NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School

North Stonington, CT

September 28 – October 1, 2014

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement On Limitations

APPENDICES

INTRODUCTION

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

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

> Teaching and Learning Standards
> > Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
> > Curriculum
> > Instruction
> > Assessment of and for Student Learning
>
> Support of Teaching and Learning Standards
> > School Culture and Leadership
> > School Resources for Learning
> > Community Resources for Learning.

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School, a committee of five members, including a former principal, an interim principal and the current principal in accordance with their respective tenures, 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 input from students, parent groups, central office professionals, and the school board.

The self-study of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School extended over a period of 14 months from September 2012 to February 2014. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, central office professionals, and parents joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle 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 15 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. The Committee members spent four days in Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School, North Stonington Public Schools, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented teachers, counselors, and administrators of public schools, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials

- 10 hours shadowing 24 students for a half day

- a total of 35 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 28 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning

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

- the examination of student work, including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School, located in North Stonington, Connecticut, serves the community of North Stonington, which is located in New London County in southeastern Connecticut. North Stonington shares a border with Rhode Island. The town is primarily a bedroom community with a majority of its residents working within a thirty-minute drive from town. Some major employers of town residents include Pfizer, Electric Boat, Foxwoods Resort Casino, and Mohegan Sun Casino.

According to the 2010 census, the population of North Stonington was 5,313, of which 93.5% is white and the remaining made up of African American (1.1%), American Indian (1.1%), Asian (1.4%) and other (2.9%). 95.3 % speak only English, 2.3% speak a European language, and 2.4% speak other languages. The median income of town residents is approximately $75,000 as of 2010.

Since 2008, the majority of the population of North Stonington is employed in educational services, manufacturing, health care and social assistance, construction, professional, scientific, and technical services, and the retail trade. The unemployment rate for town residents in 2012 was 7.3%, whereas the rest of Connecticut's unemployment rate was 8.4%. For the years 2008-2012, the percentage of families with children under eighteen years of age whose income was below the poverty level was 7.1%. During the 2013-2014 school year, 19% of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School students were eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals.

Other than Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's 388 students, the North Stonington School District is comprised of one other school, North Stonington Elementary School, serving 388 students pre-k to the 5th grade. 34 students living in North Stonington attend schools outside of town.

North Stonington Public Schools is ranked 102 out of 166 districts in the state in terms of per pupil expenditures and spent $14,996 per pupil compared to a state average expenditure of $11,490 in 2012. In fiscal year 2012, state, federal and other resources accounted for 27.6% of all funds received in the district, leaving 72.4% of its funding to be obtained through local resources. 75% of local property taxes are allocated to the public schools. Two students paid nonresident tuition fees of $14,350 each to attend Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School High/Middle in 2012-2013.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School serves students grades 6-12 with a total enrollment of 388 students divided between 205 males and 183 females. The school's population has fallen over the past ten years. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition has remained constant at 8% (15) African-American, 3.9% (7) Asian, 1.8% (2) American Indian, and 2.3% (9) Hispanic during the 2012-2013 school year. The average dropout rate for the past two years has been .07%, the average daily student attendance is 94.1%, and the average daily attendance among teachers is 96.8%.

There are 44 teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. This includes a middle/high school art teacher and two shared staff members with the elementary school, a social worker and a band instructor, creating a ratio of 9.5 to 1. Individual teachers carry an average load of 73 students with an average class size of 14. In those classes required for graduation, the average size is 14 students. Students attend school for 182 days and a total of 1,074 hours.

Students in grades 6-8 are placed in non-leveled academic classes for their core English, social studies, math, and science classes, except for 7th grade math which consists of pre-algebra and traditional 7th grade math and 8th grade math which consists of pre-algebra and algebra sections. All freshmen are placed in academic or honor level classes for social studies and English according to achievement and teacher recommendation. For math and science courses, students are placed in general, academic, or honors level according to their achievement and teacher recommendation. All students maintaining at

least a C+ average in a specific academic discipline have the option of overriding their placement, with a parent request, and have the ability to move up or down an academic level. Students in grades 10-12 are recommended for general, academic, honors or advanced placement level based on teacher recommendation and the availability of the honors or AP courses within that academic discipline. All students are encouraged to challenge themselves to the best of their ability and can take courses in different levels for each core subject if needed based on their strengths and areas which are more challenging for that particular student. 28% of our students are in mainly honors level classes, 42% of our students are in mainly academic level classes, and 19% of our students are taking at least one Advanced Placement course. To graduate from North Stonington Public Schools, a student must have earned a minimum of 24 credits in the STEM, Humanities, and Career and Life course clusters, complete their Senior Project, and successfully meet performance standards in mathematics, science, writing, and computer technology as well as take elective classes for a total of 25 credits. Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School also offers many clubs and activities for students to participate in during the school day.

In the class of 2013, 66% of graduates attended four-year colleges, 13% attended two-year colleges, 2% entered the military, and 8% entered the workforce. Graduates of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School in the recent past have attended and graduated from Three Rivers Community College, The University of Connecticut, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, the University of Rhode Island, New England Institute of Technology, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, The United States Naval Academy, and many others.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School has established many partnerships with local businesses and organizations that support the learning environment. Local organizations provide volunteer opportunities for students, science equipment has been donated, and field trips are organized by teachers to augment learning in the classroom. Also, many of the businesses in town donate money to advertise in programs for school events. Through the Senior Project, students are mentored and have opportunities to job shadow at local businesses or organizations. Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School also hosts Career Day, where local business and industry workers volunteer their time to speak with students about their careers.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School participates in a partnership with the University of Connecticut's Early College Experience Program and the New London Scholars' Program with Connecticut College. Students also have the opportunity to take virtual courses through the Virtual High School Program or the State of Connecticut On-Line program. Over the past six years, many intern teachers from The University of New Haven have worked at the school in all levels and courses.

Students at all levels are recognized for their achievement through the Renaissance recognition program each quarter as well as being named to the honor roll for their achievement. In addition, there are end of the year award ceremonies for grades six and seven, Class Night for the eighth grade, Underclassmen Awards night for students in the ninth through eleventh grade, and Senior Night for the graduates. These award ceremonies highlight academic and Fine Arts achievement as well as school and community service. Also, students take part in writing contests sponsored by various local organizations throughout the year. Student athletes receive honors at award ceremonies at the end of each season and through the Eastern Connecticut Athletic Conference as well as from local newspapers.

COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING
EXPECTATIONS

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT
LEARNING

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 21st century learning expectations. Every component of the school is driven by the core values and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations.

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

2. The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.

3. The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

The learning community of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School identified core values and beliefs about social/civic expectations more than ten years ago, have begun to identify academic learning expectations, and are taking purposeful steps to embed the core values and beliefs into instruction, school culture, and decision-making through collaboration and professional discussion. Board of Education members, parents, students and teachers agree that the social/civic expectations are part of the collective understanding among all stakeholders with varied recollections about the origin of these shared values. According to the self-study report, the current mission and expectations were presented for the first time in the 2011-2012 High School Program of Studies after the faculty voted to approve them at the 2011 year-end faculty meeting. Most stakeholders recall that the mission and expectations were originated more than ten years ago. The self-study indicates the initial set of core values, developed by the administration, has evolved over a number of years. Student and parent feedback was also sought, as well as input from the board of education before the current statement was developed.

The social/civic expectations are readily articulated by students, faculty, and parents with a sense of pride. The mission statement, along with academic and social/civic expectations, is displayed in each classroom in large poster format, as well as published on the website and in the student and Senior Project handbooks. The Core Values and Beliefs Standard Committee cited the Endicott Survey as evidence of utilizing research to maintain Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's core values. In addition, the self-study stated several books and periodicals that are provided to the faculty and used to guide instruction and practice. Best practice as defined by Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's core values were in evidence in some classroom observations, such as lesson objectives with referenced standards posted on the daily lesson board, posted essential questions, modifications to ensure that all students are exposed to the academic expectations appropriately as active participants, use of technology embedded in lessons, challenging students with higher order thinking skills, engaging students in collaborative teamwork to solve problems, providing modifications to rubrics as needed. The final faculty meeting of each school year is utilized for reviewing core values and beliefs, yet, it appears at times that the 30% turnover rate in faculty experienced at the school throughout the time of the self-study creates a need for further clarification and common understanding. As a result of the widespread practice of embracing the pillars of social/civic expectations and core values, students and teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School have internalized and pervasively demonstrate a positive and supportive culture of respect within and across their peer and age groups. (classroom

observations, teacher interviews, student interviews, school tour, student shadowing, handbooks, self-study)

The school's core values and beliefs statement includes succinctly stated learning expectations that are identified as academic and social/civic, and the academic expectations defined by school-wide analytic rubrics. The academic expectations address the 21st century skills of communication and problem solving, among others. According to the Endicott Survey, both staff (88.7%) and parents (86.4%) indicate that the school's learning expectations are challenging. School-wide analytic rubrics are somewhat completed for use in Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's classrooms. Specifically, five point school-wide rubrics include descriptions of levels one, three and five, but levels two and four have not yet been developed. Teacher interviews and examination of student work reveal show limited use of critical thinking and problem solving rubrics. One example is the school-wide writing and speaking rubrics, which are used to assess the research project completed by students in grades six through eleven. This assignment is a collaborative effort between the English Language Arts and social studies departments to prepare students for Senior Project at the end of their high school career. Analytic rubrics are not yet in place for the social/civic expectations, teachers and administrators describe the disciplinary referral process as a 'reverse rubric.' Data from disciplinary referrals is stored electronically for every student, and this information is used to guide discussions about students, and to eliminate them from consideration for programs that are used to celebrate student adherence to core values such as the Renaissance Program, which recognizes students for academic and social achievement. When the purposeful use of analytical rubrics measure student progress in Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's academic, civil and social expectations, all students will be assured the opportunity to succeed in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott Survey, school-wide analytic rubrics, teacher interviews, student work, meetings with students)

The core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations for all students are reflected in the programs and practices at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School, which demonstrate their importance to the school community, and have started to influence curriculum, assessment, and school procedures. The Senior Project, a culminating experience required for all students, reflects and includes the academic expectations of the school. This project engages students in research, writing, fieldwork, and an oral presentation. The *Student Handbook for Senior Project* 2014-2015 states that successful completion of this project allows students to demonstrate their ability to "write effectively, read effectively, speak effectively, problem solve effectively, and critically think effectively." The

Renaissance Program is another indicator that academic achievement is valued and encouraged by the school staff. The goal of the program is to increase motivation for academic achievement through positive incentives and recognition. Students must earn a specified marking period grade point average or demonstrate specific growth since their last recorded grade point average, exhibit good behavior as defined by the social/civic expectations, and comply with the school's attendance policies. Conversations with teachers, students, and parents clearly illustrate that these stakeholders embrace the social/civic expectations and endeavor to model these four pillars. They proudly describe the school community as a family in which mutual respect is observed. The recently established (2011-2012) advisory program presents lessons on the themes of respect, responsibility, honesty, and safety, and school clubs, such as the Declamation Club and GSA, also demonstrate the importance of the core values and beliefs. The School-Wide Information System (SWIS) is used to monitor student infractions of the social/civic expectations. The analysis of this data has led to some changes in practice, such as teacher supervision of the hallways and cell phone policy. According to the Endicott Survey, 91.9% of the staff report that they consider the core values and beliefs when making a decision.

The mission statement is posted on the school's website and the mission, expectations, and core values are included in the program of studies and student handbook. Some teachers' course expectations include the academic and/or social/civic expectations associated with the course while other teachers' course expectations do not include these expectations or include what appear to be outdated academic expectations. The currently employed curriculum template used in the district requires the author(s) to list the appropriate expectations for student learning, which can be seen in the science curriculum. The allocation of funding to support curriculum development in 2014-2015 will benefit this process. Once the faculty plans lessons and designs assessments with purposeful links to the academic expectations, these expectations will become as highly valued and embedded into school culture as the four social/civic pillars. (self-study, website, panel presentation, student led tour, meetings with teachers, Endicott Survey)

Reviews and revisions of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations occur annually during the first faculty meeting and periodically in advisory groups with students. An informal process and timeline for the regular review of core values and expectations can be articulated by faculty and administrators. Continual anecdotal feedback is sought to update the core values. Interviews with teachers indicate the core values and beliefs are collaboratively discussed at a faculty meeting each year. Student feedback is obtained through an ongoing review of core values in advisory. The information

gathered through these forums has initiated a revision of the rubrics used for the Senior Project, which is currently underway. Although the local business community is actively involved in the Senior Project, serving as mentors and supervisors in fieldwork. Program coordinators examine data about students' achievement and performance on standardized tests and analyze results which are shared with teachers in their departments to drive instruction. Anecdotal data is used to discern learning gaps that lead to changes in instruction to meet the learning needs of students. Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's academic and social/civic expectations align with the district's written goals: "To continue the improvement of the quality curriculum and instruction, to prepare students to compete successfully in the global society of the 21st century, and to increase pride in our schools and communities." When revisions are based on deliberately designed reviews based on research, stakeholders can be ensured that the work being done represents the high level of complexity required of the 21st century learning expectations. (student panel presentation, handbook, small group meeting, teacher interviews, classroom observations, board policy goals and objectives)

Commendations
- The ubiquitous acceptance of the social/civic expectations by all stakeholders, resulting in a respectful and supportive culture
- The utilization of the school-wide writing and speaking rubrics in grades 6 -11 to assess student progress as they prepare for Senior Project
- The collaboration between the English Language Arts and Social Studies departments in preparing students for the Senior Project
- The implementation of the Renaissance Program, which rewards and celebrates student achievement and social/civic behaviors
- The use of the advisory program to support the attainment of the academic and social/civic expectations
- The consistent use of school-wide writing and oral communication rubrics
- The core values, beliefs about learning, and the 21st century learning expectations are reflected in the culture of the school
- Learning expectations are articulated and aligned with district's learning goals
- The decisions that promote the achievement of learning expectations for all students
- The continual feedback, including that of students, that is sought to clarify learning expectations
- The extensive use of data in the review and revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Recommendations

- Create and implement a formal review process for core values and beliefs and report its results to all stakeholders
- Develop and implement school-wide rubrics for social and civic expectations
- Complete all performance levels on the academic rubrics
- Develop and implement a plan to utilize school-wide rubrics within and among all disciplines
- Expand the use of whole school data analysis to identify and celebrate school successes and to inform future work in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Examine school data about students' achievement of the expectations for student learning to formalize school-wide learning objectives

2   Curriculum

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

1.   The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

2.   The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
  ▪   units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
  ▪   the school's 21st century learning expectations
  ▪   instructional strategies
  ▪   assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.

3.   The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
  ▪   inquiry and problem-solving
  ▪   higher order thinking
  ▪   cross-disciplinary learning
  ▪   authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
  ▪   informed and ethical use of technology.

4.   There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

5.   Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

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

7.   The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School is currently in its second year of a major curriculum review and revision. A cycle of curriculum development was implemented by the administration in the 2013-2014 school year. The newly revised science curriculum, along with the timeline for curriculum development, is designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. Completed curriculum list the school's 21st century learning expectations, but explicit connections are needed within the learning plan. Teachers frequently report that they are responsible for all of the identified learning expectations, and the self-study indicates a need to formalize the process for consistent use of school wide rubrics and the process that will be used to identify specific responsibility to ensure that each student is given feedback about his or her progress. The science department has the only completed curriculum by grade level but has yet to identify the differences between course levels. In addition, while each course identifies relevant 21st learning expectations, how those expectations are met are not yet explicitly connected to learning objectives or instructional strategies. Review of state standards and input from the faculty drive decisions to add or delete courses or units of study from the curriculum.

Once all of the curriculum areas have reviewed and revised the curriculum using the template, all students will be ensured the ability to practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (science curriculum, curriculum cycle, individual course expectations sheets, program of study)

The newly designed formal, written curriculum plan at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School uses a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, the school's 21st Century learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices and the use of school-wide analytic and course specific rubrics.

During the last two years, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School has completed most of the initial stages of the curricular cycle, including the development and implementation of the science curriculum that addresses their 21st century learning expectations. In addition, the faculty has initiated the development of the English and art curricula, which includes state and common core standards and is reflective of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School 21st century learning expectations. By the

end of the end of the 2017-2018 school year, all areas of curriculum will have completed the revision process using the newly developed common format.

Upon the completion of the newly developed and implemented curricular cycle at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School, each curriculum will contain units of study with essential questions, concepts, content and skills; include the 21st Century learning expectations, contain instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course specific rubrics. (curriculum cycle, science curriculum binder, curriculum posted on the school website, meeting with program coordinators)

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's process of curriculum revision is designed to ensure depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving; higher order thinking; cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunity both in and out of school; and the informed and ethical use of technology. Upon reviewing the existing curriculum a wide variety of learning objectives are complemented by instructional activities that emphasize inquiry and problem-solving such as web quests, simulations, real-life scenarios, inclusion of related current events, labs, and performance tasks.   The use of interdisciplinary teams with common planning time in grades six through nine is among the ways Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School has worked to ensure teachers have an increase awareness of other content areas, allowing them to seek out those learning activities to be included in their curricula. In addition, program coordinators were implemented added in the past year, they and administrators are available to oversee content areas and help guide the creation of these curriculum documents.

The curriculum includes a variety of opportunities to utilize technology, which enable teachers to model its ethical and informed use. Classroom observations and curriculum documents support the fact that students are using technology in an informed and ethical manner. The curriculum contains common core standards and encourages the use of school wide rubrics, all of which help to ensure incorporation of cross-disciplinary learning. Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School also offers a wide variety of extra co-curricular activities for students such as debate, drama, Greenhouse club, and SADD, which afford students learning experiences beyond the 6-12 curriculum and the classroom.

Given Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's newly implemented revision cycle, 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, and informed/ethical use of technology. (interview with program coordinators, curriculum documents, teacher interviews, student interviews, school website)

The newly implemented curriculum revision process enables teachers to align the written and taught curriculum. Teachers report and the self-study substantiate the use of administrative observation to ensure alignment between written and taught curriculum. During the pre-conference meeting, administrators review individual lesson plans. The post-conference meeting includes a discussion of the written and taught curriculum. In an effort to enhance the clarity of the alignment, a curriculum revision cycle has been initiated. While the Endicott Survey indicates 79% of the staff feel there was proper alignment, documentation to support this statement will become available as the revised curriculum is written. Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School has added program coordinators who facilitate meetings both departmentally and across disciplines, as needed. These meetings are designed to lead the discussion of curriculum and to provide opportunities to ensure proper alignment between both the written and taught curriculum. The addition of program coordinators is a positive step toward the latter; these positions are new and their roles and responsibilities have not been formalized. The principal envisions expanding the role of these program coordinators to include a more formal process of overseeing the curriculum.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School curriculum will stem from an appropriately formalized process which ensures the alignment between the written and taught curriculum once the roles and responsibilities of the program coordinators have been established. (Endicott Survey, principal interview, program coordinators interview, self-study, teacher interview)

The newly implemented process of curriculum revision includes curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas, and the coordination between Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School and its sending school is mostly informal and anecdotal.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School created a comprehensive curriculum review cycle identifying a timeline for the development, implementation and review of all curricula. Common planning time is provided for grade level teams six through nine as well as regular department meetings for grades ten through twelve. Recently Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School received $3000 from the Board of Education for substitute teachers to allow teachers to work on curriculum. In

addition, students in grades six through eleven complete a research paper that is overseen by the Humanities Program Coordinator, which guarantees every student an interdisciplinary experience in social studies and language arts.

The self-study indicates that teachers are afforded the opportunity to meet with sending grade staff to discuss specific students and academic issue related to content. Teachers also report communication about curriculum in grades six through twelve and informal conversation with the elementary school. The superintendent confirmed that the building administrators supervise curriculum revision. The self-study also indicates that the administration is aware that the current process does not provide sufficient time in the school day to allow for a formal process for vertical articulation, nor does the revision process yet include the development of a district curriculum map or plan.

All students will be afforded multiple opportunities to achieve the school's 21st century expectations as the school completes plans to increase curriculum coordination and vertical articulation. (self-study, central office interview, student interview, teacher interview, board proposal for expenses)

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, despite town-wide budgetary constraints.

The North Stonington Board of Education provided the district a 4.9% increase in the 2012-2013 budget and district administration utilized alternative funding sources including Perkins funding, North Stonington Education Foundation, Regional Action Council funding, and the Parent Teacher Organization to ensure the instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies are available to fully implement the curriculum. Despite changes to full time positions over the last three years including eliminating some positions and adding others, the Endicott Survey indicates that 65% of the staff believes the school has sufficient personnel to implement the curriculum. In addition the Library/Media center budget continues to remain constant over the years allowing for the maintenance of a sufficient print collection and subscription to a variety of databases for student use.

There has been a significant increase in technology over the last three years, with more than $20,000 allotted to enhance technology. For example, the Wi-Fi network in the school combined with a "Bring Your Own Device" policy has helped alleviate the demand for access to computer labs.

Despite the fact that the Endicott survey indicates that only 45% of the staff and 35% of parents believe that co-curricular activities are adequately funded Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School offers approximately 36 different clubs, activities, athletics and their diversity in activities has been cited by the self-study as a strength of their curriculum.

Due to the purposeful acquisition of additional funds to ensure staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the developing curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. (district expense report, self-study, Endicott Survey, panel discussion, school website)

Purposeful plans are underway to provide the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. The district recently introduced program coordinators to assist building administration with coordination and articulation of the curriculum. The district has responded positively to staff requests for time to meet with colleagues to revise curriculum beyond the common planning period. Program coordinators and staff both report an active role in writing the curriculum. With many teachers being the sole instructor for particular classes, the responsibility for developing and revising curriculum falls on their shoulders.

The district developed and began to implement the curriculum cycle during 2012-2013 school year. This cycle is designed for a rotation of all curricular areas through the 2021-2022 school year. The superintendent has reported that he has allocated $12,000 dollars for curricular revisions for the 2014-2015 school year. The self-study report and many teachers interviewed stated that administration frequently shares professional articles either by email or in their mailbox. While particular books are cited that were read to support the revision process, a formal process was not apparent to the committee to substantiate that specific research was used during the development, evaluation and revision of the curriculum. However district administration, program coordinators, and teachers report that multiple professional development sessions are planned for the current school year to provide support for the curriculum process.

Teacher interviews, program coordinators, and the self-study identify that standardized assessment data have been used to identify areas of weakness in the past. The new curriculum format includes Common Core State Standards, as well as relevant subject area and state standards.

Due to the purposeful efforts of the district to provide the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School is on track to consistently use assessment results and current research in guiding their development, evaluation and revision of the curriculum.   (curriculum cycle, self-study, program coordinators interview, teacher interviews, curriculum documents)

Commendations:
- The principal's initiative and leadership in the development of the formal curriculum cycle
- The willingness of the science department to pilot the new process of curriculum development
- The variety of learning opportunities available to students
- The teachers' effective use of technology in curriculum planning
- The emphasis of the curriculum on depth of understanding, problem solving, inquiry, and application of knowledge
- The vision of the principal to create and empower program coordinators
- The formal departmental and cross-disciplinary meetings to discuss the alignment of the curriculum with the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations led by the program coordinators
- The principal's inclusion of formal discussions related to the curriculum in the teacher supervision and evaluation process
- The commitment to providing an interdisciplinary opportunity to all students in grades six through eleven through the humanities research paper coordinated by the language arts and social studies departments
- The ability of the district administration to secure additional funding to provide technology enhancements
- The adequacy of the budget for instructional materials and supplies, staffing levels, and the library/media services program
- The willingness of the district to allocate sufficient funds, provide release time and find alternative funding for curriculum revision, in addition to adequate staffing levels, instructional materials and supplies, and the library/media program
- The professional development offerings related to curriculum review and revision
- The use of assessment results to inform changes in the curriculum

Recommendations:

- Ensure that all departments complete the formal curriculum processes
- Differentiate curriculum to articulate the difference between academic levels of the same course where appropriate
- Include the school's 21st century learning expectations in all curriculum documents
- Ensure the completion of the curriculum cycle
- Design and implement an organizational chart to ensure all departments have leadership personnel responsible for curriculum
- Formalize the roles and responsibilities of the program coordinators
- Develop a district curricular alignment map
- Provide formal planning time for all teachers to ensure curriculum coordination and vertical articulation
- Create and implement a plan for curriculum writing responsibilities that includes the roles of administration, program coordinators, and teachers

3 Instruction

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

1.   Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

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

3.   Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
     - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
     - strategically differentiating
     - purposefully organizing group learning activities
     - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.

4.   Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
     - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
     - examining student work
     - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
     - examining current research
     - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

5.   Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

Teachers' instructional practices are examined through a variety of formal and informal meetings to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Most teachers readily express commitment to the belief that all students are capable and can achieve at high levels. When discussing instructional strategies, several teachers connected their instructional strategies to the core value belief that students must assume the role of active participants. In a science classroom, it was observed that students were actively participating in their learning by discussing a student blog after viewing a video prepared for them by their teacher. In an art classroom, students immediately went to work on individual projects after a brief introduction by the teacher. Each student knew what to do and worked independently, with teacher support as needed.

Teachers differentiate learning to meet the needs of all students. This reflects their belief that all children are capable and have a fundamental right to attain high levels of educational achievement. For example, in an English class, it was observed that all students are learning the same content and skills with varied texts. In Art, all student work is displayed to promote the idea that creative works is valued and should be celebrated. In a variety of formal and informal interviews and discussions, parents were pleased to share the ways in which their children's varying needs were met by their teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. The Endicott survey stated that 53.6% of parents believe that their son/daughter's teachers personalize instruction to support his/her achievement of the school's learning expectations, with 26.2% of parents undecided.

Throughout common planning time at the middle school, teams reflectively examine their practices to adjust instruction. Ninth grade teams participate in common planning time twice a week. Grades ten through twelve work together informally to plan and adjust instruction. Department meetings include all teachers and are held once a month, led by the newly instituted program coordinators, providing added time for collaboration. The program coordinators are responsible for educational leadership, supporting the school's mission and expectations through reinforcing best practices and encouraging a culture of collaboration with a focus on student learning. This collaboration will help teachers reflect upon their practices and further develop their beliefs about learning.

During a student panel, all students in attendance agreed that they are held to high expectations. They also articulated that the curriculum in their courses has a high level of complexity, as outlined in Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's Core Values. The core values and 21st century learning expectations were readily apparent in all classrooms. However, it was observed that some teachers did not make explicit connections between their instruction and the core values and 21st century learning expectations. When Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School implements a formal plan for teachers to examine their instructional practices, all students will be ensured the opportunity to achieve the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott Survey, classroom observation, student shadowing, teacher interviews, students, parent interviews, self-study, program coordinator job description)

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

Personalization is evident throughout most classes, as seen through classroom observations and interviews with teachers and students. According to the Endicott Survey, 78.9% of staff believes that they personalize instruction for students. Additionally, a majority of students (61.1%) believe that teachers give them opportunities to choose topics for some assignments. In an art class, for example, students can select their focus, interpreting the theme of "ancient", and then produce their final artwork in pen-and-ink, scratchboard, or an etching. For a yearly research project in grades six through eleven, students select an aspect of an overarching concept for research, such as "The Renaissance" or "Religion". As discussed in teacher interviews, the use of learning styles and multiple modalities also drive instruction. Students learn information through a variety of methods and can demonstrate their knowledge in multiple formats, such as through writing, discussion, debate, group work, oral presentations, formal speeches, skits, and visual presentations. The Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School learning community also meets students' individual learning needs through purposeful effort. In the middle school, an SRBI class is integrated into the schedule to allow for teachers to meet with small groups of students in their targeted area of need. The middle school reading specialist meets with students for explicit instruction that encourages students to build on their strengths and become aware of their reading growth. At the high school, the Student Study Center provides support for

students who need extra academic support during study halls or lunchtime. Students and teachers also both report the common practice of staying after school with teachers for extra help. Virtual High School (VHS) allows students to take any high school level course of interest that would not be typically available to them in the master schedule. To ensure that all student needs are addressed as they begin high school, freshman teachers meet once a week with guidance to discuss student's progress and collaborate about ways to support students. As a result of this personalization, students feel as though they are part of the learning process and student needs are addressed in numerous ways.

Students are engaged in cross-disciplinary learning, although this varies among teachers, grades and departments. Classroom observations and teacher interviews reveal that literacy practices such as close reading, writing, and vocabulary instruction are woven into content areas. In art classes, for example, students learn a vocabulary term of the day at the start of every class, increasing their content area vocabulary. When art projects are completed, students are required to write a reflection about the process and product. In middle school science, students access a variety of sources to learn about a topic, such as the food chain. In Social Studies, students read complex texts and discuss text-dependent questions both in writing and through discussion. In sixth grade, teachers were awarded a grant to attend a two-day workshop on Long Island Sound, which generated a cross-curricular field trip experience. Also, the annual research project in grades six through eleven demonstrates the coordination between English and Social Studies, as students study the content in one class and learn how to conduct research and engage in reading and writing in the other.

Students are consistently engaged as active and self-directed learners, with an emphasis on inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking skills, however, the level of academic challenge varies by teacher. As stated in the Endicott Survey, 74.4% of parents believe that their son/daughter's teachers emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. In math, a teacher asked students to consider the meaning of systems, including systems of linear equations and the possibility of solutions. In English, students were challenged to write a personal narrative about a critical time in their life, and then represent this as a comic strip, mirroring the style of the graphic novel they were reading. As seen in classroom observations, students were actively engaged in hands-on and project-based work, and teachers worked as facilitators and coaches. In Art, the teacher provided feedback to students as they worked, asking them probing questions about their work and offering suggestions for improvement. Students also mentioned numerous opportunities to engage in cooperative groups, such as middle school students working together to build their understanding of the earth's rotation using hands-on tools. In

social studies, students present weekly about a current event article of their choice. Students are required to explain the issue and offer possible solutions, demonstrating problem-solving and critical thinking. In these instances, students are pursuing concepts in depth, synthesizing concepts, and applying knowledge.

In some areas, there is opportunity for students to apply their knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. In regards to the students' belief that they have an opportunity to apply what they're learning outside the classroom, 56.5% agree, 16.3% disagree and 27.3% are undecided. In an Early Childhood Experience Individual and Family Studies course, students apply their knowledge of child development to design and implement a lesson at the local elementary school. In the 2014 Summer Reading project "One Book, One Summer," students at the middle school held a Skype session with the author, interviewed a Doctors without Borders representative, and participated in another Skype session with students in Zambia who had also read the book *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. Middle school students also have the opportunity to participate in a weekly grade-level book club during lunch, mirroring an authentic, adult book club. When completing the high school Senior Project class, students must complete internship hours with a community mentor. Aside from these opportunities, limited evidence was available to indicate student participation in authentic tasks across all subject areas.

Students are extensively involved in self-assessment and reflection across all grade levels and subject areas. Most students (71.7%) believe their teachers provide them with opportunities to assess their own work, 9.4% express disagreement. Teachers routinely ask students to reflect on their work, identify area of needs, and set goals or revise their work for resubmission. Students use rubrics, checklists, and narrative reflections to identify their strengths and needs. In an English class, for example, students are given thorough and specific written feedback on written work. The students then schedule a writing conference, revise their work based on both the written and verbal feedback, and resubmit it for a final grade. In addition to feedback from teachers, peer feedback is a mandatory component in the annual research project for English Language Arts and social studies. In art, students engage in peer critiques biweekly, evaluating each other's works based on a rubric. Students report that in some classes, they grade themselves on a rubric before the teacher evaluates their work. In middle school science, student work showed that students had an opportunity to reflect on their own work prior grading by their teacher. In middle school math, teachers ask students to identify and reflect on errors that they have made. In social studies at the high school, one project included a self-assessment piece that occurred prior to teacher assessment. In Advisory, students are required to identify at least one academic goal

and re-address that goal to identify progress and areas of need throughout the school year. All of these examples demonstrate a focus on self-reflection to promote individual growth.

The teachers' use of technology is pervasive throughout the school to support the achievement of 21st century learning expectations. Classroom observations showed that teachers use SMART boards and Epson projectors in daily instruction. Most students believe they are asked to use technology in their assignments (69.7%) The use of technology is increasing as students progress from grade six to twelve: 55.6% of sixth graders believe they are asked to use technology, compared to 72.6% of twelfth graders. For example, students use graphing calculators in math classes and use the "Computer on Wheels" laptop cart for word processing and research. Students in sixth grade science participate in a student blog and students in several classes have prepared PowerPoint presentations for various assignments. As shared by teachers, students in some English classes use Google Docs to work collaboratively on the same assignment, engage in peer feedback, and publish their work. Art students were observed conducting research on the Internet using classroom computers and personal devices such as iPads to gain creative inspiration for their new project. Middle school teachers mentioned the use of Glogster and Edmodo, in addition to teacher created videos for flipped classroom opportunities. Teachers also report extensive reliance on technology for communication. This can be seen in the fact that both the principal and guidance office have Facebook pages, all eighth grade team teachers and others use Remind101 to notify students of upcoming deadlines and events, some teachers have their own web pages and blogs, and others use Twitter to share information with students. Students are also encouraged to use appropriate technology when conducting research during and outside of class. Students are ensured with opportunities to achieve the school's 21st century expectations given the teachers' commitment to consistently employ instructional practices such as personalized instruction, rigorous problem solving and higher order thinking, and authentic tasks. (Endicott Survey, classroom observation, student shadowing, student work, teacher interviews, students, department leaders, self-study)

The vast majority of teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time, strategically differentiating instruction, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the classroom.

In the classroom, most teachers regularly assess student learning throughout the lesson by employing a variety of assessments and adjust their instruction accordingly. For example, in a seventh grade math

class, it was observed that the teacher asked students to write out the steps they took to solve a specific math problem, promoting student learning through formative assessment. Teacher feedback was immediate and specifically targeted to student improvement. In the middle school, teachers indicated that there is an effort to analyze formative assessments and other data (for example, the Qualitative Reading Inventory- 5) to group students into more appropriate levels based on their reading and writing skills. In an interview, an eighth grade English teacher offered that she uses exit slips to determine the direction of her instruction for the ensuing class period. High school English teachers explained how they use benchmark assessments to have students reflect on their progress and formulate plans for achieving greater learning goals.

Many teachers strategically differentiate to help individual students learn concepts and skills. According to the Endicott Survey, 79.6% of staff believes that teachers use differentiated instructional practices to meet the needs of all students. Weekly grade level meetings in the middle school allow teachers to discuss the achievements and needs of individual students and adjust instruction accordingly. Also, collaboration with the literacy specialists, program coordinators, special education teachers, and other specialists help classroom teachers thoughtfully differentiate to meet the needs of students. Program coordinators also assist with selecting instructional materials and reinforcing best practices, focusing on what individual students need to be successful while maintaining alignment with school-wide 21st century learning expectations. For example, in high school English, the students focus on the same Essential Question but read different books based on their ability level. In the middle school, a science teacher gave examples of group learning activities that engage students with in-depth learning and collaboration. It is important to note, however, that according to the Endicott Survey, 43.1% of parents believe that teachers modify/adjust their instructional practices based on students' progress in achieving the school's learning expectations, with 38.9% undecided and 18% disagreeing. According to teacher interviews and visiting team observations, students throughout the school are encouraged to continually strive for the next level academically. For example, students who excelled in seventh grade math last year were encouraged to participate in advanced math Virtual Learning classes. Another example was the decision to move students up a level within a ninth grade English class once they reached goal on a particular assessment. For those who need academic support, there are a variety of options. Extra help sessions are offered to students who need additional time to learn in all classes from Grade 6 through 12. The Student Support Center (in the high school) and the SRBI class (in the middle school) offer students opportunities for individual help and small group support. The Endicott Survey reported that 77.1% of parents feel that teachers provide additional support to their son/daughter when needed.   By consistently

adjusting their instructional practices in response to formative assessments, strategically differentiating instruction, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional individualized support, teachers will be better able to meet the individual student needs and increase overall academic achievement for all students. (Endicott Survey, classroom observation, student shadowing, teacher interviews, student interviews, department leaders)

Teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School purposefully improve their instructional practices individually and collaboratively 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, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

Teachers in grades six through nine engage in common planning time with grade level colleagues. During this time, they review assessment data and student work to modify their teaching practices accordingly. Common planning time is not formally available for the high school teachers in grades ten through twelve, so they utilize a more informal process of sharing information about student work, achievement, and instructional practices. The Special Education teachers use planning time flexibly to provide student support or to meet with their colleagues as needed. According to the Endicott Survey, 54.8% of staff believes that teachers have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practices, with 21.6% undecided and 23.6% in disagreement. The amount of time given to staff to examine student work is inconsistent across grade levels. However, a majority of teachers believe that the analysis of student assessment data helps them modify their teaching practices. Teachers report that 75% improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, as seen in the Endicott Survey. For example, reading and literacy specialists utilize informal reading inventories, among other assessments, to make instructional decisions. Due to the small size of the school, high school teachers see each other daily and share information. Individual teachers regularly share information either in person or via email about what they have learned from their own research into best practices. The Endicott Survey reveals that 61.7% of staff believes that teachers improve their instructional practices by engaging in informal opportunities for professional discourse focused on instructional practices. Those that possess more technical expertise participate in professional blogs and share information gleaned from that resource with colleagues. Administration encourages teachers to attend professional development workshops and content-specific

conferences while providing financial support and classroom coverage. Teachers who attend such workshops share what they have learned most often in an informal setting with colleagues.

Teachers are also encouraged to present at conferences. The middle school reading specialist and program coordinator for English and history presented at two conferences in recent years. Regional and district professional development is provided to all teachers within the district throughout the school year. The topics are decided upon by administration, however they respond to teacher input with the guidance of the Program Coordinators. When several staff members expressed interest in one particular topic, the principal established a professional book club so that others might participate if desired. This book club meets outside of school hours. A professional resource library is available to all staff members in the general school library. On a regular basis, program coordinators disseminate information about professional development opportunities or reading materials to appropriate staff members. Program coordinators schedule department meetings at least once a month and infrequently provide time for teachers to review and discuss current research and best practices. Teachers communicate regularly with parents through positive emails sent a minimum of six times per quarter and also through grade level newsletters, which include information from each teacher regarding what is happening in their classroom. As indicated by teacher interviews, the positive feedback from students and parents has been rewarding and reinforces the practice for teachers.

Given the provision of dedicated time and a plan for teachers to purposefully improve their instructional practices individually and collaboratively 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, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, all students are provided with multiple opportunities for success. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing)

The vast majority of teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. As indicated in the Endicott Survey, 89.2% of staff believes that teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, with only 1.9% disagreeing. Additionally, 81.7% of students believe that their teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach, with 5.7% disagreeing. Most of these efforts to maintain expertise are teacher-directed and voluntary. While teachers reflect as a part of their evaluation process, this process has not become systemic outside of the evaluation process. Some

teachers regularly read content-specific literature to help them improve instruction in their subject area. For example, teachers shared that a new, voluntary professional book club was formed by the principal focusing on the text "Grading Smarter, Not Harder" by Myron Dueck. For many teachers, their involvement in this club aligns with their teacher evaluation goals. According to the self-study, thirteen members of the staff polled said they regularly read content-specific professional journals. Some teachers have professional subscriptions and memberships to organizations such as the International Reading Association (IRA), National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the International Technology Association (ITEA), the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), to name a few. Numerous teachers attend local, statewide, and national conferences in order to improve their instructional practice, including their participation in the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and the University of Connecticut's Early College Experience (ECE) workshops. Other teachers take a more informal approach to maintaining subject-area expertise, such as following education professionals on Twitter, going on site visits to other high-achieving schools, and sharing articles with colleagues. While most teachers are maintaining expertise in their content area, this practice mostly occurs on a voluntary basis.

When Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School develops and implements a specific plan for staff development that provides teachers with opportunities to be adult learners and reflective practitioners, all teachers will maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, ensuring the opportunity for all students to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott Survey, classroom observation, student shadowing, student work, teacher interviews, students, department leaders, self-study)

Commendations:

- The common belief among teachers that all students are capable and can achieve at high levels and their willingness to design their instruction accordingly

- The formal common planning time provided for teachers in grades six through nine to discuss instructional practices

- The majority of teachers who connect instructional practices with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

- The integration of appropriate technology to enhance instruction

- The frequent use of self-assessment and reflection across all content areas

- The significant extent to which teachers personalize instructional practices

- The opportunities students have to select topics for assignments and projects
- The SRBI and Student Support Center programs to support personalized learning and differentiated instructional practices
- The multiple formats in which students demonstrate their learning
- The weekly meetings of ninth grade teachers and guidance counselors to discuss student progress
- The opportunities students have to be engaged in cross-disciplinary learning
- The utilization of strategic differentiation to help individual students learn concepts and skills
- The group learning activities designed to engage students with in-depth learning and collaboration
- The keen interest of individual teachers in improving their instructional practice, seeking out professional resources to further inform their instruction
- The willingness of teachers to create opportunities to share information both on a formal and informal basis
- The principal's establishment of a voluntary professional book club
- The number and variety of professional organizations to which teachers belong

Recommendations:
- Develop and implement a plan for all teachers to regularly examine and reflect upon their practices through collaboration and peer review, and to explicitly connect those practices with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

- Increase opportunities for students to engage in rigorous problem solving and higher order thinking during instruction

- Continue to improve and enhance communication with parents to make them aware of the efforts of teachers to modify their instructional practices based on student progress in attaining the 21st century learning goals

- Institute a formal process for gathering feedback from parents and students and use this feedback to make instructional adjustments, when appropriate

Teaching and Learning Standard

4 Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

2. The school's professional staff communicates:
   - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
   - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.

3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.

5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.

6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.

8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
    - student work
    - common course and common grade-level assessments
    - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
    - standardized assessments
    - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
    - survey data from current students and alumni.

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

The professional staff of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School inconsistently utilizes school-wide rubrics to assess whole school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Although the self-study narrative states, "many informal and some formal processes guide the assessment of student progress in achieving 21st century skills" the evidence indicates that the process is informal and conducted by *some*, but not all teachers. Analytic rubrics to assess the school's academic expectations are used in whole or in part by some teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. Some teachers reported that they use rubrics for grading, but specific information about student mastery of rubric expectations but a formal process is not yet in place to include that information on report cards or in school-wide records, nor were students able to consistently articulate their progress when interviewed, especially as related to the expectations regarding problem solving and critical thinking. Many of these rubrics reflect components of the school-wide rubric and may have added modifications. When asked how rubrics are used before an assignment to instruct students, students and teachers report that the expectations for learning are introduced by teachers at the beginning of the term. Five school-wide rubrics are used to assess the Senior Project, a comprehensive project every senior must complete to graduate. Additionally, teachers in the middle school begin to prepare their students for the capstone Senior Research Project, which encapsulates all five learning expectations as outlined in the Senior Project Handbook. School-wide rubrics are used for assessing some student work but the information is not stored and/or disaggregated. Formal means of measuring whole-school achievement of 21st century learning expectations are not yet developed, with the possible exception of the capstone Senior Project. When the professional staff of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School consistently utilizes school-wide rubrics to assess whole school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, all students and their families will be informed of their progress. (self-study, teacher interviews, student interviews, student shadowing, standards committee)

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School professional staff uses a variety of media to communicate individual student progress in achieving its formal school-wide academic expectations to students and their families, but has yet to develop a means to communicate progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community. Individual student achievement of the social/civic expectations is communicated to many students and families through the Renaissance program and disciplinary blue slips. Parent and student interviews indicate familiarity with the

social/civic expectations, although students who are included in Renaissance are only those who've achieved academic and behavioral success, and disciplinary slips inform parents about rule infractions. Students show most awareness of the Senior Project learner expectations and the writing and presentation school-wide rubrics. Parents, when interviewed, indicated limited knowledge of the 21st Century Academic Expectations and school-wide rubrics, yet, the Endicott Survey indicated that 73% agree to their awareness of them. Students and parents have limited knowledge of individual achievement of school-wide academic expectations. PowerSchool, a web-based database used by the school for the past two years, allows teachers to record grades by assignment for the term, semester, and school year. A majority of teachers update student progress with frequency. However, PowerSchool and report cards are not yet configured to reflect accomplishment of school-wide learning expectations. Report Card Night, Senior Project presentations, and Welcome Back Night are used to distribute course expectations and school-wide learning expectations to parents and guardians. During the Senior Project presentation, students showcase their accomplishment of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's school-wide academic expectations and 21st century learning expectations. A monthly newsletter is distributed via email to families that provides an overview of student achievements and insight into the various learning opportunities students are given in each grade level. This practice is well received by those parents interviewed, but the connection to academic expectations is not in evidence. Upon the school use PowerSchool to record and report individual student and school progress in achieving the school's learning expectations based on the school-wide rubrics, students, parents, and the community will have a more consistent understanding of the outcomes.   (teacher interviews, administrator interviews, parent interviews, self-study, Endicott Survey)

The middle school math and reading teachers collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. The middle school teams review data as a means to determine the success of the curriculum and instruction in preparing all learners from grades six through nine. Data from the Connecticut Mastery Test was reviewed to ascertain skill gaps and inequities in student achievement in English, math and science. The review of this data occurred at the team, department, and administrative levels and was used to drive instruction, according to teachers. Reading tests administered three times throughout the year are analyzed to assess student progress in the middle school. The use of the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI-5) administered by the middle school reading specialist and English teachers serves as a baseline assessment in September to identify students with reading needs. Teacher interviews and the student panel show that the staff tracks social/civic expectations data and uses the School Wide Information System (SWIS) to disaggregate and analyze

student behavioral data. Senior Project data is collected at the conclusion of each school year, and the Senior Project Committee analyzes student presentation performances in order to maximize student achievement. This year, the principal announced a plan to use data from the Performance Series Test to determine inequities in student achievement in math and English. Professional development half days will be dedicated to a formal review by the middle school staff of the test results in order to analyze the data. The freshman team provides teachers the chance to support students' transition to high school. Part of this work is completed through collaborative analysis of student achievement results. Through this process the school collects data that helps it to address possible reasons behind inequities in student achievement. The future goal is to create an intervention program within the SRBI course schedule in order to support students whose test results indicate learning inequities. While a variety of data is collected in IEP/504 meetings, student assessments, and standardized tests, there was limited evidence to indicate that this data is tracked, disaggregated, and analyzed in a systemic way in order to respond to inequities in student achievement. When the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School faculty implements a plan to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement, students and their teachers will benefit from the information and be assured the ability to measure progress toward the school's 21st century learning expectations. (student interviews, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, self-study)

In varied, informal and inconsistent means, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. According to the self-study, the staff has been directed by administration to incorporate the 21st century learning goals on the first day of class and on "Back to School" night; however, there is no school-wide practice that includes lists of skills in each new syllabus or limited connections to learning plans. The expectations are posted on the school website and in every classroom. In some classrooms, the daily objectives for the class are posted on the board, however students are students who were shadowed, observed, or interviewed weren't clear about how the unit-specific learning goals connect to the school's 21st century learning expectations. Throughout the building, there are posters that display the school's 21st century learning expectations. As evidenced by student work samples, many teachers articulate to their students what they are expected to know and be able to do prior to a given assignment. In a history class that was observed, an outline of expectations was provided to students completing a project about immigration. However, these expectations were not explicitly connected to the applicable 21st century learning expectations.

When teachers consistently communicate to students the applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed, students will be assured the ability to achieve them. (self-study, teacher and student interviews, class observations, science curriculum)

Prior to summative assessments, teachers often provide students with corresponding rubrics. Students report that rubrics are an expected part of many classroom assessments at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. Teachers often modify these school-wide rubrics to include unit-specific expectations while assessing certain key skills. Students report that these rubrics are generally shared when teachers introduce assignments, allowing them to become familiar with how they will be assessed in advance of final grading of the work. During student shadowing and classroom observations, the committee observed numerous examples of teachers sharing rubrics in advance of summative assessments. For example, in art classes, students use a common project rubric to assess the process and product of the piece, in addition to their written reflection. Additionally, the self-study team shared numerous examples of student tests and projects that incorporated rubrics. When all teachers share corresponding rubrics in advance of summative assessments, students will more effectively understand the criteria by which they are assessed to measure their understanding of key concepts. (students, teachers, student work, self-study)

Teachers employ a range of assessments in their classroom, including both formative and summative assessments. Teachers use formative assessments regularly, such as exit tickets, warm-up activities, mini-lessons, and the use of mini whiteboards to quickly evaluate student understanding. Consistent with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, self-directed learning opportunities, such as Senior Project, are assessed across departments. Traditional assessment options are supplemented by projects, presentations, speeches, visual representations, demonstrations, lab activities, authentic writing opportunities, and group projects. The sophomore Spanish III course asks students to demonstrate their learning by first writing, then creating a video of group performing the ending to a Spanish soap opera. As a result of the variety of assessment strategies used by teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School, students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in varied modalities. (teachers, students, self-study, panel presentation, evidence box, administrators)

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School teachers, both formally and informally collaborate in team meetings to discuss student progress, behavior, data and the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. In order to facilitate teacher

collaboration with regard to assessment and the 21st century graduation expectations, grade level teams meet regularly in grades six through nine. In these meetings, teachers in English and Social Studies collaborate across curricular areas to analyze and revise their joint research paper, a common assessment in both disciplines. The majority of teachers use this time to share student work to gain feedback from their colleagues. Both high school and middle school teachers collaborate during professional development days to create, analyze and revise assessments. At monthly high school faculty meetings, program coordinators have begun to facilitate reviews of assessments by teachers, however high school teachers continue to rely on informal opportunities to meet due to lack of formal scheduling. Teachers seek out conversations with their colleagues to support their professional work with students. At the end of school in June, the Senior Project Committee meets to reassess this capstone assessment. When the faculty is provided with formal planning time, they will be able to consistently and formally collaborate to ensure the use of common assessments. (program coordinators, teachers, school leadership, self-study, panel discussion)

Teachers inconsistently provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Teachers provide timely feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Based upon classroom observations, the committee noticed that a positive rapport exists between teachers and students when assignments are returned during class. Teachers provided feedback that allowed a student to make revisions that support the expectations of the assignment. At Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School assessment feedback is timely, as indicated in the Endicott survey in which 63.8% of students report that teachers return work in a reasonable amount of time. Upon examination of student work, however, evidence was limited in terms of work returned to students providing adequate constructive feedback to help students understand how to revise their work, or those that would guide a student to improve his or her performance. When corrective feedback is utilized more consistently in classrooms, students will be assured the ability to revise and improve their assignments to progress toward achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (evidence bins, student interviews, classroom observations)

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School teachers use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. According to the self-study, teachers provide feedback through many different types of formative assessments. For example, research papers are first submitted in draft form so that students can revise and resubmit. In interviews, several teachers indicated the use of exit slips. Homework is also used as a formative assessment. Many teachers

scaffold assignments to give their students opportunities to practice skills and revise drafts in order to increase their competencies, develop their skills, and demonstrate growing analytical understanding. The seventh grade English and social studies teachers utilize formative and summative data to identify student-learning difficulties in writing. They created a collaborative process, in the form of a common electronic folder, to collect and assess data about identified weaknesses. Through this process, students are supported in both content and writing skills, including skills such as organization and language conventions.

While preparing students to complete their Senior Project, teachers, especially social studies and English teachers in grades nine through eleven, assign work which allows students to develop research skills, practice presentation skills, and create visual presentations, as they continue to develop analytical, writing, and presentation skills. In one class, junior English students presented their analyses of allusions chosen from the class text, *Fahrenheit 451,* and presented visual representations of the source of the allusion. Through this visual presentation, students linked the past to the present and reflected on the learning that resulted from this comparison.

As a result of formative assessments used by teachers to give students an opportunity to reflect upon and revise their work, students have an opportunity to grow in their skill development. (observations, student work, self-study, teacher interviews)

Most teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of student data for the purpose of improving instructional practice. However, as stated in the self-study, no formal process exists to document this process or how it is used to revise curriculum. Examination of student work happens informally in many departments throughout the school. One example of how student work is examined is the student writing folder. Beginning in the sixth grade, students create a folder of writing samples that will follow them through twelfth grade. These folders, which contain mostly summative assessments, are passed on to the student's next English teacher in grades seven through twelve. The data individual teachers gather from these examples of student work help shape their instruction to plan grammar lessons, thesis development workshops, and vocabulary building activities. In teacher interviews these writing folders are referenced as a valuable resource to improve instruction and monitor student progress towards achieving 21st century learning expectations, which culminates in the Senior Project. Interviewing administration, both the principal and assistant principal discussed how they are actively involved in assessing data from recent standardized test scores to initiate implementation of a

more organized support system utilizing the SRBI class.   Collaborating with teachers, their goal is to use this student learning data to target students who need more instructional support in order to achieve the school's academic 21st century learning expectations. During the 2013-2014 school year, professional development time was dedicated to the planning and development of the Science and Music curriculum, however, once again there was no evidence of the examination of student work being used to drive changes in curriculum. While teachers consistently indicate in the self-study report, group meetings, and individual interviews that student learning is examined to revise curriculum practices, limited evidence exists to confirm this anecdotal practice. Currently, data is collected to track colleges and other programs seniors will be attending after graduation, however, the school has not utilized data from sending schools or survey data from current students and alumni for the purpose of revising curriculum. When a formal process in place to link examination of student work with the curriculum revision process, students will be assured access to successfully achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teachers, self-study, administrators)

Grading and reporting practices are reviewed and revised but their alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning has not yet been formalized. In the last year, a school-wide grading initiative was implemented when the online program PowerSchool was introduced. While the implementation of this grading tool may have increased conversation about assessment practices and given the school community access to grades daily, the grading portal and report card include are not yet connected to how the student's academic achievement is aligned to the school's core values and beliefs. In the self-study, it is reported that discussion has begun regarding incorporating the social and civil expectations into report cards. In teacher interviews, there was inconsistent validation of this information, and the group of teachers who were able to discuss this was a small group of teachers who are currently reading *Grading Smarter, Not Harder* by Myron Dueck. In interviews, teachers consistently state that school-wide rubrics or modified school-wide rubrics are used to assess summative and formative assessments in every discipline. In the reviewing of fifty examples of student work from 2012-13, five used school-wide rubrics to assess student performance, one used a modified school-wide rubric, and eight used a checklist that did not demonstrate alignment with the school wide rubric. The remaining samples did not include rubrics. Calibration of rubrics across disciplines and between grade levels was not in evidence. There was limited evidence that common assessments and common rubrics are used to ensure that grading practices are consistent within subjects and respective departments. In one example, the two Spanish teachers in the high school use a common midterm. Classroom

observations and teacher interviews indicated that common assessments are also used in the high school art program; however, it does not appear that this occurs system-wide. While the school community agrees that report cards, the parent portal, and summative assessments are regularly used, there is no formal process in place to review, revise, and ensure consistent alignment of grading practices to the school wide learning expectations.

When a formal process is put in place to review, revise and ensure alignment of grading practices to the school wide learning expectations, student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations may be consistently achieved. (teachers, parents, self-study, panel presentation)

Commendations:
- The effort of individual teachers to utilize rubrics to assess student work
- The consistent use of the school-wide rubrics in the assessing individual student progress on the Senior Project
- The purposeful communication to students and families regarding social/civic expectations and their ability to positively impact the school culture via the Renaissance program and other initiatives.
- The communication about and the integration of the Senior Project school-wide rubric in all grades, resulting in seniors who are well-versed in the application of the rubric
- The efforts of the six through nine grade level teams to collect data and discuss how it can be used to inform instruction
- Clearly visible posters in every classroom which state the core values, school wide goals, and 21st learning expectations established
- The consistent use of rubrics by some teachers to inform students of their learning goals before summative assessments
- The use of a variety of assessments to demonstrate student learning, including the experiential learning that takes place in the Senior Project
- The formal and consistent collaboration of six through nine grade level teams during common planning and team time
- The timely manner in which Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School teachers return assignments with appropriate feedback to their students
- The variety of formative assessments used to develop student skills

- The teachers' practice of scaffolding assignments which enables students to practice their skills and correct their work
- The development of an electronic portfolio by middle school teachers
- The informal efforts of teachers to examine student work individually and collaboratively to drive changes in instructional practices
- The cumulative writing portfolio that includes student work from grade six through the culmination of grade 12

Recommendations:

- Create and implement a formal process of modifying and solidifying the school wide rubrics used in Senior Research Project throughout the middle and high school
- Create a formal, ongoing process in which teachers assess individual student progress and directly tie that progress with achievement of the school wide learning expectations
- Use formal and consistent communication with students, parents, and the community at large to provide specific references to student and school achievement of the school-wide academic expectations
- Create and implement a systemic protocol to communicate the applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed
- Ensure that formative assessment practices such as those described above are contained in all new curricula.
- Develop and implement a plan to ensure that all teachers in grades ten through twelve have scheduled time to create, analyze and revise formal and informal assessment
- Ensure that all students are provided students meaningful opportunities to revise their work based on specific and corrective feedback
- Develop and implement a formal process by which student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni are used to drive changes in curriculum and instructional practices
- Revise grading and reporting practices to reflect the alignment between the school-wide rubrics, student achievement, and the 21st century learning expectations

SUPPORT STANDARDS

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

5 School Culture and Leadership

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

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

2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).

3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.

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

7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.

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

9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.

11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School consciously and continuously builds safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. Students and parents receive a handbook at the beginning of each year, which identifies the schools core values and beliefs, academic expectations, and social/civic expectations. This resource also includes information about *The History of the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School and Library,* providing stakeholders a common frame of reference regarding the rich history of the school.

Universally, stakeholders communicate pride in their school. According to the Endicott survey 85% of students report feeling safe. Students report pride in their ability to regulate their behavior and teachers report handling the majority of behavioral concerns in the classroom. When necessary, teachers can fill out a behavior form known as the *blue form* to address discipline concerns. The form includes categories such as *Behavior, Classroom Intervention, Possible Motivation, Behavioral Expectations not Met* that relate to Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's social/civic expectations. This data is then collected and inputted into an online database, the School-Wide Information System (SWIS), allowing school leaders and the staff to analyze and improve school climate. One such review of discipline data led to the installation of security cameras in the hallways and the tunnel. This resulted in a reduction of discipline infractions in those areas.

When a major issue arises in the school, the principal addresses the faculty and students to express concern and to ensure communication is direct and consistent. The principal has called emergency faculty meetings to inform and involve teachers in decision making related to issues such as family crises or serious student concerns. It is reported that virtually all staff members attend these emergency meetings.

The school purposefully develops programs to build upon the already strong sense of community that exists in this tight-knit setting. Middle and high school advisory groups meet bi-weekly in all grades, and, beginning in the 2012-13school year, the high school advisory groups have teamed with the middle school for some team-building activities. Advisory topics are designed to support the school's core values and social/civic expectations and include relationship building, empathy, communication, and problem solving. In addition to a number of well-attended after-school athletic and co-curricular activities, students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of clubs and events grades six through

twelve that meet during the school day. Further, the Renaissance program motivates students to succeed academically, and to demonstrate Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's four pillars of positive social/civic behavior: *Respect, Honesty, Safety and Responsibility.* In addition, National Honor Society provides recognition and development for its junior and senior members who exemplify academic achievement, leadership, service, and character. There are numerous other opportunities for students to contribute to and benefit from the positive school climate including the daily morning show, The Positive Health in Teens Organization (PHIT), and through guest speakers promoting safety and tolerance. The school's adoption of a positive parent outreach goal in 2012-13, in which teachers are required to contact parents for positive affirmation on a monthly basis, further enhanced the school climate according to teacher reports. School-wide reading programs, *One Book One Summer* for grades six through eight and *One Book One Region* for grades nine through twelve unite faculty and staff in common conversations and activities. Most notably, through the senior project, the entire school community unites in support of students by asking them to demonstrate their learning in an authentic and meaningful way.

As a result of the purposeful and continuous development of a safe, positive, respectful and supportive culture, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's students demonstrate pride, shared ownership and believe in their ability to succeed. (self-study, students, teachers, panel presentation, facility tour, parents, school leadership, student handbook, program of studies, Endicott Survey)

The school is equitable, inclusive, and, in many ways, fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core courses. The program of studies indicates that virtually all middle school courses and all high school electives are heterogeneously grouped. At the high school, every student is required to take the following heterogeneous courses: Civics (.5 credits), Invest in Yourself (.5 credits) and World Languages (2 credits). However, in high school the majority of core courses (ELA, Social Studies, Math, & Science) are grouped homogeneously into the following levels: general, academic, honors, and, for some upper level courses-Advanced Placement. There have been minor fluctuations in grouping practices in recent years. In 2012-13 the general chemistry class in grade eleven was eliminated to increase heterogeneity but reinstated the following year due to feedback from teachers. Beginning in 2014-15, the general level was removed from grade eleven ELA and social studies. Currently, there is no evidence of a formal process that regularly reviews grouping practices using current research and best practices.

A small number of students with Individual Educational Plans (IEP) in the high school and the middle school. These students are supported by four special education teachers (two at each school), and nine paraprofessionals that provide various supports in and out of class for these students. There are sixteen students at the high school with learning plans under the Americans with Disabilities Act (504 plans) and thirteen at the middle school. A very small number of high school and middle school students have been identified as English Language Learner (ELL). A community volunteer along with two literacy teachers provide supports to these students. An English teacher is in the process of obtaining her master's degree in ELL with the monetary support of the school district to enhance this support. The special education director reports that all IEP students are required to meet the same academic requirements as their peers. Individualized support is provided as part of the Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) block, and additional support is provided in the student study center, study skills course and homework club. In addition, there are some courses in which special education teachers or paraprofessionals are assigned to provide immediate support. Special education teachers provide a smaller number of students with direct support in math and ELA as part of the SRBI block. Recently, a reading specialist was added at the high school to further support the needs of the students.

As a result of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's equitable, inclusive and heterogeneous practices, all students have access to the school's learning expectations. (self-study, school leadership, teacher interviews, program of studies, student interviews)

Primarily through the advisory program, there is a formal, on-going program and process which effectively ensures each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The advisory program provides every student the opportunity to feel safe, known, heard and respected. It facilitates caring relationships based on open communication, trust and respect. All middle and high school teachers and students are involved. Students meet bimonthly, working in mixed grade level groups (grades six through eight or grades nine through twelve). On occasion, middle and high school groups combine. The associate principal leads a committee of staff that develops the curriculum, who aligned all topics to the school's social/civic expectations. For example, there is a session on bullying tied to the theme of respect; a "Giveback Day" supporting the responsibility expectation and scenarios and role-play that promote that of honesty. In one advisory session, both the

students and teacher were observed sharing stories related to personal loss in an open, supportive, and family-like environment.

Advisory is also the vehicle through which students develop their Student Success Plans (SSP's) Separate meetings are planned for goal development, a mid-year review, and a final reflection. Students develop goals in the categories of academic, career, personal growth, and health and wellness.

In addition to the advisory and the numerous informal ways that faculty gets to know their students, including through athletic programs and the numerous clubs that meet during the advisory block bringing students and teachers together. The clubs tap into a variety of student interests and include Greenhouse, Adventure, and Oxfam club. The vast majority of students and the majority of faculty participate in these club activities.

As a result of the school's programs and processes that link students and staff, students at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School benefit from personalized assistance in meeting the school's learning expectations. (self-study, students, teachers, facility tour, teacher interview, community members, school leadership, program of studies; observations, advisory handbook and schedule)

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. Teachers use resources outside the school to remain current in their fields and to continue to use best practices in the classroom setting, dedicate formal time to implement professional development, and the principal and staff apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. There is a collaborative spirit of reflection and inquiry that exists in the faculty seen in both formal and informal conversations. Formal opportunities to reflect and analyze teaching and learning are most widespread in grades six through nine where collaboration occurs regularly, formally and in interdisciplinary teams. These groups meet once per week amongst themselves and another time with guidance counselors and administration to support student learning. Teachers report that informal conversations about teaching and learning are a regular part of the culture including in grades ten through twelve due to limited formal common planning opportunities.

School leaders encourage and support teachers to attend professional workshops and conferences including the National Science Teachers Association, Connecticut Science Teacher Convention, The State Education Resource Center (SERC), CT Music Educators Association, International Reading

Association, National Association of School Psychologists, Connecticut Association of School Librarians, Connecticut Council for the Social Studies. The leadership team reports a move towards a coaching model where out-of-district experts train or work directly alongside Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School staff. This is scheduled to occur in math this school year. Program coordinators have begun to play a role in the selection of professional development, though a full teaching schedule limits their ability to deliver trainings themselves. In addition, to remain current in their fields, the staff regularly reads educational literature. The leadership team, including program coordinators, for example, has read *Cage-Busting Leadership* by Frederick Hess; the counseling department has received a copy of *How Children Succeed*, and fifteen members of the school's book club are reading *Grading Smarter Not Harder* by Myron Dueck.

During the school day, grades six through nine teachers meet in teams twice a week. Once per week grade level teams meet amongst themselves to discuss improvement strategies and at other times meet with school leaders and guidance personnel. School-wide time is allotted through monthly faculty meetings, two shortened faculty development days; and a total of five professional development days where teachers attend in-house professional development or go out-of-district to attend regional professional development conferences. Program coordinators have begun to use content based meeting times to review student work with teachers and facilitate opportunities for professional development. In grades ten through twelve, formal opportunities are limited, but there have been efforts to provide substitutes to facilitate collaboration among departments, and the alignment of lunch schedules has provided limited opportunities for reflection.

The principal and associate principal cooperate with all stakeholders to develop a Theory of Action that describes annual actions and strategies to bring about system-wide improvement. Classroom observations and interviews with teachers reveal that teachers are implementing a variety of approaches gained from professional development, whether related to the common core, differentiated instruction, or questioning techniques. (self-study, teacher interview, school leadership, program of studies,)

School leaders at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improving student learning. The new research-based evaluation framework, The Connecticut System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED), is designed to consider multiple standards-based measures of performance, promote professional judgment and consistency, foster dialogue about student learning, and encourage aligned professional development,

coaching and feedback. The principal and associate principal perform all of the formal observations and write all the observation reports for staff, with the exception of special education teachers who are evaluated by the Director of Special Education. Teachers receive constructive feedback throughout the evaluation process. Teachers have reported rich dialogue with school leaders following both formal and informal observations. For example, a teacher reported developing a student-learning objective based on the feedback provided by her principal in a post-conference. As part of this process, teachers submit lesson plans and thus reflect with school leaders about the implementation of the curriculum. School leaders make it a point to be visible in classrooms and hallways and to walk through classes regularly. Teachers widely report the visibility of the principal and associate principal as a strength and welcome their feedback.

Further, teachers are reporting an increase in gathering data as a tool in the improvement of student learning. To help staff become more versed in the new evaluation system including the development of data-driven student learning outcomes (SLOs), school leadership has devoted substantial professional development time to help teachers develop their SLOs. Teachers report the former professional development committee shifted its purpose and has essentially become the new evaluation committee and assisted school leaders in providing that training.

As both the evaluation tool and the school leadership's theory of action are in their early stages of implementation, there is limited documented evidence at this time that whole-school initiatives are being instituted as result of the system.

When Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School completes the implementation of the new evaluation system and other school wide initiatives, these programs will be provide avenues to improve instructional practices and improve student learning. (interviews, teachers, school leadership, self-study)

The organization of time generally supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers and the learning needs of all students. A teacher-led committee recently completed a two-year study of the master schedule with specific consideration to changing to a block schedule. The committee, made up only of teachers and under the oversight of a retired administrator, visited schools within the neighboring communities to examine their master schedules. The feedback obtained from these visits was utilized to determine if block scheduling was possible and appropriate for Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. Prior to this, the school schedules were stagnant; the same periods met

every day at the same time. As a result of the study the master schedule was changed but a block schedule was not adopted. There are 3 separate master schedules (6th - 7th grade, 8th grade, and a high school schedule). The middle school schedules have allotted a minimum of 40 minutes of instructional time for each of the four core courses, two electives and one SRBI block while the high school has allotted a minimum of forty-eight minutes for seven courses per day. In addition to meeting the academic needs of the students, all three schedules afford enhanced personalization and the opportunity to develop their social/civic expectations through a breakfast break, a morning show, advisory, and club/activity time. In addition, the middle school schedules allow students a daily, structured support period (SRBI). There is also opportunity for middle school students to use this SRBI time to take high school virtual online courses for credit. In the high school, students can use the student study center, independent study courses, and after school time to work on virtual courses and receive support.

Some teachers from the block schedule committee reported a major challenge in creating the new master schedules was to account for when the band teacher leaves between 10:15 and 12:30 to provide instruction at the elementary school. As a result of this challenge, this time frame is exactly the same every day on all 3 master schedules, allowing limited flexibility in the use of this time.
Teacher schedules allow for twice-weekly collaborative time for grade six through nine teachers including elective teachers when possible. Administration reports they participate in one of the two weekly team meetings. Though a formal process for reviewing student data and driving these discussions does not yet exist, most teachers report they use this time to talk about instructional and assessment strategies within their classrooms and student performance. Decisions are made at this time on student supports and interventions. Also, several teachers report meeting informally as the schedule allows (ie. lunch period) and on their own time to discuss these same topics.

In grades six through eleven there is an interdisciplinary/cross curricular learning activity between ELA and social studies. Other opportunities for this are done on an individual teacher basis but there is limited formal, structured time in the schedule for all grade levels.

Some high school students have reported challenges with fitting elective courses into their schedules because of the number of required credits for graduation (twenty-five) and the limitations of available course sections. Students can fill these gaps with virtual on-line classes.

When the utilization of time is adjusted to allow common planning time for all of the high school teachers, the staff will be increasingly able to meet the needs of all students using research-based instructional practices. (interviews, panel presentations, self-study, documents/reports, school leadership panel, central office administration)

Student load and class size effectively enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. According to the Endicott survey, the vast majority of students (86.7%), teachers (90.3%) and parents (87.7 %) agree that student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. The average class size is fourteen students for both the middle and high school, however, some course sections are in the twenties. These higher numbers are a reflection of student scheduling challenges. The average student load per teacher is seventy-three students. Many teachers report that because of their reasonable class sizes they are able to re-teach as necessary in small groups without disrupting the entire lesson plan or class focus. The students in the Honors, Early College Experience (ECE) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses are reported to be self-directed learners and require less individualized instructional support. The general level courses have fewer students enrolled and are taught at a pace designed to accommodate individual learning needs. In some general level courses there are special education teachers and/or paraprofessionals who assist all students in the class. This allows for extensive personalized instruction to address individual learning needs. As a result of student load and class size the learning needs of individual students within and across the content areas are being meet. (Endicott Survey, Self Study, Class Observations, Student Shadowing)

The principal, working with other school leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Both the principal and the associate principal are new to their leadership roles. They see themselves as co-educational leaders. They hold themselves to high expectations focused on student success. Both provide educational leadership for the school through teacher observations and conferences, review and approve professional growth plans and student learning objectives. Furthermore, all-important decisions are made through a collaborative effort of the school and district leadership in conjunction with the school board. They collaborate within their building to set the agenda and focus of professional development and common planning time. For example, with the implementation of SEED professional development has been provided to most teachers on differentiated instructional strategies and effective questioning techniques. It was reported that in 2013-2014 several teachers focused their professional growth goals on these items utilizing

articles on best practices to help guide their growth. This year fifteen of forty-four teachers are participating in a book club as they collaboratively read *Grading Smarter Not Harder* by Myron Dueck.

Students at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School are very proud of being "Lions". School spirit is celebrated through Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Spirit Week, Homecoming, and Renaissance events. There is also a great sense of pride among students and faculty and staff members. Many of the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School community are alumni of the high school and report regularly participating and attending Lions events, further supporting a continuing, positive culture at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. Students take ownership and pride in the multitude of organizations and clubs active at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. These activities, clubs, organizations, and sports are overseen by faculty, staff, and in some cases, community member volunteers. Student academic achievement is regularly acknowledged and celebrated through various honors celebrations as well as receipt of awards. Teachers and staff members report consistently showing their appreciation for their students and celebrate all successes. There are established events such as the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Senior Honors Night, Undergraduate End-of-Year celebration, Eighth Grade Promotion Breakfast, and the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony. Students are able to become part of the school beyond their academic requirements and promote success in achieving the 21st century learning expectations. The majority of high school students state that they know what is expected of them to achieve the 21st century learning expectations as directly related to the senior project. They speak to the primary focus on reading, writing and speaking effectively but are unable to articulate the connection to how they are assessed on critical thinking and problem solving. Many middle school students have reported they understand the social/civic expectations essential to advisory topics and enrollment in the Renaissance program. However, these students reported knowing that they have to complete a senior project to graduate but express limited knowledge of the academic expectations. The vast majority of students report having ample support to be successful.

Teachers have reported that the recent turnover in school administration has left them in flux; however, they expressed confidence in the new administration and look forward to building cohesiveness and consistency in carrying out the mission and core values.

As the principal continues to work collaboratively toward the shared vision to carry out the mission and core values, all students will be assured the ability to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (handbooks, interviews, panel meetings, self-study)

While many teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promotes responsibility and ownership, there is limited involvement by students, and parents. According to the Endicott Survey, 87% of staff members feel they play a meaningful role in decision-making, while 72% of parents and only 57.9% of students believe they have opportunities to be involved in important decisions made at the school, and 22% are undecided. Many students and teachers report that the principal has an open door policy. The principal feels it is vital to be visible throughout the building and to continuously communicate with her constituents in person as well as electronically through emails, school newsletters and other items on the school websites. Formal mechanisms are also in place to facilitate communication which include school board meetings and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The self-study indicates very few parents and students attend meetings or participate on committees when invited.

In recent years, a few students have presented to the school board about potential changes to their school. One specific change was the electronic device policy. As a result of the student presentation a new bring your own device policy (BYOD) was adopted. In addition, some students have worked on changing the advisory structure with administration. This resulted in a rotational advisory schedule that now allows all students greater access to clubs and activities during the school day. Most recently some students are working on a healthy foods committee. As a result of their feedback, the food service provider has changed some of the food and meal options available in the cafeteria.

When student and parent involvement in meaningful and defined roles are increased the school culture, greater responsibility and ownership will result and improve the overall educational experience of the students and strengthen the community commitment to the schools core values and beliefs. (self-study, panel presentations, handbooks, website, interviews with teachers, students, parents)

Teachers who are interested take initiative on issues or committees and demonstrate the leadership essential to the improvement of the school and increase students' engagement in learning.
Within the last year, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School has instituted three new program coordinators in Unified Arts, Humanities, and STEM. As this is a new position, their job duties and responsibilities are evolving. Currently they are working as liaisons between the teachers and school

administration on scheduling, content-driven professional development, and department meetings. Teachers lead committees such as Positive Behavioral Interventions System (PBIS), School Climate Committee, Block Schedule Committee and Renaissance Team. Teachers drive professional development opportunities through their input to administration. Recognizing a need for additional training and instructional materials, some teachers report they have made informal requests through the program coordinators, the principal and, in some instances, directly to the superintendent and the school board. Several teachers have reported that their professional development opportunities have been greatly expanded and the new technology and textbooks are allowing them to improve their teaching and learning practices and student engagement. For example in the last two years three ELL students joined the student body. An English teacher has requested and will be receiving certification in order to better support these students.

Another way in which teachers show initiative and leadership is through their involvement beyond the classroom. Most teachers at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School volunteer to oversee numerous student clubs and activities both during the school day and afterschool hours. These programs include but are not limited to Senior Project, Book Club, Debate Club, Declamation Club, Drama, GSA, National Honor Society, Oxfam, Ski Club, Yearbook, Greenhouse, and Chess Club.

Because teachers exercise initiative and leadership in their schools, there is a strong school climate that supports all students in their growth and development. (Interviews, self-study, program of studies, school/district website)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are fully collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school board, superintendent, and principal have an effective and cooperative relationship. Weekly communication between the superintendent and the principal to review issues of concern encompassing everything from individual student/family needs to equipment repairs. This relationship, guided by a strong sense of community, demonstrates mutual respect and investment in the common good of all students.

The administrative team, led by the superintendent, made various public presentations to the school board and community about various topics, initiatives, and programs aligned to the school's core values and beliefs. Recently, the superintendent and the principal presented to the school board and community groups the need to increase technology in the classrooms (iPads, Smartboards, wide wireless access) as well as the need for a math specialist at the elementary level and a reading specialist at the MS/HS level.

The school board, in collaboration with an outside funding source, approved and implemented new technology throughout the building.   In addition, the budget was increased by 4.9% to allow for the addition of these faculty positions. The ability of the school board, superintendent and the school administration to carry out components of the school's core values and beliefs have been inconsistent due to budgetary restrictions. The school board, at the recommendation of the superintendent, has hired an outside consultant to help the district work toward overcoming these challenges.

When new/additional funding resources are allocated and community support becomes more consistent greater opportunities for all students to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations will be available. (interviews, facilities tour, panel presentations, school board meeting minutes)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with extensive decision-making authority to lead the school. The school's core values and beliefs and a strong conviction of the importance of supporting students in their achievement of the 21st century learning expectations guide the principal's leadership. The superintendent expresses confidence and trust in the principal's ability to lead every step of the way.

The principal leads her staff in teaching and learning in collaboration with the support of an associate principal. Together they oversee discipline, conduct teacher evaluations, supervise teaching and learning through those evaluation components. The principal also provides substantial input about school budget utilization. In previous years the school budget was combined for both the middle and senior high school. This year is the first year that the budget has been divided between the two schools. The principal reports this is allowing for better control over where and how the funds are spent.

The principal has been given full authority by the superintendent and by the board to make important decisions for the school. Both central office personnel and teachers attest that the principal is granted almost every request she presents for approval on their behalf. Most recently the principal has been approved professional development for math teachers in a common core-coaching model; new textbooks in English Language Arts that are aligned to common core have been instituted; and a change in the master schedule has been implemented this year.

Because the principal enjoys autonomy in decision-making in the school and shares responsibility and transparency in decision-making with other administrators and teachers, the ownership of the core values and 21st century learning expectations can be shared by all stakeholders, improving the school

climate and promoting stability across the board. (interviews, panel presentations, self-study, school board meeting minutes)

Commendations:

- The pride in Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School school, reported by the vast majority of stakeholders, that fosters a safe, supportive, positive culture for student success in completing their 21st century learning expectations
- The commitment and continuous dedication of a proud staff that has resulted in many opportunities beyond the classroom for the students to enhance their school experience
- The positive impact of the Renaissance Program
- The formal adoption of a parent outreach program
- The multiple opportunities for students to be in heterogeneous courses in a variety of electives
- The district's funding of an ELL teacher
- The development of the individual Student Success Plan in the advisory program
- The advisory program which allows each student to have an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well
- The additional opportunities during the school day for students to build relationship with other adults through their participation in clubs and activities
- The noticeable efforts of the principal and associate principal to work toward a collaborative learning environment focused on student success
- The ongoing acknowledgment of student success
- The pride students exhibit for the school
- The significant leadership roles the teachers assume in order to ensure that students are supported academically and personally
- The positive impact of the adoption of the administrators' Theory of Action
- The visibility of the building administrators in classroom visits/observations
- The commitment by administration to provide teachers with the opportunities and funding to participate in professional development
- The effective use of professional development concepts and knowledge gained in classroom instruction
- The allotted time in the master schedule for the students to develop their social/civic expectations
- The favorable student load and class sizes that allow teachers to meet the needs of all students
- The various opportunities for teachers to demonstrate decision-making authority

- The significant efforts of the teachers in ensuring that students are supported academically and personally
- The willingness of teachers to use their personal time to support students
- The strong, supportive, collaborative relationship between the school board, superintendent and the principal
- The effective leadership of the superintendent

Recommendations:
- Assess the impact of the initiatives intended to create positive school culture
- Increase heterogeneity in core courses consistent with research-based best practices
- Ensure the alignment of professional development to school-wide goals
- Collect data about the impact the new evaluation system on improving teacher effectiveness and student performance and use this data for possible revision
- Complete the Theory of Action in order to establish a direction for Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School
- Provide formal opportunities for teachers within the same discipline and across disciplines (specifically in grades ten through twelve) to collaboratively review, develop, and implement research-based instructional activities and cross-curricular educational opportunities
- Provide specific mechanisms for both students and parents to be more involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making
- Provide opportunities for the community to learn more about and support the needs of the school.
- Continue to align the budget to a process that ensures alignment with 21st century learning goals

Support Standard

6   School Resources for Learning

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.

3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
    ▪ deliver a written, developmental program
    ▪ meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
    ▪ engage in individual and group meetings with all students
    ▪ deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
    ▪ use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
    ▪ provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
    ▪ use an appropriate referral process
    ▪ conduct ongoing student health assessments
    ▪ use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
    ▪ are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
    ▪ provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
    ▪ ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
    ▪ are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
    ▪ conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

7.   Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:

-   collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
-   provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
-   perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School has timely, coordinated and directive intervention strategies for students, including identified and at risk students, that support most student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Identified students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) and 504 accommodation plans have case managers (a special education teacher or school counselor, respectively) who monitor their academic, disciplinary and attendance records and intervene when necessary.

The SRBI tiered support/intervention system is served by two primary groups: weekly school counselor meetings and the Student Intervention Team (SIT). Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School teachers hold team meetings two days a week to discuss students in grades six through nine. One of these two meetings each week is designated a school counselor meeting, which is attended by a school counselor, administrator, school psychologist and social worker in addition to the teacher team. Students in grades ten through twelve who are identified through disciplinary, attendance and/or academic concerns are addressed by the SIT. SIT meets as needed after school and is attended by support staff, student teachers and an administrator. Most interviews indicated that the school counselor meeting was a far more effective intervention tool, partially because it met more regularly and partially because it emphasizes team based solutions.

Renaissance is a program that rewards positive performance and behavior. Students who maintain academic and behavioral standards are honored. Those who regularly violate behavioral (including attendance) standards are referred to either the school counselor meeting or SIT. The school may refer truant students under age sixteen to the North Stonington Juvenile Review Board. The Student Study Center and Homework Club are examples of resources available for students to utilize on an as-needed basis. In addition, all middle school students have an SRBI block built into their school schedule. In case of emergency, the social worker facilitates a crisis response team. When a student is identified as at risk, the school psychologist or social worker may meet with him/her on a regular basis. The social worker coordinates fundraising efforts to assist needy students and families within the community.

A majority of staff (95.2%), parents (76.5%) and students (58.2%) agree that the school has timely and coordinated strategies to meet the needs of all students. Due to Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students grades ten through

twelve, identified and at risk students, all students have the ability to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, self-study, panel presentation, teachers, parents, observations, students)

The school frequently provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. According to Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Self-Study Report, 79% of parents report that the school provides information about available student services to all families. At the beginning of the school year, introductory newsletters are sent to parents from both the administration and school counselors. Throughout the school year, parents are able to use PowerSchool to view their student's homework assignments and grades. Support services have the opportunity to provide information to parents in the weekly newsletter published by the associate principal. Remind 101, a digital communication tool, is used by the eighth grade team and various other teachers to send texts to students and parents with important information about school activities and upcoming events. The six through twelve advisors also publish a weekly newsletter. Counselors and administration maintain Facebook pages and the Health/PE department initiated a Twitter account this year. In addition, school counselors have pertinent information available on their school website page and, along with the Special Education Teachers, keep in touch with parents via email and parent meetings. Because the school maintains a channel of communication with parents, families are aware of support services available to them. (PowerSchool, weekly newsletter, school counselor website, subcommittee meeting)

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School support services use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. The nurse utilizes PowerSchool to notify teachers of pertinent medical conditions and related instructions. Special education teachers maintain student IEPs using the web-based IEP Direct program. The special education department utilizes a variety of assistive technologies to help students meet their 21st century learning objectives. For example, Kurzweil and Book Share are utilized to read text to students while Dragon-Naturally Speaking translates student speech into text in a Word document. The school counselors utilize the demographic and academic information stored in PowerSchool to better guide and individualize their services for students. Counselors use RediStep and My CollegeQuickstart to help students plan academic and career goals. The school counseling secretary maintains the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) a database of disciplinary records for all students. School counselors use the data to proactively address student behavioral concerns. School counselors maintain a portion of the school website as well as a Facebook page. They use these sites to impart important information about their services and upcoming events.

The Library/Media Center has an array of technologies to assist students in their educational endeavors. Some examples include books on compact disks for students who are better auditory learners and a Spanish version of the online World Book Encyclopedia for ELL students and those taking Spanish at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School. According to the Endicott Survey, 71.9% of students believe that the media center provides a sufficient range of material and technology for student use.

Counselors noted that Student Success Plans (SSPs) and college/career planning could benefit from technology usage. Software applications might allow for more efficient college and career exploration and make the college application process more efficient. When Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School support services utilize technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student, all students will be ensured access to their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, panel discussion, district technology report, school website, Endicott Survey)

Certified/licensed support staff at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School deliver an appropriate developmental program that provides personal, academic, career and college counseling to students. Counselors also deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers. They recognize the need for greater use of ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Two school counselors serve all students in grades six through twelve. While the counselors work together to provide services to students in grades six through twelve, each counselor's caseload is developed to ensure all students have a consistent counselor for grades nine through twelve. One school-counseling secretary serves the counseling staff, one school psychologist, and one district social worker. Endicott Survey results state that 91.9% of staff and 76.5% of parents believe the school has sufficient certified/licensed counseling personnel and support staff.

School counselors deliver a written, comprehensive developmental guidance program to students. There is a recognized time frame regarding when counselors cover specific topics in classroom lessons and/or evening presentations. School counselors meet with students individually and in the classroom. Counselors report at least one meeting with their students each year and most students several times, in

addition to the developmental guidance lessons delivered in the classroom. However, this statement is not supported by the Endicott Survey results, in which 60% of students reported that they do not meet with their school counselor regularly. The new administration addressed this concern by adding an additional counselor and by reconfiguring counseling services in September of 2014.

School counselors, in collaboration with the school psychologist and social worker, maintain connections with local community and mental health agencies. They participate in periodic in-service training regarding crisis response. Referrals are made North Stonington Juvenile Review Board in cases of truancy. When outside resources are unavailable, the department makes the best of in-house resources, such as the food pantry started by the school social worker.

There has been limited use of parent and student surveys (paper and e-mail) to improve services, which has led to some positive programmatic changes. One example of this is the Transition Night for fifth grade parents. Survey results from this evening allowed counselors to revise the program. Counselors report a desire to utilize a more formalized system to monitor stakeholder feedback and growth. When counseling services are coordinated to include all students in a relevant and meaningful way, all students will be assured the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Self-study, student shadowing, teacher interview, teachers, students, parents, school support staff, Endicott survey)

The school's health services are staffed by an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services. Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School is staffed with one full time nurse (7.5 hours a day) and one part-time health aid (3.25 hours a day) to meet the needs of approximately 400 students and 75 staff members. The nurse reports to the special services director, and is a member of the Crisis Intervention Team and the Emergency Management Committee. The health services department provides mandated training to staff for topics such as blood borne pathogen. They send out posters to teachers via email to promote wellness behaviors such as hand washing and reminders regarding flu shots to post in the classrooms. The health services department posts information on the school website about health forms, physicals, and health and wellness information. They also communicate to parents via the weekly newsletter that is published by the Associate Principal and send informational letters home when there is a specific health concern in the district. Teachers can obtain important medical information about their students through medical alerts in PowerSchool. The health services department conducts state mandated student health assessments on a regular basis and maintains student health records. The nurse worked with the sixth

grade class to educate the students about self-care and counsels students on individual basis regarding interventions related to a variety of health concerns. They also work individually with students on their senior projects when their topics are connected to a health related field. According to the self-study and conversations with the health services staff, nurses are trained to make appropriate intervention referrals and work with parents and community agencies to provide support services to students and families that go above and beyond what they can provide within the district. The facility is adequate with a private area for students who are not feeling well and an enclosed office for private discussions. There is a restroom available for students that is shared with the main office staff. Data is collected and reported to administration regarding absences and students services on a monthly basis. Since there is a sufficient amount of health services, staff, teachers and students have adequate access to preventative and intervention services. When the health services department reaches out to staff, families and students requesting feedback on the quality of their services, they will have the data necessary to further enhance their service to their school community. (monthly report, website, visit with health services staff)

Library media services are integrated into the curriculum and instructional practice and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. The Library Media Specialist collaborates on a regular basis with teachers to provide resources for classroom projects. For example, the Library Media Specialist co-teaches with a ninth grade English teacher in a unit called "Freshmen Boot Camp" to instruct the students about setting up Gmail accounts in order to share documents when working on a group project. The Library Media Specialist also provides books and reference material to teachers as requested and maintains an arrangement with the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Public Library to request materials through their inter-library loan program.   According to the Endicott Survey, 71.9% of students agreed that the library has the resources they need and provides them with a wide range of materials, technology and other information services. Besides print books and magazines, the library subscribes to databases such as SIRS Research, WorldBook Encyclopedia, Culturegram and EasyBib. Since the school participates in the UCONN Early College Education (ECE) program, students have access to the UCONN databases and iCONN resources as well. Links to these databases are available on the media center page of the school. Currently, there is one iPad for teacher checkout and one Kindle Fire for student checkout. The library has a laptop cart that teachers can sign out for use in their classrooms or when available, students use them in the library.   There is also a computer lab attached to the library that is available for teacher reservation. The library has a count of approximately 18,000 items in its catalog, including fiction, nonfiction, reference and AV materials.   It also contains a wide selection of thirty-six different magazines, DVDs , eight nonfiction multi-user ebooks and

audiobooks available for teachers and aligned to their curriculum. According to Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's 2012-2013 Strategic School Profile, the number of print material in the library is above the District Reference Group (DRG) and state average. The Library Media Specialist surveys staff each year to see which online databases and magazine subscriptions are most used and adjust the selection accordingly. The Library Media Center is open from 7:15 – 2:45 on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays and from 7:15 to 4:00 on Tuesday and Thursday (as the Homework Club meets in the library until 4 and the advisors will allow other students to use the space).   There is one full time Library Media Specialist, who, along with monitoring and assisting students, is scheduled to teach one sixth-grade class each day. A teacher monitors the library during lunch as a scheduled duty. Study hall students and Virtual High School students utilize six computers available for student use. Study hall students also have access to other computer labs in the school. Sixth-graders attend a class about research skills in a section of the library. A small section contains chairs set up with a projector and screen or the students can sit at a group of tables in another section for class work.

The Library Media Specialist has access to a computer and projector in order to demonstrate lessons to the students. Classroom teachers reserve one of the three laptop carts or the computer lab. There are a number of programs related to reading coordinated by the Library Media Specialist and the middle school reading specialist: One Book-One Summer for the middle school and One Book-One Region for the high school, where students have the opportunity to meet with the author during a regional event. This year, the middle school students read *A Long Walk to Wate*r and were visited by a member of Doctors Without Borders to discuss their work in Africa and participate in a middle school Skype with the author in the gymatorium. Students have also recently communicated via Skype with a group of students in Zambia. In the winter, a book club, Middle Ground, matches adults and middle school students and in the spring, the Library Media Specialist sponsors the Nutmeg Games, encouraging students to read the Nutmeg Book Award nominees. The Library Media Specialist is also a member of the Intermediate Nutmeg Book Award Committee this year. Because the Library Media Center works collaboratively with staff and provides material for class projects, the students and staff can retrieve adequate information for research and curriculum integration. When additional dedicated computers are available for the Library Instruction classes, students will be better served, able to practice what is being taught in a timely fashion, and allow study hall students to access remaining computers outside of the class time. (self study, newspaper article, class visit, interview with library media specialist)

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners are staffed by an appropriate number of certified personnel, who collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. Students are provided with inclusive standard opportunities per state and federal law. Ongoing assessments are performed using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School employs two school counselors, one district social worker, one school psychologist, four special education teachers, one district occupational therapist, one speech language pathologist, one reading specialist and a literacy specialist. Paraprofessional numbers vary depending on student need. There is no permanent position associated with providing ELL services, though the literary specialist is currently helping in that role. It should be noted that many community members volunteer in support roles at the school. For example, one paraprofessional serves as a class advisor and yearbook advisor and the superintendent's wife volunteers in the student center to help a student with reading difficulties.

School counselors are case managers for those students with 504 plans. Twenty-nine students are currently supported with 504 accommodation plans in the school. Counselors are responsible for the 504 referral process and annual meetings for those students who qualify. School counselors share 504 accommodation plans with those students' teachers at the start of each year, and are responsible for monitoring the implementation of those plans and engaging all stakeholders when plans are unsuccessful.

Special education teachers are case managers for thirty-six students with IEPs. All special education teachers provide a study skills class for their students. These classes help students with homework completion and the development of skills necessary for success in and out of school. Where appropriate, they are responsible for co-teaching some of their students' classes. The Director of Special Education schedules and runs the majority of PPTs. Though some students with IEPs receive direct instruction from their case managers, most are mainstreamed into regular education classes. Case managers work with teachers and paraprofessionals to adapt schoolwork and conditions to individual IEP needs, while ensuring access to the mainstream curriculum. The social worker, school psychologist, occupational therapist, speech/language pathologist, paraprofessionals, reading specialist and literacy specialist are

utilized on an as-needed basis to fulfill student 504 accommodation plans, IEP goals and SIT behavioral or academic intervention plans.

Two community volunteers as well as the reading and literacy specialists currently serve Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's small ELL population of three students. A reading specialist expressed willingness to earn her ELL certification, and the district is supporting that effort financially.

A majority of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School faculty agree that the school has an adequate number of certified support personnel for identified students (72.6%), that these personnel collaborate with the school community regarding their students' needs (91.9%) and that they utilize assessment data and feedback from the school community to improve services for their students (75.8%). Anecdotal evidence indicates that support personnel would like to do more assessments using relevant data and feedback to improve their services. Because Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School provides an adequate number of support personnel for identified students, the staff is able to collaborate with all teachers to provide their students with inclusive education opportunities, improve their services based on relevant data and feedback, and ensure all students access to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Self-study, student work, teachers, central office personnel, school support staff)

Commendations:
- The timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for students in grades six through nine that support their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations
- The coordination of the eighth grade team to communicate with parents via Remind 101
- The wide variety of media used by the school to communicate with parents
- The weekly newsletters prepared in advisories at all grade levels
- The range of technology provided to students
- Outreach to parents (letters, e-mail, Facebook, evening presentations) and students (individual meetings, classroom lessons)
- The Library Media Specialist's implementation of a variety of strong reading programs
- The use of Skype to connect students with the global community
- The media specialist's co-teaching with an English teacher in the Freshman Boot Camp program
- The range of print, non-print, databases, and electronic resources to support student learning
- The range of support staff available to assist students with special learning needs

- The district's support of the reading specialist's certification to accommodate ELL needs by obtaining certification

Recommendations:
- Create and implement timely, coordinated, and directive strategies for all students in grades ten through twelve in need of intervention
- Explore and consider implementing technology related to coordinate Student Success Plans and college/career planning
- Review counseling services to determine why a significant number of students do not feel connected to their counselors and implement changes as needed
- Create and implement scheduled, reliable ways to collect data related to student services
- Provide a students' only restroom for the health services program
- Explore and implement assessments and use the data to improve student support services

Support Standard

7   Community Resources for Learning

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

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
   - a wide range of school programs and services
   - sufficient professional and support staff
   - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
   - a full range of technology support
   - sufficient equipment
   - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
   - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
   - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
   - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.

3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
   - programs and services
   - enrollment changes and staffing needs
   - facility needs
   - technology
   - capital improvements.

4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.

6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

7. All professional staff actively engages 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.

North Stonington provides Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School dependable funding in its operating budget for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. A wide range of school programs and services are provided to the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School student body. These include a variety of courses, including the UCONN Early College Experience (ECE) courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and Virtual High School (VHS) courses. VHS courses allow Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School students to access curricula that would otherwise be unavailable to students in a small school.

Additionally, the school partners with community members to deliver services such as a food pantry and community give back day, to help Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School students and families. The 2013-14 school budget included a 4.97% increase, which occurred after the school administration presented to the Board a proposal for literacy and math support. Each school department reports that they receive adequate funding for textbooks and supplies. Based on the last three school budgets, the community reliably supports the employment of necessary professional and support staff.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School budgets sufficient funds for ongoing staff professional development and curriculum revision. Administration secures substitute teachers for staff when they are pulled out of the classroom to write curriculum. The staff attends both in-district, regional, and out-of-state professional development. For examples, Unified Arts teachers attend regional staff professional development, as well as training with UCONN for the delivery of ECE courses. However, the Director of Information Technology reports that the focus of this department has been acquiring further resources for students and faculty. As a result, a plan for professional development is not yet in place.

The school staff reports sufficient technology support to positively impact student achievement. The district has a full-time Information Technology (IT) Specialist who oversees the acquisition and placement in the classrooms of educational technology tools and software. Additionally, the IT Specialist has installed a school-wide server and Wi-Fi that covers the entire building. He reports adequate funding for technology, further, grants and budget surpluses are often dedicated to technology

purchases. The North Stonington district is currently in year three of a five-year technology plan, and the grants and budget surpluses dedicated to technology have resulted in the district surpassing its current goals.

The school staff has sufficient equipment. As a result of recent grant awards and district allocation of funds, the technology department added laptop carts that teachers can sign out and computer labs for both the middle and high school. Each classroom contains either an Epson or SMART board installed to allow teachers to incorporate technology into their classes. Teacher interviews show that the previous need for more technology outlined in the self-study report is no longer an issue. As a result of the reliable budgeting for and allocation of school staffing levels by the district, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School is able to secure and retain faculty members needed to deliver the curriculum. Because of the district's professional development offerings, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School teachers and support staff are able to collaborate to write curriculum and receive training both in and out of district.

Due to the efforts of the IT specialist, superintendent and school board, the district staff receives a full range of technology support. Grant awards and district allocation of resources for technology allow students and staff to have the necessary technology equipment to enhance education. With the installation of Epson and SMART boards in classrooms, the demand for signing out the computer labs for teacher presentations has been eliminated. Finally, as a result of steady funding by the town over the past three years, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School continues to receive sufficient instructional materials and supplies. As a result of the wide range of school programs and services Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School provides, students are able to access courses for college credit, learn by experience from experts in a variety of fields, and access curricula through Virtual High School that would otherwise be unavailable to students in a small school. (teacher interviews, superintendent and school board forum, social worker interview, and budgetary information)

The director of facilities develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. Over the last five years, the Director of Maintenance reports that his department has been reduced by one full-time maintenance staff and 1.5 custodial staff. Despite these reductions, maintenance and repairs take place reliably on an as-needed basis. If a need arises, teachers use www.schooldude.com to report needed maintenance repairs to the director of facilities. The school

maintains, catalogues, and replaces equipment as needed. The director of facilities maintains an equipment replacement and maintenance schedule that recommends when the district needs to upgrade and replace equipment. Equipment is budgeted for, purchased, and maintained based on this schedule.

The maintenance staff reliably keeps the school clean on a daily basis. Teachers, school administrators, parents, and students report being very satisfied with the cleanliness of the school. No health or safety issues were identified, and the committee received all necessary documentation regarding health and safety inspections.

As a result of the ongoing maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, proper maintenance, cataloguing, and replacement of equipment, and the diligence of the maintenance staff, the staff is able to deliver instruction. (maintenance staff interviews, superintendent interviews, conversations with parents, building tours, equipment replacement and maintenance schedule, teacher interviews)

Currently, the community inconsistently funds capital improvements, and the district is unable to implement a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, as well as capital improvements. The superintendent has obtained a number of grants in order to begin implementing a long-range plan for technology, and formed a committee to investigate future upgrades, renovations, and funding for the facilities in light of two failed referenda in the past year. The long-range plan for technology and for some facility needs is a result of grants and other outside funding sources. The IT department currently has a 5-year plan in place for the acquisition and use of technology equipment. The Superintendent reports a new tri-community committee following several that were in place in the past to develop plans for future upgrades, renovations, and funding for the facilities in light of two failed referenda in the past year.

As a result of the lack of a long-term plan for programs, services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, and capital improvements, the district is reacting to needs as they present themselves. When the district long-term plan is in place and funding is approved by the voters, the district will be able to resolve longstanding funding issues. (IT coordinator interview, superintendent interview, teacher interviews, maintenance and groundskeeper interviews)

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. Each year the teachers are given a budget form to

estimate their expenses for the following school year. The program coordinators review each budget form and submit it to the principal. Once the budget is implemented, teachers get a report each week detailing how much they have spent and how much remains in their account. Additionally, teachers report that if they need more funds for an important project or other educational need, program coordinators and administrators are able to secure funds to support their staff's needs. As a result of transparency in the budget process and flexibility of funds when needed, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School staff is able to adequately secure materials needed for their classes. (Teacher interview, Superintendent interviews, Central office staff interviews, budgetary information)

The school site and plant inconsistently support the delivery of high-quality programs and services. Based on interviews with science teachers and a group of parents, the science labs science labs and equipment in their current state will increasingly limit science teachers' ability to carry out labs and group investigations, and longstanding concerns exist. All of the high school science labs, both workstations and equipment are outdated and undersized. Some emergency showers are located over computers and desks, the chemistry classroom lacks a ventilating hood, and storage needs cannot be met in the existing chemical storage room, creating cramped conditions. In addition, the cabinet used to store flammable materials is not properly vented, and some of the science lab drains flow directly into the septic system.

The age, size and condition of the cafeteria and food preparation areas present challenges for the school. In addition to the overall aged appearance of the facility, the equipment is outdated and the size requires four separate lunch waves in order to accommodate the student population, which creates scheduling challenges.

The shared 'gymatorium' space presents a unique set of challenges, as physical education, performing arts, and athletics share a space, which presents frequent scheduling conflicts. The split school setting requires student to cross route 2 for physical education and some music classes. The underground tunnel provides a safer route than crossing the street, but requires a long walk outdoors, and it also requires school doors to remain unlocked for student access. Lighting and surveillance issues have been addressed while time to cross for some students may require more than the scheduled four minutes passing time on poor weather days. Stakeholders with physical challenges must be bussed across the street, which also takes a significant amount of time. While there is enough space for typical guidance and nurse related issues, there is a need for a dedicated space for confidential meetings in guidance (IEP,

crisis meetings, etc.), wheelchair access to nurse's office and a dedicated bathroom for ill students as well. There is adequate parking and outdoor space for faculty and students, however, due to state restrictions on the use of pesticides, the athletic fields are grub and bug infested at times causing dips and poor grass coverage, which can be dangerous to student athletes. There have been repairs and renovations, such as the addition of new boilers and new security doors. However, a larger scale renovation to the building will improve HVAC efficiency, science lab spaces, window issues, electrical system inadequacy and the overall ability of the physical plant to meet the needs of 21st century learners.

Until all necessary renovations are completed, the facilities, space, and health and safety issues will continue to negatively impact the delivery of curriculum, the learning environment, and the school's ability to fully support its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. (Superintendent interviews, teacher interviews, Social worker and nurse interviews, maintenance and groundskeeper interviews, and building tour)

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. The director of facilities maintains documentation of all applicable tests and inspections as designated by state mandates. The science department keeps documentation of chemical storage in a secure area and is in the process of changing the documentation of chemical storage form MSDS to OSHA's safety data sheets, as required by the state by June 2015. An air quality check is scheduled for when the building's windows can be securely closed this winter, and funds have been allocated in the budget for this expense. There are certain parts of the building that have excessive high temperatures during the winter months. Individual teachers report that thin walls, insufficient windows and insulation, and the location of thermostats cause unusually high temperatures, resulting in the need for teachers opening windows to regulate the classroom temperature. There are handicap accessible bathrooms located near the cafeteria and in the high school, and there is an elevator that allows physically challenged students or other stakeholders to access all parts of the building. A van is provided when physically challenged students or other stakeholders need to cross route 2 to reach the "gymatorium". Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School staff uses www.schooldude.com to report building issues to the director of maintenance. Parent concerns regarding the building can be communicated to the school administration.

Because the director of maintenance maintains complete and accurate records that the facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations, students are able to learn in a safe and comfortable environment. (building tour, maintenance staff interviews, teacher interviews, building inspection records, budgetary information)

The professional staff actively engages 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. 80.2% of parents report that the professional staff at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School actively and effectively engages parents and families as partners in each student's education. Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School staff engages with parents and families in a multitude of ways. Teachers email and call parents and families as needed, Remind 101 is used to send text reminders, parents and families are invited to Back to School Night, parents and families are encouraged to sign up for parent conferences, and PowerSchool is used to communicate assessment data directly to students, parents, and families. Class advisors send out weekly email updates to families about upcoming class events and other school functions. Additionally, the student handbook is distributed to all students to maintain awareness of the school rules and policies. Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School formalizes attempts to improve parent communication by setting school-wide parent communication goals. Last year teachers were directed to track the number of positive emails to parents, and this year's goal is to proactively send progress update emails to parents alerting them of academic issues before they become larger problems. Less connected students and families are identified in a variety of ways. The school social worker makes home visits and conducts evening parenting classes. Grade level attendance committees track student attendance along with their academic progress and a protocol is in place to hold parent meetings when a set number of absences are reached. When a need is identified, every effort is made to reach out to families in economic need, and there is a formal process to collect food and other resources to be distributed during the year. Teachers report that as a result of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School's frequent communication and interface with the community, the number of families who feel disconnected from the school community is very low. Parents, Senior Project mentors, community members, and 11th grade students are invited to serve on the Senior Project assessment committee.

Because the professional staff actively engages 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, the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School is a tight-knit learning community. Administrators and

staff engage parents and community members to help ensure that all students can achieve success with the school's 21st century skills. (social worker interviews, parent interviews, school board member interviews, superintendent interviews, copies of email and paper parent and family correspondence, school website, Endicott Survey)

The school consistently develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. There is a strong, multi-faceted, mutually beneficial relationship between Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School and the community. More than eighty per cent of parents reported effective partnerships with community organizations. Community partnerships include Westerly and Backus Hospitals, Westerly Animal Shelter, Pfizer, and Monsanto, and a variety of other business and industry workers who participate in Career Day. The school partners with local colleges in a variety of ways, including partnerships with UCONN, New England Technical College, and Three Rivers Community College. Further collaboration with UCONN includes the Early College Experience Program, in which Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School faculty works with UCONN professors to deliver college level courses to Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School students. Additionally, the Senior Project requires that all seniors connect with a mentor not associated with their family or school to investigate an area of interest and to log fifteen or more internship hours. Finally, seniors present their learning in both written and oral modes. Mentors, parents, teachers, and peers are invited to evaluate Senior Project final presentations. Additionally, Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School harnesses community support via volunteer tutors organized by the Education Foundation. Students are placed with a tutor/mentor from the community who serves as another adult role model and educator who meets with their student both during the school day and after school. The Advisory Program includes a school-wide Give Back Day, in which student advisories conduct service projects in the community.

As a result of the strong, multi-faceted, mutually beneficial relationship between Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School and the community, students benefit from the experience, resources, and expertise of community members while also learning the value of giving back, ensuring access to successful completion of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (senior project handbook, senior project mentor database, advisory program, teacher interviews, student interviews, parent interviews, school website, Endicott Survey)

Commendations:

- The effective leadership of the Superintendent to secure grant awards to procure technology equipment
- The continual support of the Superintendent's office for staff to attend professional development training
- The wide range of educational opportunities available to students despite the small size of the school
- The clean and inviting school environment as a result of the diligence of the maintenance staff, despite staff reductions
- The diligence of the Superintendent and the board of education to develop a new renovation plan to present to the voters for approval
- The ability of teachers to request textbooks and supplies for the upcoming school year and additional funds as needed allows them to plan appropriately to effectively deliver their curriculum
- The commitment of the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School administration to create opportunities for students in a challenging physical environment
- The ability and willingness of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School staff to communicate with parents and families in a variety of ways
- The strong community partnership forged between Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School and the North Stonington community, including its extensive network of Senior Project mentors
- The numerous opportunities for students to give back and gain understanding of their local and international community
- The numerous partnerships with the community, local agencies, businesses, and institutions of higher education
- The early college enrollment program with UCONN

Recommendations
- Ensure that teachers receive necessary professional development as new technology is introduced to the district
- Update and follow a maintenance schedule for preventative maintenance, cleaning, and repair
- Resolve all identified facilities, space, and health and safety issues in a timely manner
- Create a long-range funding plan that accounts for anticipated changes in enrollment and subsequent staffing

- Continue to update the technology plan as equipment and technology tools are purchased, including planning for technology equipment upgrades and replacement
- Update the science labs to include both curricular and health and safety requirements
- Implement athletic field maintenance plans that comply with state regulations while providing safe playing surfaces for students
- Secure voter approval of the next bond vote to resolve the longstanding facilities, space, and health and safety concerns
- Update the science labs to provide appropriate hands-on learning experiences for students
- Continue the process of converting from the MSDS to OSHA to document chemical expiration dates and purchases
- Address the space and ADA issues in the health services office
- Continue to expand communication opportunities for all families

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change, which negatively impacts, on the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact, which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 91. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report, which is required of each member school to ensure that the Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The Committee wishes to express gratitude to the faculty and staff of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School High School/Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Middle School for the support and hospitality afforded to them throughout the visit.

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Middle/High High School
NEASC Accreditation Visit
September 28 - October 1, 2014

Visiting Committee

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Cheryl Leaver, Assistant Chair South Kingston High School South Kingstown, RI 02879	Tamara Carty Smithfield HS Smithfield, RI 02917
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	Michael Nolan Shepaug Valley School Washington, CT 06793

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts and student activities

- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities

- significantly decreased funding

- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing

- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors

- grade level responsibilities of the principal

- cuts in the number of support staff

- decreases in student services

- cuts in the educational media staffing

- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated

- takeover by the state

- inordinate user fees

- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School

Commendations

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

- The ubiquitous acceptance of the social/civic expectations by all stakeholders, resulting in a respectful and supportive culture
- The utilization of the school-wide writing and speaking rubrics in grades 6 -11 to assess student progress as they prepare for Senior Project
- The collaboration between the English Language Arts and Social Studies departments in preparing students for the Senior Project
- The implementation of the Renaissance Program, which rewards and celebrates student achievement and social/civic behaviors
- The use of the advisory program to support the attainment of the academic and social/civic expectations
- The consistent use of school-wide writing and oral communication rubrics
- The core values, beliefs about learning, and the 21st century learning expectations are reflected in the culture of the school
- Learning expectations are articulated and aligned with district's learning goals
- The decisions that promote the achievement of learning expectations for all students
- The continual feedback, including that of students, that is sought to clarify learning expectations
- The extensive use of data in the review and revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Curriculum

- The principal's initiative and leadership in the development of the formal curriculum cycle
- The willingness of the science department to pilot the new process of curriculum development
- The variety of learning opportunities available to students
- The teachers' effective use of technology in curriculum planning
- The emphasis of the curriculum on depth of understanding, problem solving, inquiry, and application of knowledge
- The vision of the principal to create and empower program coordinators

- The formal departmental and cross-disciplinary meetings to discuss the alignment of the curriculum with the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations led by the program coordinators
- The principal's inclusion of formal discussions related to the curriculum in the teacher supervision and evaluation process
- The commitment to providing an interdisciplinary opportunity to all students in grades six through eleven through the humanities research paper coordinated by the language arts and social studies departments
- The ability of the district administration to secure additional funding to provide technology enhancements
- The adequacy of the budget for instructional materials and supplies, staffing levels, and the library/media services program
- The willingness of the district to allocate sufficient funds, provide release time and find alternative funding for curriculum revision, in addition to adequate staffing levels, instructional materials and supplies, and the library/media program
- The professional development offerings related to curriculum review and revision
- The use of assessment results to inform changes in the curriculum

Instruction

- The common belief among teachers that all students are capable and can achieve at high levels and their willingness to design their instruction accordingly

- The formal common planning time provided for teachers in grades six through nine to discuss instructional practices

- The majority of teachers who connect instructional practices with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

- The integration of appropriate technology to enhance instruction
- The frequent use of self-assessment and reflection across all content areas
- The significant extent to which teachers personalize instructional practices
- The opportunities students have to select topics for assignments and projects
- The SRBI and Student Support Center programs to support personalized learning and differentiated instructional practices
- The multiple formats in which students demonstrate their learning

- The weekly meetings of ninth grade teachers and guidance counselors to discuss student progress
- The opportunities students have to be engaged in cross-disciplinary learning
- The utilization of strategic differentiation to help individual students learn concepts and skills
- The group learning activities designed to engage students with in-depth learning and collaboration
- The keen interest of individual teachers in improving their instructional practice, seeking out professional resources to further inform their instruction
- The willingness of teachers to create opportunities to share information both on a formal and informal basis
- The principal's establishment of a voluntary professional book club
- The number and variety of professional organizations to which teachers belong

Assessment of and for Student Learning

- The effort of individual teachers to utilize rubrics to assess student work
- The consistent use of the school-wide rubrics in the assessing individual student progress on the Senior Project
- The purposeful communication to students and families regarding social/civic expectations and their ability to positively impact the school culture via the Renaissance program and other initiatives.
- The communication about and the integration of the Senior Project school-wide rubric in all grades, resulting in seniors who are well-versed in the application of the rubric
- The efforts of the six through nine grade level teams to collect data and discuss how it can be used to inform instruction
- Clearly visible posters in every classroom which state the core values, school wide goals, and 21st learning expectations established
- The consistent use of rubrics by some teachers to inform students of their learning goals before summative assessments
- The use of a variety of assessments to demonstrate student learning, including the experiential learning that takes place in the Senior Project
- The formal and consistent collaboration of six through nine grade level teams during common planning and team time
- The timely manner in which Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School teachers return assignments with appropriate feedback to their students

- The variety of formative assessments used to develop student skills
- The teachers' practice of scaffolding assignments which enables students to practice their skills and correct their work
- The development of an electronic portfolio by middle school teachers
- The informal efforts of teachers to examine student work individually and collaboratively to drive changes in instructional practices
- The cumulative writing portfolio that includes student work from grade six through the culmination of grade 12

School Culture and Leadership

- The pride in Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School school, reported by the vast majority of stakeholders, that fosters a safe, supportive, positive culture for student success in completing their 21st century learning expectations
- The commitment and continuous dedication of a proud staff that has resulted in many opportunities beyond the classroom for the students to enhance their school experience
- The positive impact of the Renaissance Program
- The formal adoption of a parent outreach program
- The multiple opportunities for students to be in heterogeneous courses in a variety of electives
- The district's funding of an ELL teacher
- The development of the individual Student Success Plan in the advisory program
- The advisory program which allows each student to have an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well
- The additional opportunities during the school day for students to build relationship with other adults through their participation in clubs and activities
- The noticeable efforts of the principal and associate principal to work toward a collaborative learning environment focused on student success
- The ongoing acknowledgment of student success
- The pride students exhibit for the school
- The significant leadership roles the teachers assume in order to ensure that students are supported academically and personally
- The positive impact of the adoption of the administrators' Theory of Action
- The visibility of the building administrators in classroom visits/observations

- The commitment by administration to provide teachers with the opportunities and funding to participate in professional development
- The effective use of professional development concepts and knowledge gained in classroom instruction
- The allotted time in the master schedule for the students to develop their social/civic expectations
- The favorable student load and class sizes that allow teachers to meet the needs of all students
- The various opportunities for teachers to demonstrate decision-making authority
- The significant efforts of the teachers in ensuring that students are supported academically and personally
- The willingness of teachers to use their personal time to support students
- The strong, supportive, collaborative relationship between the school board, superintendent and the principal
- The effective leadership of the superintendent

School Resources for Learning

- The timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for students in grades six through nine that support their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations
- The coordination of the eighth grade team to communicate with parents via Remind 101
- The wide variety of media used by the school to communicate with parents
- The weekly newsletters prepared in advisories at all grade levels
- The range of technology provided to students
- Outreach to parents (letters, e-mail, Facebook, evening presentations) and students (individual meetings, classroom lessons)
- The Library Media Specialist's implementation of a variety of strong reading programs
- The use of Skype to connect students with the global community
- The media specialist's co-teaching with an English teacher in the Freshman Boot Camp program
- The range of print, non-print, databases, and electronic resources to support student learning
- The range of support staff available to assist students with special learning needs
- The district's support of the reading specialist's certification to accommodate ELL needs by obtaining certification

Community Resources for Learning

- The effective leadership of the Superintendent to secure grant awards to procure technology equipment
- The continual support of the Superintendent's office for staff to attend professional development training
- The wide range of educational opportunities available to students despite the small size of the school
- The clean and inviting school environment as a result of the diligence of the maintenance staff, despite staff reductions
- The diligence of the Superintendent and the board of education to develop a new renovation plan to present to the voters for approval
- The ability of teachers to request textbooks and supplies for the upcoming school year and additional funds as needed allows them to plan appropriately to effectively deliver their curriculum
- The commitment of the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School administration to create opportunities for students in a challenging physical environment
- The ability and willingness of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School staff to communicate with parents and families in a variety of ways
- The strong community partnership forged between Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School and the North Stonington community, including its extensive network of Senior Project mentors
- The numerous opportunities for students to give back and gain understanding of their local and international community
- The numerous partnerships with the community, local agencies, businesses, and institutions of higher education
- The early college enrollment program with UCONN

Recommendations

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

● Create and implement a formal review process for core values and beliefs and report its results to all stakeholders
● Develop and implement school-wide rubrics for social and civic expectations
● Complete all performance levels on the academic rubrics
● Develop and implement a plan to utilize school-wide rubrics within and among all disciplines
● Expand the use of whole school data analysis to identify and celebrate school successes and to inform future work in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
● Examine school data about students' achievement of the expectations for student learning to formalize school-wide learning objectives

Curriculum

● Ensure that all departments complete the formal curriculum processes
● Differentiate curriculum to articulate the difference between academic levels of the same course where appropriate
● Include the school's 21st century learning expectations in all curriculum documents
● Ensure the completion of the curriculum cycle
● Design and implement an organizational chart to ensure all departments have leadership personnel responsible for curriculum
● Formalize the roles and responsibilities of the program coordinators
● Develop a district curricular alignment map
● Provide formal planning time for all teachers to ensure curriculum coordination and vertical articulation
● Create and implement a plan for curriculum writing responsibilities that includes the roles of administration, program coordinators, and teachers

Instruction

- Develop and implement a plan for all teachers to regularly examine and reflect upon their practices through collaboration and peer review, and to explicitly connect those practices with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

- Increase opportunities for students to engage in rigorous problem solving and higher order thinking during instruction

- Continue to improve and enhance communication with parents to make them aware of the efforts of teachers to modify their instructional practices based on student progress in attaining the 21st century learning goals

- Institute a formal process for gathering feedback from parents and students and use this feedback to make instructional adjustments, when appropriate

Assessment of and for Student Learning

- Create and implement a formal process of modifying and solidifying the school wide rubrics used in Senior Research Project throughout the middle and high school

- Create a formal, ongoing process in which teachers assess individual student progress and directly tie that progress with achievement of the school wide learning expectations

- Use formal and consistent communication with students, parents, and the community at large to provide specific references to student and school achievement of the school-wide academic expectations

- Create and implement a systemic protocol to communicate the applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed

- Ensure that formative assessment practices such as those described above are contained in all new curricula

- Develop and implement a plan to ensure that all teachers in grades ten through twelve have scheduled time to create, analyze and revise formal and informal assessment

- Ensure that all students are provided students meaningful opportunities to revise their work based on specific and corrective feedback

- Develop and implement a formal process by which student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni are used to drive changes in curriculum and instructional practices

- Revise grading and reporting practices to reflect the alignment between the school-wide rubrics, student achievement, and the 21st century learning expectations

School Culture and Leadership

- Assess the impact of the initiatives intended to create positive school culture
- Increase heterogeneity in core courses consistent with research-based best practices
- Ensure the alignment of professional development to school-wide goals
- Collect data about the impact the new evaluation system on improving teacher effectiveness and student performance and use this data for possible revision
- Complete the Theory of Action in order to establish a direction for Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School
- Provide formal opportunities for teachers within the same discipline and across disciplines (specifically in grades ten through twelve) to collaboratively review, develop, and implement research-based instructional activities and cross-curricular educational opportunities
- Provide specific mechanisms for both students and parents to be more involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making
- Provide opportunities for the community to learn more about and support the needs of the school.
- Continue to align the budget to a process that ensures alignment with 21st century learning goals

School Resources for Learning

- Create and implement timely, coordinated, and directive strategies for all students in grades ten through twelve in need of intervention
- Explore and consider implementing technology related to coordinate Student Success Plans and college/career planning
- Review counseling services to determine why a significant number of students do not feel connected to their counselors and implement changes as needed
- Create and implement scheduled, reliable ways to collect data related to student services
- Provide a students' only restroom for the health services program
- Explore and implement assessments and use the data to improve student support services

Community Resources for Learning

- Ensure that teachers receive necessary professional development as new technology is introduced to the district
- Update and follow a maintenance schedule for preventative maintenance, cleaning, and repair
- Resolve all identified facilities, space, and health and safety issues in a timely manner
- Create a long-range funding plan that accounts for anticipated changes in enrollment and subsequent staffing
- Continue to update the technology plan as equipment and technology tools are purchased, including planning for technology equipment upgrades and replacement
- Update the science labs to include both curricular and health and safety requirements
- Implement athletic field maintenance plans that comply with state regulations while providing safe playing surfaces for students
- Secure voter approval of the next bond vote to resolve the longstanding facilities, space, and health and safety concerns
- Update the science labs to provide appropriate hands-on learning experiences for students
- Continue the process of converting from the MSDS to OSHA to document chemical expiration dates and purchases
- Address the space and ADA issues in the health services office
- Continue to expand communication opportunities for all families