how measurable the learning expectations are. The core values statement of WHS includes three challenging academic expectations for all students. The academic expectations lack specificity and this makes it difficult to write analytic rubrics. The civic and social expectations are written in such a way as to make them impossible to measure. The civic expectations, for example, call for students to “understand the concept of taking responsibility for one’s own actions.” Teachers throughout the school are largely unclear on the content of the expectations, and unaware of whether school-wide rubrics for the expectations exist. In interviews with the Core Values Committee, members agree that the difficulty of developing expectations for civic and social behavior is an ongoing challenge. As a result, developing rubrics for these standards has not yet been completed. The committee, which includes a school board member, stated that the board approval process for the rubrics would not occur in the foreseeable future. Development, implementation, and review of analytic school-wide rubrics that identify high levels of achievement for all 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations will allow WHS to begin measuring student achievement of these expectations. (self-study, teachers, Core Values Committee meeting, panel presentation)

The school’s core values and beliefs about learning are reflected in the culture of the school, but does

not guide major policy and procedural development, or drive curriculum, instruction and assessment.

The core values and beliefs are clearly evident in many of the school's programs such as the mentoring program, student advisories, Freshman Academy, Backpack Project, Friends of Rachel, tiered diploma, and student and athletic councils. They are also evident in that students have the freedom to create clubs based on individual interest, and are evident in limited courses and academic offerings.

However, teachers, guidance counselors and administrators are not able to identify how the core values impact specific policies or decisions or how they impact their lessons and curriculum. The school board has not had the opportunity to adopt the rubrics linked to the core values and this has delayed their use at the high school to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment and to guide policies and procedures. In many cases teachers seem unclear about how to use the core values to make curriculum decisions. Students routinely are unable to identify the core values or how they impact what they are studying in their classes. The school's core values and beliefs are strongly reflected in the building's culture, but the school's curriculum, instruction and assessment is not driven and policies and procedures are not guided by its stated core values and beliefs. (panel discussions, self-study, student shadowing, observations, Core Values Committee meeting, school board).

The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on limited research and multiple data sources, however there is no plan for an ongoing formal review process. The administration solicited input from faculty in 2010, as they revised their four-year-old Mission Statement and transferred this to a statement of core values and beliefs. The revised document, without school-wide rubrics, was approved by the school board on January 10, 2011 and now exists as the guiding document of core values for WHS. Rubrics for the core values still do not exist. In developing the currently approved statement of core values, the administration solicited input from faculty, students, and community members in 2010; the statement was influenced to a limited degree by data and research. Since that time, the committee has continued its work; the latest draft

revisions occurred in May 2012, at which time the committee also began drafting a rubric for academic expectations, though this is only partially completed. Rubrics for the social and civic expectations do not exist, nor does a plan for their full development and approval. Members of the Core Values Committee indicate that they still do not fully understand how to create appropriate rubrics for these core values and some express a belief that the rubrics are not necessary to maintain high standards. The level of commitment to create rubrics is low. A formal review and revision process will help ensure that the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations of WHS continually reflect best practices and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. While the committee has continued to work on the document since its approval in early 2011, there is no plan for periodic, ongoing review. The absence of rubrics and the ongoing review of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations based on research and multiple data points has made the school-wide expectations limited in their usefulness and effectiveness in driving curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (Core Values Committee, administration, panel presentation, teachers)

### **Commendations**

1. The school's significant investment in acquiring input from all stakeholders in drafting the core values and school expectations
2. The core values and beliefs are clearly evident in many of the school's programs
3. The school's intent to include a community service component for graduation.

### **Recommendations**

1. Review and revise the school-wide academic expectations for learning to ensure that they are clearly defined and measurable
2. Develop and implement analytic rubrics for each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and define the targeted high level of achievement in each rubric

3. Develop and implement a process to ensure the school's core values and beliefs drive curriculum, instruction , and assessment in all classrooms and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions and allocation of resources
4. Develop and implement a plan for the regular review of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources and school and district priorities and is inclusive of the school community
5. Assure all members of the WHS community understand the core values and beliefs and how they relate to all school-based decisions

**2****Curriculum**

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

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

## CONCLUSIONS

The curriculum is not purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. WHS has articulated school-wide academic expectations, which reflect the school's mission; however there is little evidence in curriculum documentation to support this process. Some course documents reference SAU Objectives and WHS Mission Expectations. Teachers are unable to provide rubrics measuring the schools 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Although WHS has initiated the alignment and incorporation of competencies, the faculty recognizes that they are at the beginning stages of integrating the articulated 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations within the existing curriculum. Implementing a consistent format that embeds 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into curriculum documents across all disciplines will ensure that all students practice and achieve success. (self-study, curriculum documents, curriculum committee)

The curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with concepts, content and skills, instructional strategies and assessment practices that include course-specific rubrics. However, there are no essential questions, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and assessment practices using school-wide analytic rubrics in curriculum documents. The schools 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations that have been recently developed have been disseminated in a collaborative process to all stakeholders. While not presently published, there is evidence of staff training that ensures that instructional strategies are in place to meet the needs of the students and goals of the school. The faculty understands that revisions will be required over time to align curriculum with the Common Core. Without essential questions and assessment practices using school-wide analytic rubrics, it is more difficult for students to make connections between parameters of the course and the learning expectations. (curriculum documents, curriculum standard meeting, self-study curriculum narrative)

The curriculum provides limited emphasis of depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities and ethical use of technology. Some of the curricular areas that emphasize a depth of understanding and application of knowledge could be observed in the business education, family and consumer sciences, physical education, and technology classes. Through curriculum documentation, departments use a limited number of higher order thinking activities, co-curricular and authentic learning opportunities. With the assistance of a DOE Literacy Coach, all departments are now emphasizing writing/literacy in their content areas. Many departments at WHS ask students to use inquiry and problem-solving strategies, such as the math department's performance assessments. However, other curricular areas are lacking in cross-disciplinary learning and authentic learning opportunities. In the WHS handbook, the Behavior Expectations and Student Computer and Internet Use Policies exist to ensure that all students are informed about ethical use of technology. When the school wide written curriculum includes depth of understanding and application of knowledge then the students at WHS will be ensured that they have opportunities to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (curriculum, student work, classroom observations, teachers)

There is no formal mechanism in place to ensure that the written curriculum is the taught curriculum. Little evidence exists to demonstrate a clear alignment between the written and taught curricula. Every teacher is formally observed at least once per school year. The school administration only requires lesson plans and objectives are prepared ahead of time of the scheduled formal observation. These formal observations act as a check and balance for the alignment of taught and written curricula. In the Endicott survey, 53 percent of teachers states that the written and taught competencies are aligned. At the present time teachers' lesson plans or units of study are not collected and reviewed except before a formal observation. The WHS curriculum coordinator acknowledges that this is not a current practice and is not being considered in the near future. Without lesson plans or unit reviews and with only a

single formal observation, the evidence is not sufficient to support a clear alignment with competencies. Only when written curricula are in place for each subject area and after a systematic review process of curricula between and among grade levels is established will there be insurances that the written and taught curricula will be aligned. (self-study, Endicott survey, teachers, administrators)

There is effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation in two academic areas within the school and sending schools. The mathematics and science departments at WHS have recently visited the middle school and middle school teachers have observed freshman classes at WHS to determine appropriate vertical flow of courses. However, in other academic areas there is no formal curriculum coordination and vertical articulation. The WHS staff members do not feel they have enough common planning time to articulate their curricula. The Curriculum Coordinator has proposed vertical teaming in other academic areas to focus on continuous revisions rather than overall large revisions through the Curriculum Advisory Council (CAC). Curricular coordination and vertical articulation will reduce transition difficulties to WHS. When the curriculum coordinator implements vertical teaming in all academic areas to focus on continuous revisions of the curriculum, student will experience a more seamless and consequently a more effective process of learning. (administrators, curriculum documents, teachers)

WHS staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum. The school also supports the implementation of the curriculum in other ways such as co-curricular programs and extended learning opportunities. WHS has a student-to-teacher ratio of 8:1, with each teacher having an average student load of 41 students. Based on the Endicott survey, 61 percent of staff, 83 percent of parents and 77 percent of students feel that there are sufficient instructional materials, equipment and supplies. Some students feel that their access to technology is limited because of the technology infrastructure within

the building. The Endicott survey also includes a rating of adequate for the print and non-print materials in the media center. Classroom sizes are adequate for the school's population. Some classrooms are in need of additional storage space. Some areas of the school are not handicap accessible, which could limit a student's access to certain programs. For example, the band room is on the third floor with no handicap access, which makes it difficult for a student with a physical handicap to participate in the band program. It is not easy to relocate this program to another area of the school. WHS is creative in using the facility to house multiple co-curricular programs. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center allow students' access to educational resources that support a full and comprehensive educational program with the exception of areas within the building that are not handicap accessible. (self-study, building tour, observations, students, parents, Endicott survey)

The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum using assessment results and current research; however, teachers feel there is insufficient time for this work. The curriculum coordinator is responsible for curriculum coordination and articulation and he also serves as the IT coordinator for the district. This curriculum coordinator serves on the Curriculum Advisory Council (CAC) along with teachers and administrators from the district. The CAC organizes a regular rotation of curriculum review. In 2009 following a statewide initiative, curriculum documents were revised to follow a competency-based model, which was applied to all curricular areas. The professional staff at WHS over the past three years has spent approximately \$12,000 on stipends for professional development focusing on curriculum development and revision. The Endicott survey reports that 67 percent of staff feels this is not adequate. Along with dedicated time to look at their curriculum and to help each other with revisions, the staff has read multiple curriculum-related books on topics ranging from Ruby Payne's research on how poverty affects student learning to Dr. Jernstadt's research on

brain-based learning to Christine Felix's strategies to incorporate reading in all areas of the curriculum. There is limited evidence that WHS uses data from school assessments to make revisions to the curriculum. Teachers have used Performance Pathways to a limited extent to help with curriculum revision. WHS engages in innovative ways to collaborate on curriculum: the middle school teachers visit the high school and freshman teachers visit the middle school to ensure cohesive vertical alignment of the curriculum. Other programs that relate to curriculum include Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) and credit recovery through the Learning Lab during school hours. The district has provided opportunities and funds for WHS staff members to work on curriculum development and evaluation but without a clear focus and planned collaboration the results will be a school curriculum that lacks cohesion. (curriculum, teacher interviews, CAC minutes, Endicott survey, observations )

### **Commendations**

1. The curriculum includes content competencies
2. The Behavior Expectations are listed in student handbook
3. The clear Student Computer and Internet Use Policy
4. The emphasis of writing / literacy in all departments
5. The CAC overseeing the rotation and revision of curriculum
6. The offering of a variety of opportunities for students to access the curriculum through VLACS and the Learning Lab
7. Effective curriculum coordination and vertical articulation in the mathematics and science departments within the school and sending schools
8. The use of multiple curriculum related books on topics ranging from on how poverty affects student learning to research on brain based learning.

## **Recommendations**

1. Review and revise curriculum documents to include essential questions and 21st century learning expectations
2. Develop and implement a process to ensure the curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding inquiry, problem solving, higher order thinking and cross disciplinary learning
3. Create and implement a protocol to assess and document that the written curriculum is the taught curriculum
4. Improve student access to technology
5. Develop and implement a plan to provide effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools within the district
6. Provide more time and professional development focused on curriculum revision driven by the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

**3****Instruction**

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

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

## CONCLUSIONS

Teacher's instructional practices are continuously examined but do not ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Some teachers use instructional strategies and practices that are consistent with WHS's support of its core values and beliefs. There is limited evidence these strategies support the school's articulated 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. In the self-study, interviews with teachers, parents and students, classroom observations and in school-supplied written documents, teachers demonstrate only limited evidence of incorporating the core values, beliefs and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations in their instructional strategies. Many teachers are not able to reference specific core values and beliefs about learning when they discuss their instructional strategies. The majority of teachers understand they have school core values and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations; however, these core values and beliefs, along with the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, do not seem to be well understood or articulated. Teachers report that "Research for Better Teaching" professional development added value to their instructional practices by offering them the opportunity to examine their practice. The Teachscape program required the teachers to observe their peer's instructional practices. The evidence collected shows the teachers are conducive to improving their instructional practices to support student learning, the school's core values, beliefs and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, as they understand them. Examining instructional practices without a full understanding of the school's core values, beliefs and 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations prevents teachers from providing students with an opportunity to achieve the school's learning expectations. (students, teachers, parents, administrators, self-study)

Teachers' instructional practices are inconsistent in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations by personalizing instruction, engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, engaging students as active and self-directed learners, emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and

reflection, or integrating technology. According to the Endicott survey only 35.7 percent of students feel that their assignments are personalized, although many students note they are given the opportunity to choose some assignments. Limited evidence suggests that some instruction is personalized with the example of the freshman foundations English class in which students can choose their own topics for a unit report. While 72 percent of the staff reports in the Endicott survey that they personalize instruction to support student achievement, the examples cited in the self-study and classroom observations suggest that student choice is misconceived as personalization. A noteworthy program that demonstrates cross-disciplinary learning is the Photovoice project in which Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical School collaboratively works with the art and science departments. There is also cross-disciplinary instruction found between the English and social studies department on units relating to war and conflict. However, most WHS subject areas are not engaging in cross-disciplinary instruction in spite of some conscious and creative efforts in certain classes. Teachers report that they would like to see more formal cross-discipline learning occur at WHS, and several teachers admit they “don't know what is going on in other classrooms.” According to the Endicott survey only 37.2 percent of students reports that their teachers make learning exciting and interesting; however, there are multiple opportunities provided for self-directed learning and creative hands-on small group activities that enhance engagement. There is a lack of evidence of higher order thinking skills and depth of knowledge being taught during classroom visits, and as provided in student work. Several students interviewed also report that they do not feel sufficiently challenged in their classes, although 66.7 percent of the staff reports they do encourage inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking. A notable example is the technology education project of building designs for the future. The evidence provided indicates that WHS has made a concerted effort to give students opportunities to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. In electives and core classes alike, students are experiencing real world problems. Through an examination of rubrics, lesson plans, blog and journal entries, and student work samples, there is evidence that in some classes teachers engage students in self-

assessment and reflection. Due to the limitations presented by infrastructure and equipment availability, technology integration exists in pockets of the school but is not employed consistently or universally. In the absence of formal efforts to apply 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, students cannot become fully engaged, active and self-directed learners. (self-study, students, Endicott survey, teachers, observations, student work)

There is evidence that teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student through formative assessments. Strategically differentiating instruction is not the prevailing method in the classrooms, nor is purposeful student grouping to facilitate student learning. Most teachers provide additional support, but there is not adequate use of alternative instructional strategies within the regular classroom. Teachers use formative assessments to check their students' levels of understanding by using warm-up quizzes, homework checks, class discussion, science labs, interactive white boards, on bell-ringer activities, and group discussion of assigned readings. Teachers were observed using informal verbal checks on assigned reading, and did offer constructive or individualized feedback to students. In the majority of classes visited, students do not appear to be purposefully grouped. There are exceptions to this in classes such as Integrated Math, and science classes in which students are grouped purposefully depending on the needs of students and activities. Although occasional purposeful grouping exists, most classes observed were teacher-centered and students worked independently. There is some evidence of instructional differentiation in the classes observed. These differentiation strategies are not employed consistently, however; most teachers' classrooms appear as traditional homogeneous classes. There have been successful attempts at strategic differentiation; for example, a general biology class offering options to a written quiz, student choice in choosing books appropriate to their reading level, and other evidence of student choice in projects. One teacher collects notebooks of students who are struggling and highlights their notes to help them focus their studies, and this has helped them improve their test grades. Another teacher gives students who need it

additional time to finish a test. Students with IEPs or 504s, have extra time, adjusted workload expectations and have different sets of expectations. Both teachers and students report that teachers provide additional support and alternative strategies in the regular classrooms in the form of posters in action, games, stories, technology when available, and the use of interactive white boards, which help pique student interest and engagement. Students that were interviewed made it very clear teachers were always available outside of class to meet or work with students. The Endicott survey points out 76 percent of parents reports that teachers offer extra support to their child. When all teachers use differentiated instruction in meaningful ways and purposefully organize group learning activities, all students will have access to high quality instruction. (teachers, students, parents, self-study, observations, Endicott survey).

In the Endicott survey it is noted 55.6 percent of WHS teachers use student achievement data and feedback from student work and other sources to improve their instructional practices, engage in professional discourse focused on these practices, or examine current research. Yet, only 41 percent of students agree that teachers solicit their opinions about ways to improve their instruction, and only 20 percent of parents surveyed feel that their child's teachers ask for feedback on their instructional practices. The English department launched a successful initiative requiring summer reading after analyzing the results of standardized test scores in reading. Reading scores highlighted literacy issues that led to hiring a consultant to aid the faculty with literacy instruction. Data collected from math tests led to an adjustment in the curriculum, which now offers a general-level integrated math program in grades 9-11. A Compass Learning Program was put into use to improve math scores. Nonetheless, an overwhelming majority of teachers report that they do not have regular, formal time to review assessment data and those meetings are not scheduled to specifically focus on reviewing student work. Several students and parents remarked that teachers do not adjust their instruction and assessments based on feedback from student assessment. A majority of staff members seems not to have had the

opportunity to incorporate current research in their teaching practices, nor have they been able to formally engage in professional discourse on instructional practices. Increasing faculty opportunities to collaborate and review student work and assessment data will improve instructional practices. (self-study, teachers, panel presentation, Endicott survey, students, parents)

Teachers at WHS are active life-long learners and reflective practitioners, maintaining expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. In order to maintain certification in New Hampshire, teachers must acquire 30 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) in each area of certification and 45 CEUs in other areas. Teachers earn CEUs by attending a variety of professional development offerings. Evidence indicates that teachers participate in a wide variety of professional development opportunities and make efforts to share what they have learned with their colleagues. The principal indicates that only two teachers are currently not considered Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT) but are completing the requirements to achieve that certification. All teachers are certified in the area in which they teach. By maintaining an appropriately licensed and qualified faculty, WHS provides its students with instruction from HQT content-area specialists. (Endicott survey, self-study, principal)

## **Commendations**

1. The accessibility of teachers to students during and outside of regularly-scheduled classes
2. The institution of the “Research for Better Teaching” professional development program
3. The successful attempts at strategic differentiation
4. The institution of the “Teachscape” program (peers observing peers)
5. The English departments launch of a successful initiative requiring summer reading after analyzing standardized test scores in reading.
6. The hiring a consultant to aid the faculty with literacy instruction
7. The Photovoice collaborative with Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical School and the WHS art and science departments

7. Teachers participate in a wide variety of professional development opportunities and make efforts to share what they have learned with their colleagues.

### **Recommendations**

1. Incorporate core values, beliefs and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into instructional practices
2. Provide formal opportunities for student and parent feedback to improve instructional practices
3. Provide time for teachers to collaborate to examine student work and to improve instruction
4. Increase and emphasize inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills and personalization in instructional practices.
5. Increase opportunities for inter-disciplinary instruction

**4**

**Assessment of and for Student Learning**

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

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

- data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
- survey data from current students and alumni.

11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

While rubrics have been written to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, a formal approved process for these types of assessment is not yet in place. The professional staff does not employ a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Although there is evidence that some rubrics that measure the identified 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations exist, there is no plan or timeline for moving the rubrics forward for board review and adoption. The rubrics have not been fully implemented in any existing program or piloted with students. The lack of a formal process to use school-wide rubrics to assess whole-school and individual school progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations prevents students and stakeholders from determining growth and progress. The implementation of a formal process using rubrics to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations will help ensure that all students at WHS meet those learning expectations. (teachers, administrators, students, self-study)

The school does not have a formal means of reporting student or whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students, to their families or to the communities served by WHS. While WHS communicates student progress to students and their parents regarding classroom performance, it does not communicate student progress on the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations at this time. Through conversations with teachers, students, and parents, it is reported that PowerSchool is used to communicate grades and progress. Teachers are required to update grades on a weekly basis. In addition, parents are notified through Alert Now to expect report cards, which are distributed to students at school. Although WHS uses a variety of tools to communicate student progress in classes, it has yet to incorporate communications to students and parents about student progress in meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. This cannot be achieved until the

rubrics to assess these expectations are fully implemented and the process for reporting the results has been developed. The development and implementation of a formal process to communicate student achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations will allow all stakeholders to be informed of both student and school-wide progress. (teachers, parents, administrators, self-study)

The professional staff collects, disaggregates and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. The administration and guidance personnel have reviewed data from state test scores, the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) test scores, and have reviewed grades, behavior, and attendance records to monitor student progress. As a result of an examination of 9<sup>th</sup> grade course failure rates, the school implemented a Freshman Academy intended to give 9<sup>th</sup> grade students a good foundation for academic success. Teachers in Freshman Academy have weekly planning meetings. Based on NWEA scores, students are recommended to the Learning Lab for remediation. Because of weak reading and writing NECAP scores, the school worked with a DOE consultant from 2009-2011. The consultant met with faculty members to review data and assessment tools and offered suggestions for support in assessment and instruction to augment skills in reading fluency and writing. Woodsville High School's practice of collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data has allowed faculty and staff to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. (teachers, parents, administrators, program of studies, self-study)

Teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations in general terms as they relate to unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study. Although teachers have not formally incorporated or applied the school's identified 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into their units of study, teachers often communicate general learning objectives and expectations to students. WHS curriculum has clearly defined units of study but has not incorporated the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into the curriculum. Examples of evidence to support

this include project descriptions and classroom behavioral expectations outlined in the unit of study. WHS has the Core Values and Beliefs about Learning and Academic, Civic and Social Expectations statement clearly posted in each classroom as well as in the handbook. In addition, the faculty participated in Teachscape, a data-gathering program, which revealed that 201 out of 206 classes had “evident” expectations. It is unclear which expectations were being addressed or how they were made evident. When WHS incorporates the school’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into its units of study, students will be able to be assessed in achieving the intended learning goals related to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teachers, curriculum, self-study, observations)

Prior to summative assessments, teachers sometimes provide students with the corresponding rubrics. In reviewing students’ work some teachers include specific rubrics with well-defined criteria for students to follow. Among the work submitted as evidence, most include a rubric. It is unclear whether the rubric was available to students prior to the assessment. Some teachers indicate that they prefer other means such as checklists to convey expectations. During one classroom visit involving student presentations, both teacher and students reported that no guidelines or rubrics were used either before or after the assessment. Because the practice of making rubrics available to students prior to summative assessment is inconsistent, WHS students may not always be clear about specific learning objectives. (teachers, students, student work, self-study, observations)

The majority of teachers at WHS use a variety of formative and summative assessments in each unit of study. The Endicott survey indicates that 72 percent of teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Some formative assessments are used regularly but are not limited to the following: journal writing, writing warm-ups, multi-drafted papers, conferencing, student blog entries, quick comprehension checks, study guides, peer and self-assessment, and informal presentations, are used to assess learning. Some examples of summative

assessments reviewed include rubrics, checklists, project expectations, multiple-choice, short and extended response writing pieces, and formal presentations. Finally, the external examinations, the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and the Northwest Education Assessment (NWEA) complete the assessment picture. By employing a wide range of assessment strategies that include formative and summative assessments, WHS teachers have data to produce an accurate picture of student achievement. (teachers, students, student work, self-study, observations, Endicott survey)

There was little evidence available to show that teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. While teachers within the same department are scheduled to meet monthly, they reported that more regular collaboration happens informally. In discussions with teachers across different disciplines, they indicated that only world language and algebra use common summative assessments. Other departments like language arts with sections of the same course taught by different teachers report that they do not have common assessments and have not discussed or planned to implement such assessments. The science department formally collaborated to develop department-wide rubrics for lab reports and oral presentations although there were no examples of this in the work reviewed. Due to the lack of formal collaboration on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, WHS teachers are unable at this time to ensure consistent learning among classes. When WHS teachers and administrators collaborate regularly to review the creation, analysis, and revision of assessment practices, it will have a significant impact on developing relevant long-range curricular and instructional goals that will positively impact student learning. (teachers, assessment committee, self-study)

According to the Endicott survey, 53 percent of students feel teachers provide timely feedback and 64 percent of students feel teachers provide corrective feedback that helps them improve their work. This

was also confirmed in talking with students and parents. Student work was reviewed and many samples of rough drafts received constructive teacher feedback without a grade. Math teachers regularly allow students to indicate, before submitting it, which problems they struggled with on homework assignments. The class solves the problem together and students can revise their work. The WHS teachers encourage students to self-assess frequently, correcting drafts of an assignment, and revising and correcting their work. In some classes, teachers use a combination of self and peer-assessed rubrics before project completion to allow for improvement. Providing specific, timely, and corrective feedback to students ensures WHS students' ability to improve their progress towards meeting the school's learning expectations. (teachers, students, Endicott survey, self-study, observations)

Formative assessments are frequently used by individual teachers to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning but there is no obvious collaboration among WHS teachers for the purpose of using formative assessments to impact changes in instructional practices. Teachers use journal entries, warm-up activities, weekly essays, check-ins, drafts, and blog entries, which were all included in samples of classroom work. During classroom observations, very few formative assessment strategies were observed. Students report that material is re-taught after they take some type of formative assessment. Because of WHS teachers' regular use of formative assessments, they are able to inform and to adapt their instruction to improve student learning. (teachers, students, self-study, observations)

Not all teachers and administrators, individually, collaboratively, or consistently examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. This does, however, take place within a smaller subset of teachers and departments.

Woodsville High School's successes in this area relate to changes in programming based on NECAP

and NWEA scores that include the development of the Freshman Academy, the Learning Lab, Integrated Math, and the utilization of the DOE literacy consultant to support improved fluency in reading and writing. Teachers in different departments indicate they have not developed common assessments or grade-level assessments and have not finalized a process to measure 21st century learning expectations. There was no evidence provided to address data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions. With the exception of the Endicott survey, there is no evidence of data from current students or alumni. By not consistently examining a range of evidence of student learning, WHS teachers are unable to thoroughly revise curriculum and improve instructional practices. (teachers, students, parents, administrators, self-study, classroom observations)

WHS teachers and administrators infrequently review and revise their grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Because the school has not implemented the rubrics designed to measure 21<sup>st</sup> century learning as identified in the core values and beliefs document, there is no evidence to indicate alignment. The self-study states once the common rubrics have been finalized, a reporting process will have to be implemented. The school uses PowerSchool to record and report grades at this time. The school has made adjustments in its diploma requirements. In order to support struggling students who are having difficulty reaching the school's credit expectations for a WHS diploma, which is higher than the state's requirements, the school has now developed and offers three tiers of diplomas. One is the WHS Academic diploma; another is the WHS Academic with Distinction diploma; the third is a diploma for a reduced number of credits but which affirms that the student has met the state requirements. When WHS finalizes the school-wide rubrics so grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised, assessment practices can be aligned with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, and students' understanding of their achievement will become clear. (Endicott survey, teachers, assessment committee, self-study)

## **Commendations**

1. The practice of collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data has allowed faculty and staff to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
2. The use of formative assessments allows teachers to adapt lessons to meet student needs
3. The responsiveness of the administration in developing programs to meet student needs based on data collected and disaggregated
4. The use of a DOE literacy consultant to help teachers revise instructional and assessment strategies to improve student fluency in reading and writing
5. The provision of timely feedback to allow WHS students to revise work and improve learning
6. The development of the three-tier diploma program

## **Recommendations**

1. Finalize and adopt school-wide rubrics to measure student progress in meeting 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. Develop and implement a formal process, based on school-wide analytic rubrics, to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
3. Develop and implement a process to communicate individual student and school progress to students and parents
4. Develop and implement a process to communicate the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community
5. Develop common assessments and a process for evaluating the results to assess student learning across content areas and to modify instruction
6. Develop a process to examine a wide range of evidence of student learning in order to revise curriculum and improve instructional practices

7. Review grading and reporting processes regularly to align with the school's core values and beliefs

**COMMISSION ON  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**



Founded in 1885

**SUPPORT STANDARDS**

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**SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP**

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**SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

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**COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

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## School Culture and Leadership

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

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

11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

## CONCLUSIONS

The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. The school's mission statement, which states a belief in the value of every student, is posted in every classroom and is included in the school handbook. The mission statement and the school handbook are updated annually. The students have written and adopted a student pledge stating what they see as their broad responsibilities as members of the WHS school community. Policies regarding attendance, tardiness and discipline are clearly outlined in the school handbook. In the Endicott survey 79 percent of faculty and 77 percent of students feel safe at WHS and less than 25 percent of the students think bullying is a problem. WHS is a small school and students, parents and faculty have a strong sense of pride in its traditions. Each year 63 percent of the student body participates in athletics and the school community has been recognized for many years by the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) for exemplary sportsmanship both on and off the field. The Advisory program developed a Thanksgiving dinner in which the school community takes great pride. Illustrating another source of community pride, WHS students have participated each semester in a mentoring program in which high school students work with elementary students for an average of 130 hours each student. Administrators have created a Freshman Academy for incoming freshmen to address historically high 9<sup>th</sup> grade failure rates and to support their transition into high school. However, according to students and teachers, some feel discipline appears inconsistent, with some students feeling they are labeled and that discipline differs depending on the student. A lack of higher-level thinking skills in many courses and homogeneous leveling without significant differentiated instruction in core academic classes does not ensure that all students are held to high expectations. The lack of challenging expectations for all students prevents WHS from capitalizing on the very positive school climate to support and foster the academic growth

of all students. (program of studies, self-study, Endicott survey, teachers, students, parents, student shadowing, observations)

Woodsville High School is an equitable and inclusive school environment addressing the requirements for student learning. Heterogeneous grouping in core classes began with the WHS class of 2015. English/language arts, social studies, math and science classes for juniors and seniors are homogeneous while world language, physical education, fine arts, and applied arts classes are heterogeneous. Starting with the class of 2015 every student working toward a WHS diploma is enrolled in at least two heterogeneously grouped core classes through participation in the school's Freshman Academy. The Program of Studies does not identify heterogeneously grouped classes. It is unclear if opportunities are given to the students in these heterogeneously grouped classes to achieve the school's learning expectations. The committees responsible for making these decisions have NECAP and NWEA test results available to them. Given Woodsville High School's resources and through a continued focus on achieving heterogeneity in core courses, the school can further support students in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Program of Studies, self-study, Endicott survey, students, teachers)

WHS has a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselors, who knows the student well, but there is little evidence to support student achievement of the school's civic and social expectations. WHS instituted an Advisory program in 2001 as part of character education. Each advisory is led by at least one adult and up to ten students from across grade levels are grouped together. The adult establishes a rapport and fosters a personal connection with the group. Advisories stay together for the four years of a student's high school career. Advisory meets twice monthly and holds group discussions addressing study skills, academics, social and civic issues. Advisors check grades, hand out progress reports and report cards and are

encouraged to contact parents. The Advisory program is developing connections between adults and students and fostering better relationships within the student body. All the adults in the building demonstrate tremendous care and concern for their students. As the Advisory program continues to develop and establish consistent communications between home and school, WHS will fully realize its plan to assist students in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, students, parents)

WHS has opportunities and resources to improve student learning through professional development but there is currently no focused plan in place. Training, meetings and in-service activities occur throughout the calendar year. Faculty meetings, department meetings, and NEASC meetings are usually scheduled monthly. Five in-service days and six early-release in-service days occur throughout the school year and their topics have varied. However, the Endicott survey reveals only 33 percent of staff believes there is sufficient professional development time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work; teacher interviews confirm these findings. In the self-study it lists workshops that have been conducted by SERESC and outside post-secondary institutions although no topics covered or agendas were provided. WHS would benefit from having a focused professional development plan to better utilize resources and time to provide teachers and administrators opportunities to apply best practices to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment, and student learning. (Endicott survey, self-study, teachers, administrators,)

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. The teacher evaluation and supervision process is in transition and all data is not currently being used to improve student learning. The self-study report indicates administrators and teachers have taken "Research for Better Teaching" (RBT), which was very beneficial to teachers and they have now been trained to use Teachscape. The school administrators have attended a Boot

Camp for evaluators, and have been trained in Charlotte Danielson's "A Framework for Teaching." All these trainings have been undertaken to assist teachers and administrators in improving student learning, but it is unclear how all this data is being used. The school recently made the decision to transition to the peer-to-peer Teachscape observation method and the data from 273 Teachscape observations has been collected but has not yet been analyzed. As WHS administrators and teachers further develop these research-based evaluation and supervision models that include data analysis, the focus on improved student learning will be ensured. (self-study, administrators, teachers, Endicott survey)

The organization of time is inconsistent in supporting research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. The school's master schedule for grades 10-12 is modified block scheduling; this format is supported by the principal and by many teachers. However, some teachers feel the need for common planning time is not addressed. The Freshman Academy runs for 45-minute blocks with a study hall once a day. Teachers in grades nine through twelve are given the opportunity through staff meetings to meet regularly. However, it is not conclusive whether or not collaboration happens. Guidance reviews the schedule yearly and asks for input from departments. There is little evidence and a general perception from the teachers that the guidance department does not incorporate faculty input when developing the master schedule for the building. The principal sends out a weekly email asking staff members for their input as to what they would like to discuss during staff meetings and creates an agenda. Staff members are very complementary of this process and how it works. The implementation of effective instructional practices, such as collaborative learning or inquiry-based instruction, is inconsistent. Six early release days and five teacher in-service days are included on the school calendar. Available time over the past two years has been devoted to the NEASC self-study, but future plans include the allocation of time to align the school's mission with core values and beliefs; time is also needed to finalize school-wide

assessment rubrics. To address student academic needs, summer school opportunities are offered in which students may earn credits through the school's credit recovery program. The school's master schedule and current practices provide for professional development but limit opportunities for professional collaboration to serve the learning needs of all students. (Endicott survey, master schedule, parent interviews, principal presentation, school calendar, teacher interviews)

WHS student load and class size are ideal to meet the learning needs of individual students. The average class size by department ranges from 9 to 17 students; the school-wide average class size is 14. Teacher course loads per semester range from three to five with most faculty teaching four courses. A daily 90-minute prep period allows ample time for teachers to assess student work, prepare lessons and respond to individual learning needs of students. While class size does vary slightly between subjects and among different sections, the overall 1:8.5 teacher-to-student ratio means the staff and students have sufficient opportunities to know each other well. WHS consistently supports class sizes to meet the learning needs of students. Small classes and the low student-to-teacher ratio allow Woodville High School the opportunity to meet the learning needs of individual students. (self-study, parents, panel discussion, students, teachers)

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The Administration Advisory Team was created to address and carry out the core values and beliefs and the principal uses the team as one of the primary vehicles to provide instructional leadership within the WHS community. The Advisory Team is comprised of building leaders who have been nominated by their peers to represent staff, and faculty. The purpose of the team is to present possible issues and to improve communication between and among administration, faculty, staff and community. According to the Endicott survey, 61 percent of staff reports that the principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional

leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal and building leaders of WHS strive to ensure that instructional leadership is rooted in reaching the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations. (teachers, parents, students, self-study, Endicott survey)

Teachers, students and parents at WHS have numerous committees and vehicles for involvement in decision-making to promote responsibility and ownership. My Voice Student Survey and Survey Monkey have been used to collect student and staff input. All teachers serve on a Professional Learning Community (PLC) or team with a specific purpose focused on student learning. The Administrative Advisory Team is composed of volunteer and nominated staff members and serves as a forum for staff ideas and concerns to be communicated to the administration. Student groups include Student Council, Executive Council, Friends of Rachel, The Athletic Leadership Council and SADD. Parent or community groups include The Woodsville Area Booster Club and Friends of Woodsville. Each group may communicate through the Administrative Advisory Team or directly to the administration or school board. Parents and students believe that teachers and administrators collaborate with students and support them to develop clubs and activities in their area of interest. There are numerous opportunities for student, parent and staff involvement in decision-making. The principal is very accessible to staff, students, and parents with his open door policy. WHS teachers and administrators and the school community provide a wide array of activities for the purpose of continued development of a healthy school environment through which they are expanding their students' engagement in learning. (self-study, teachers, students, parents, Endicott survey)

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. There are numerous examples of improvement initiatives driven by teachers that increase student engagement in learning. Examples of faculty initiatives that increase

student engagement include but are not limited to the following: student involvement in the mentoring program; foods class and child development courses that create real world connections; the art department's open door policy that encourages student creativity; field trips to broaden students' cultural exposure outside WHS; the music department's Garage Band; numerous independent study initiatives; and the technology program's canoe building and three-day river trip. Clubs include Outing Club, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Bike Club, YMCA Youth and Government, Fencing Club, Technology Students of America, and Academic Quiz Team. The environment at Woodsville High School fosters and empowers all teachers to take leadership roles in creating student-focused programs and to provide opportunities that encourage students' engagement in learning. (teachers, parents, students, self-study)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive; however WHS has not established 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations or implemented assessment rubrics to support the achievement of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Noted in the Endicott survey 52 percent of staff believes the school board, superintendent and principal collaborate in achieving learning expectations. The self-study indicates that board members attend goal setting retreats and administrators share ideas, perspectives and problem-solving strategies. The development of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and the implementation of assessment rubrics are reported to be in process; however, this process is not clearly identified or verified. The faculty indicates the status of these plans is not consistently known. Although a level of school board and administrative collaboration exists, the synergy that can be achieved through collaboration will allow the school to fully implement 21<sup>st</sup> century leaning expectations and the rubrics needed to measure their effectiveness on student learning. (Endicott survey, panel presentation, principal, school board, self-study)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal at Woodsville High School is given the authority by the school board and superintendent to lead the school and to make decisions about what is best for the school. The school board members have indicated that they “don’t micro-manage” their administrators and that they are confident that the principal will do what is best for the management of the school and do what is in the best interest of students. According to the Endicott survey, 66 percent of staff and 60 percent of parents feel that the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The autonomy given to the principal by the superintendent and the school board provides the principal with full authority to lead WHS. (Endicott survey, principal, self-study, teachers, school board, parents)

## **Commendations**

1. The supportive, positive relationships that are the foundation of the WHS community
2. The staff members’ and administrators’ dedication and commitment to their work
3. The school community’s tremendous pride in its school
4. The safe, positive, respectful and supportive culture throughout the school environment and among students and teachers
5. The wide variety of opportunities offered for students to be successful
6. The teachers and administrators collaboration with students to develop clubs and activities in their areas of interest.
7. The small class sizes that provide opportunities for individualize learning.
8. The teachers who serve as leaders in and out of the classroom
9. The environment at Woodsville High School that fosters and empowers all teachers to take leadership roles to provide opportunities that encourage students’ engagement in learning

## **Recommendations**

1. Organize time to support more researched-based instruction, collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of the students.
2. Provide more professional development learning opportunities to continue to support the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
3. Facilitate collaboration among departments
4. Continue to build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that treat all students fairly and consistently
5. Continue to apply skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment to Improve academic rigor for all students

**6**

## School Resources for Learning

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

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

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

## CONCLUSIONS

The school has developed timely, coordinated, and direct intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, but there is limited evidence that these strategies support the school's articulated 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. WHS has a wide range of services available to students ranging from weekly at-risk meetings at which teachers are able to refer names of students for intervention, or attend the committee meetings headed by representatives from guidance, special education, administration, and the nurse to develop an action plan for each student. Also, the Freshman Academy, created to assist freshmen in their transition to the high school, has team meetings every Friday for teachers, guidance, the principal, and the class advisor to discuss issues and implement action plans for troubled or at-risk freshmen. The Academy was created in response to data indicating the failure rate of freshmen was the highest in the school, and in an attempt to ensure academic success for all students. Jobs for American Graduates (JAG), which provides students with a one-on-one mentor who checks in with the student before and after school, and which begins to implement career skills to be utilized by students in the job force, accepts students who are identified as at-risk. The varied intervention strategies effectively identify students, especially at-risk students, and provide the support and resources necessary for students to be successful in reaching the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (panel presentation, teachers, self-study, parents, administration)

The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. The Endicott survey found that 88 percent of students and 71 percent of parents agree that the school effectively communicates the support services available to families. Information regarding available services is communicated to parents or guardians when the "at-risk committee" identifies a student concern. Student referrals are also made through the guidance department and the home school coordinator. Parent inquiry regarding available student and family services are typically

made to the guidance department. Information is initially introduced through the Freshman Backpack Program, organized by the Friends of Rachel organization, where upperclassmen bring each incoming freshman a backpack of supplies and information regarding school services. Woodsville High School's protocol for providing information to students and parents helps support the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner. (Endicott survey, panel interviews, students, parents, administration)

WHS support services utilize technology to deliver a range of coordinated services for each student. PowerSchool is available to students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, nurse and administrators to communicate necessary information and correspondence. The guidance department has online career and college resources for students to research and plan post-secondary goals. The special education department utilizes several computer applications such as Noodle Tools and Dragon Naturally Speaking, which allow students to access curriculum and produce quality work. Other resources available to support student learning include SMART Boards, iPads, laptops, and audio books, which allow students and teachers alternative resources for instruction and application of material. The library media center has six desktops and three laptop carts available with wireless capabilities for teachers to access in the library or classroom. The library catalog and informational databases are available online and provide students with the ability to retrieve information anywhere. The school has created a learning lab with ten desktop computers, used by a variety of students to take online courses through the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS). This provides students the opportunity to take courses not offered at the school or helps to customize their schedule in cases of class conflicts or credit recovery needs. In regular education classrooms, there has been an influx of technology available illustrated by the new additions of SMART Boards, Promethean boards and Mimeo boards. Although it is clear there is technology available at WHS, there are issues with the integration of resources. Professional development opportunities for instructing teachers about the new technology are limited. The administration is advocating an "exploratory year" for educators to

learn the new technology as the year progresses. Also, the unreliability of the infrastructure to support this technology can limit the effectiveness of the technology resources. Finally, due to the limited technology support staff, issues that arise cannot always be addressed in a timely manner, impacting the effective and continual use of technology. WHS has access to a wide range of technology tools, which enables teachers and students to access curriculum and assessments in order to be successful academically; however without the proper training, infrastructure and resources available to maintain the technology, its effectiveness to improve student learning is reduced. (teachers, support staff, self-study, standard committee)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel who meet regularly with students, individually and in groups, deliver outreach and referrals to the community and area agencies, and use relevant data to improve services, but there is limited evidence that these services support the school's articulated civic and social expectations. The guidance department uses a district-wide curriculum called, You and School. The counselors meet with each freshman when he/she comes to Woodsville High School, and meets with each student in the spring to discuss his/her school goals and upcoming schedule. Also, each fall counselors meet with seniors to develop post-secondary goals, whether military, career or college bound. College visits and PSAT/SAT signups are also coordinated through guidance. Counselors help to develop independent study opportunities for students who have specific interests or scheduling conflicts. They also meet to help plan 504s and Individual Education Plans with fellow team members. The school psychologist meets once a week with at-risk students both individually and in group settings. She conducts evaluations and provides resources and information to parents, students, and staff regarding pertinent information in accordance with special education laws. Also, the home school coordinator works as a student advocate to reach out to parents in the community. She provides information, outreach and counseling for students and families. The guidance department makes referrals and contacts area providers such as White

Mountain Mental Health, the JAG program, and King Street School. The school utilizes data from NECAP testing and Performance Pathways to aid in student schedules and curriculum choices. Feedback from guidance has been evaluated and this has resulted in adjustments and changes to available services such as the addition of a full-time home school coordinator to help with available school services and families. This was the only evidence the committee found regarding how revisions to services were determined. Although changes were made to services, a formal review process to assess the guidance program and gain community feedback is lacking. The guidance program meets the needs of all students and supports them with a variety of services throughout their careers at WHS, however there is no evidence that these services support the school's articulated 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, guidance counselors, administrators, students)

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, use an appropriate referral process, conduct ongoing student health assessments and use ongoing relevant assessment data to support students' attainment of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, yet there is no evidence of feedback from the community about how this program could be improved. The nurse offers immunizations and flu shots to students to help maintain a healthy school environment. Every spring, health screenings of visual, auditory, and Body Mass Index (BMI) exams are conducted for all students. Test results that are abnormal are communicated with parents or guardians with recommendations for the student to see a physician. Educational pamphlets are available for students on a variety of health concerns. The nurse works to refer students who lack health insurance to the New Hampshire Healthy Kids and dental care resources available in the community. Referrals are made to parents or guardians and necessary organizations in accordance with state and federal regulations. Also, records are kept for each student who visits the nurse's office. These records include initial reasons for visit, actions taken by the nurse and referral information if necessary. These records, along with attendance

information, are used to track the extent of a school-wide illness. Also, this data is used to determine the need of medical accommodations in a 504 plan at team meetings. The confidentiality of the reports is secured in a locked box, however the facility lacks privacy. There is no curtain to ensure any student or staff privacy on sensitive issues. Although many examples were provided to support ways that information is provided to the school community, there is a lack of evidence of feedback from the community to improve services. The certified nurse offers the students a wide range of resources and services to maintain a healthy WHS, however feedback from the school community will provide data to improve services. (nurse, students, teachers, Endicott survey self-study)

The library/media services are integrated into school's curriculum, have an adequate number of certified personnel who are engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum, provide a wide range of materials, technology and support the curriculum, provide a facility available to students before and after school, are responsive to students' interests, and support independent learning and conduct ongoing assessment to improve services that support the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The library media specialist is a certified member of the staff who has knowledge of school curriculum, which allows her to implement the use of library tools, such as online databases and print materials, to support that curriculum. Technology such as TV, LCD projectors, digital cameras, and DVD/VCR players are available to support curriculum. The library also helps to organize the summer reading program, during which teachers and students read the same book and discuss it at the start of the new school year. The library provides access to online databases such as EBSCO host and Worldbook online. The library catalog and databases are available online and are accessible from home. A growing collection of audio books and videos is available for class use and for students to check out of the library. The collection, which is expanded through teacher and student suggestions, consists of over 10,000 volumes, selected periodicals and magazines. The offerings are also enhanced by the integration of the collection into the New Hampshire State Library, which provides interlibrary

loan service for materials not available at the school. The library opens and is staffed by the librarian before school at 7:30am and remains open until 5:00pm, which provides an opportunity for students to complete work and to use technology and resources they might not otherwise have access to at home. Not only do students have input in collection acquisitions, but also the library provides a welcoming, safe, and comfortable area to encourage independent reading and work. However, there are space constraints so only a limited number of students can use the resources at one time. Also, the limited number of permanent computers impedes student access, especially during the school day. The library program is assessed through collection analysis using the program Titlewave. This program helps determine the age of the collection and targeting materials to be removed and any target deficiencies in the collection. Feedback from faculty helps assess the program needs to support the curriculum. Faculty feedback inspired the addition of modern international authors to the collection. The library program provides the tools and resources for students and teachers to expand their understanding in all subject areas by offering adequate information to meet instruction requirements and by providing materials to read for pleasure that support the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (library staff, self-study, students, teachers, school tour)

Support services have an adequate number of licensed personnel who work with the school community to aid in student success at WHS by collaborating with all teachers, counselors, targeted services and other support staff, providing inclusive learning opportunities for all students, performing ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and support the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The special services work with counselors, teachers, administration and other school services to help with students identified as at-risk in order to implement an action plan to ensure success at WHS. Inclusion is a goal for all students. Students are placed in the least restrictive environment at WHS; 49 percent of students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) is fully included in classes, and 28 percent of students with IEPs is in the

resource room for only one class a day. There are a total of twelve instructional assistants who are employed as one-on-one with certain students and classroom aides to assist classroom teachers. Some examples of programs provided include homework club, mentoring, and Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG). Through collaboration, inclusions and accommodations, support services provide identified students with the tools and resources for success at WHS and students have the support to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, students, parents, support staff)

### **Commendations**

1. The Freshman Backpack program
2. The Jobs for American Graduates (JAG) program
3. The development of the Freshman Academy
4. The collaboration between the library media center and the teachers
5. The use of the Titlewave program in the library
6. The King Street School alternative school program
7. The flexibility of course offerings including independent studies and virtual learning opportunities
8. The practice of making inclusion a priority

### **Recommendations**

1. Create a process for regular review and revision for all student support services
2. Improve the reliability of the technological infrastructure
3. Provide adequate support for technology
4. Expand professional development so as to better utilize existing technology
5. Integrate the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations with all support services



## Community Resources for Learning

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

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

## CONCLUSIONS

The community and governing body provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, and provide sufficient professional and support staffing to meet the needs of the students; however, there are inconsistencies in adequate funding for professional development, curriculum revision, and technical support. There is sufficient equipment, materials, and supplies, but due to the lack of professional development regarding the use of technology equipment, materials and supplies, many pieces of technology equipment are underutilized. In addition to required courses, WHS offers numerous elective courses in each department, including Latin, French and Spanish, chorus and band, assorted art courses, technology education, industrial arts, driver's education, foods, early childhood development, mentoring, business offerings, and Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG). There are not adequate technology support personnel to address daily concerns across the entire district as the use of technology grows in the schools. The current district IT employee position is inadequate as the current full-time IT employee serves as an assistant to the superintendent as well as a curriculum coordinator, diminishing his IT role. The lack of funding for additional technology personnel does not allow faculty to fully utilize the 21<sup>st</sup> century technology available. The teachers feel the school provides adequate opportunity and funding for professional development, there is a need for narrowing and specificity of focus to maximize the use of these resources. (self-study, students, teachers, administrators)

The equipment at WHS is properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced, and the custodial staff keeps the school clean on a daily basis; however, there is no current long-range plan established to meet the future anticipated needs of the school community. The WHS custodial staff works hard to maintain a clean building on a daily basis, but budgetary constraints and the lack of custodial staff have had a noticeable impact among staff members on addressing small repairs that need to be done in classrooms. However, despite the best efforts of the school, long-term planning is lacking and facilities have been attended to on a reactionary basis. The administrators and the school board have been

having discussions on what to do with the historic building. When we talk about historic the Woodsville gym is recognized at the National Basketball Hall of Fame as an historic gym. Woodsville High School was built after the original Woodsville School burnt down. The school building itself has significant historical value to the residents of Woodsville where so many of the citizens went to this school. Although upcoming meetings have been scheduled, there is currently no strategic plan in place. The superintendent and the school board have contracted an engineering firm to analyze the building and school plant to meet life safety codes. At the current time there is no funding secured for future facility projects. To complicate this issue, the State of New Hampshire has put a moratorium on school building aid for the past three years. This has not allowed communities like Woodsville to get the very important state aid that is needed to address new construction and building renovations. Without state building aid to support the much needed building renovations the Superintendent and school board pointed out expenses like this would have a devastating effects on the overall school budget. WHS would benefit from developing a yearly maintenance schedule for building upkeep that could be used in budget preparation. While there is current funding for the school facility, support and services, until WHS develops a long-range plan to determine the needs of the ever-changing school community and anticipated long-term capital investments, students will not be securely able to meet the learning expectations set forward by the community. (self-study, custodial staff, building and grounds supervisor, administrators, students, teachers, building tour, classroom observations)

The community has funded sufficient programs and services, due to enrollment changes, staffing needs, and technology, but WHS lacks a capital improvement plan. There is no evidence of a long-range plan regarding programs, services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. The student-to-teacher ratio of approximately 8.5 to 1 is well below the state average. Programs and services that are having a positive impact on student learning include the Freshman Academy and the after school "Homework Club," the extension of school library

hours, the availability of two late buses for students, the presence of a “Home/School” coordinator, and a nationally recognized and highly regarded “Cross-Age Mentor Program.” A large portion of the student body also participates in sports and extra-curricular activities. Relating to the idea of tradition from the Woodsville Core Values, WHS offers courses in three different languages, with four levels for each. However, the facilities continue to be attended to on a reactionary basis only. Despite the lack of a strategic plan at this time, the Superintendent and the school board have initiated steps to start the planning process. The lack of a long-range plan does not allow the community the opportunity to adequately fund necessary improvements. (self-study, teachers, school board, building and grounds supervisor, students, parents)

Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the school budget. Academic departments cooperatively meet to develop budgetary needs and wishes and present their findings to the administration. The administrators review requests and make necessary cuts or adjustments to fit within budget confines and then present the draft budget to the superintendent for review and adjustments. Student-centered and support programs are prioritized with regards to the budget. In addition, the community and school board take an active role in the approval of the building budget. There is active involvement between faculty and building administrators in the development of the budget as shown by consistent yearly dialogue and budget-related meetings with the focus on student programming. Because WHS has a system that encourages faculty, administration, and community input into the budget, the implementation of the approved budget takes place in a controlled and orderly fashion. (self study, administrators, teachers, financial secretary, guidance department, parents)

Portions of the WHS site and plant do not support the delivery of high quality school programs and services to all students. Lack of handicap accessible facilities restricts students from access to multiple

programs and services such as access to third floor classrooms, band room, and learning lab. There are three science labs. The school is in the process of renovating these labs. One lab is great shape a second lab is under renovation and third lab is in very poor shape and needs to be fully renovated. The facilities such as the nurse's office, the faculty work space, and the main office are small; the lack of space prohibits any privacy or confidentiality when dealing with students, parents or outside agencies. The library has poor lighting and the lack of outlets on two walls limit technology usage. In the overall facility appropriate storage space and facilities for equipment, materials, books, confidential files, and personal belongings is lacking and detracts from the ability to deliver high quality programs and services. Electrical power sources are inadequate in classrooms and offices, which limits technology use. Conversations with students and faculty reveal that they consider the athletic facilities to be an embarrassment. Facilities, including fields and locker rooms, have fallen into disrepair and sporting events are influenced by the conditions of the playing surfaces. WHS recently undertook a major renovation in the gym area putting in a sprinkler system and ceiling. Students and staff show tremendous respect for the facility. Because the building has limited handicap access, the current school site and plant do not allow for the delivery of high quality school programs and services for student learning. (self-study, students, teachers, administrators, building and grounds supervisor, parents)

WHS maintains documentation for the physical plant and facilities applicable to federal and state laws; however, it is not in compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations. WHS has completed an upgrade of the fire alarm system throughout the building and installed a sprinkler system in the gymnasium area. Working with the local fire department, personnel continue to make improvements to the building to meet life safety codes. They have also improved the quality of air in the building. However, the third floor egress has not been addressed to be in compliance with federal, state, and local laws. The school is not handicap accessible in all areas. The superintendent and the school board

are in discussion with the local fire department about what needs to be done so everyone in the building has safe egress out of the building in case of an emergency. The current recommendation is building a stair tower. The superintendent and the school board have hired an engineer to look at the best possibilities to address this issue. Despite the recent improvements, the school does not fully meet federal, state, and local laws in regard to the life safety codes. (self-study, students, building and grounds supervisor, teachers, federal, state and local laws documentation)

WHS has policies to engage the families of struggling students but not all staff members actively engage all parents and families as partners in each student's education. According to the Endicott survey only 38 percent of WHS staff agrees with the statement that "All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education." Despite WHS efforts including Open House, Alert Now, Powerschool, email, freshman orientation, ads in the newspaper, and announcements on the lighted community sign on Central Street, parent engagement and support has been inconsistent. The school administration worked very hard to get parents involved in developing the school's core values and beliefs and still had limited parent and community participation. WHS does incorporate an At-Risk-Team in order to reach out to families of students who are less connected with the school. There is a policy in place that requires teachers to contact the parents/guardians of failing students. WHS has been very successful in reaching out and supporting students who are at-risk. Parents and families are actively engaged through the efforts of the staff to support and identify at-risk students. WHS works consistently to foster connections and engagement with parents and families on formal and informal levels, and must continue to reach out to all parents and families to create a true cohesive learning environment to support all students. (Endicott survey, self-study, administrators, teachers, guidance, parents, students, school website)

WHS develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Students take part in the “Cross-Age Mentoring Program” that pairs WHS students with elementary school students. Parents participate in Friends of Woodsville and the Woodsville Booster Club. The NH Community College system offers “Running Start” courses, which offer students college credit for approved courses. WHS students are also offered other options for course work at Dartmouth College Special Community Student Program. Local businesses support students and many WHS programs. The partnerships offered by WHS are preparing students to compete in the global society. (self-study, parents, students, administrators, teachers)

### **Commendations**

1. The opportunities provided by The Dartmouth College Special Community Student program
2. The college credit offered through the “Running Start” program
3. The community partnerships that enhance student learning
4. The three world languages offering four levels of achievement
5. A variety of after-school and support programs and services
6. The availability of two late buses for students
7. The significant percentage of students involved in extra-curricular sports and club activities
8. The recognition of century-old tradition and the sense of community

### **Recommendations**

1. Provide dependable funding for a long range professional development plan
2. Review and provide dependable funding for custodial services, maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
3. Develop a comprehensive long-range plan for building upkeep, maintenance, updates, and code requirements.

4. Improve facility and physical plant to allow for high quality educational opportunities with complete accessibility for all students
5. Meet federal, state and local fire, safety, health standards and codes
6. Provide adequate IT support for the delivery of the school's curriculum
7. Provide secure storage for confidential, medical and academic records
8. Provide adequate space in the main office and nurse's office that allows for student privacy and confidentiality
9. Develop a plan to upgrade athletic facilities

## FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This comprehensive evaluation report reflects the findings of the school's self-study and those of the visiting committee. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administration, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in Woodsville High School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of the 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 83 . All other substantive changes should be included in the Two-and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

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

Special thanks must be extended to the faculty, support staff, and administration of Woodsville High School. The warmth and openness they showed to the visiting committee was wonderful. In closing, a special thank-you needs to go to the steering committee chairs for their organization of the visit.

## Appendix A

### Woodsville High School, Woodsville, NH Visiting Committee Members Sunday, September 23, 2012 – Wednesday, September 26, 2012

Chair, Paul MacMillan	SAU 35 260 Cottage St., Suite C Littleton, NH 03561
Assistant Chair, Robert Sampson	Waterville Valley Academy PO Box 270 Waterville Valley, NH 03215
Nancy Bartlett	SAU 68 Lin-Wood Public Schools 72 Lin-Wood Drive Lincoln, NH 03251
Timothy Berube	Hanover High School 41 Lebanon Street Hanover, NH 03755
Marlise Bryant	Mascenic Regional High School 175 Turnpike Road New Ipswich, NH 03071
James Faulkner	Newport High School 268 North Main Street Newport, NH 03773
Erin Goodwin	Keene High School 43 Arch Street Keene, NH 03431
Rebecca Hanson	Pembroke Academy, SAU 53 209 Academy Road Pembroke, NH 03275
Rebecca Kennedy	Merrimack Valley High School 106 Village Street Penacook, NH 03303

## Appendix A

### Woodsville High School, Woodsville, NH Visiting Committee Members Sunday, September 23, 2012 - Wednesday, September 26, 2012 Continued

M. Elizabeth Koch	Raymond High School 45 Harriman Hill Road Raymond, NH 03077
Susan Moore	Newfound Regional School 100 Bristol Ave Bristol, NH 03222
Anna Parker	Milford High School 100 West Street Milford, NH 03055
Amy Posner	Hinsdale School District 49 School Street Hinsdale, NH 03451
Jeanne Schratwieser	Windham High School 64 London Bridge Road Windham, NH 03087
Stephanie Taylor	U-32 930 Gallison Hill Road Montpelier, VT 05602
Kristi Upschulte	Newport High School 268 North Main Street Newport, NH 03773

## **Appendix B**

### **NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

#### **Commission on Public Secondary Schools**

#### **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

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

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