

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for Melrose High School

Melrose, Massachusetts

November 7-10, 2010

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

The Distribution, Use, and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

- Support of Teaching and Learning Standards
 - Leadership and Organization
 - School Resources for Learning
 - Community Resources for Learning

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

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Melrose High School, a committee of 7 members supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Melrose High School extended over a period of 18 school months from November 2008 to June 2010. The visiting committee was pleased to note that all professional staff members, some administrators, and some parents participated in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Commission, Melrose High School also used questionnaires developed by 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 Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Melrose High School. The Committee members spent four days in Melrose, Massachusetts, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, central office administrators, teachers, and principals, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Melrose High School. The visiting team built its professional judgment on evidence collected from the following sources:

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 30 hours shadowing 15 students for a half day
- a total of 10 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 30 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

Overview of Findings

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

Quality of the Self-Study

The entire staff participated in the self-study including administrators and parents. The format was followed, and an essay was developed for each standard, including an executive summary. Strengths in adherence to each standard were identified as were areas of need. Throughout the process, the steering committee invited participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including participation in the Endicott Survey so the report reflects the perspective of the entire school community. A limited assortment of student work was available for the committee members to review from some classes at some academic levels. The support materials were available for most indicators and the team was promptly provided with all additional requested materials. The committee carefully reviewed all available documentation.

Teaching and Learning at Melrose High School

The mission statement developed by the professional staff is posted throughout the building. In addition, a school logo developed by students decorates walls throughout the school. The logo includes the expectations that all students must meet prior to graduation. The school-wide rubrics are available in individual classrooms and can be accessed on the school's WEB site. Curriculum documents received limited attention during recent district professional development time in order for the school to complete the self-study process in preparation for the visiting team. In addition to the professional development time, two delayed starts were provided for the school to complete the self-study work. There is a district plan for the review and revision of the curriculum that has not received regular attention. Curriculum oversight is the responsibility of department heads who are encouraged to be instructional leaders in their areas of expertise. Recent efforts to add core assignments and open responses in all content areas are offering more equitable experiences for students. The addition of SMARTBoards has enhanced the use of technology to support instruction.

Teachers reported that the self-study process was a valuable process that allowed them to reflect on instructional practices. The process helped to identify areas that will need attention as the school embraces the continuous improvement process. The addition of online resources will assist the school in the use of data to inform curriculum, instruction and assessment. Some teachers have observed already that the recent requirement of core assignments and open

responses in all classes has led to an improvement in student writing. Collecting data on the impact of this practice would assist the school as it assesses its efforts to achieve the mission. Some teachers participate in common planning time in a program that is in its second year and there is considerable interest in expanding this opportunity to include all teachers. Another group of teachers is meeting regularly to review student work as a way to inform their instructional practice, and there are plans to include more teachers in this process in the future. As more teachers participate in reflective practice activities both teaching and learning will improve, and more students will have the opportunity to achieve the high expectations articulated in the mission.

Support of Teaching and Learning at Melrose High School

The climate is very positive, and significant attention is given to keeping the school safe and respectful for students and staff members. In collaboration with the superintendent, school board, and community, the principal has found unique ways to support student learning. There are several opportunities available to encourage teacher leadership and the building administrators are providing leadership and support for these staff members. There are sufficient support services available to all students, and the needs of individual students are addressed.

Recent economic constraints have resulted in level-funded budgets for the past four years. However, collaborative efforts by the school board, superintendent and the Melrose city council have led to upgrades in technology, funding to repair a failing roof, and plans for a new athletic complex. The facility was built over thirty years ago, and its condition limits teaching and learning. There are many overcrowded classrooms, some classrooms are very hot, others very cold. Hallways are crowded at passing times, and some doorways allow only one student to pass at a time. Upgrades or replacements are needed for many mechanical systems, including the HVAC system. An assessment of the internal structure for its current impact on teaching and learning would provide valuable data that could be used to significantly improve the learning environment.

School and Community Profile

The Community

Melrose High School, a four-year school in Melrose, Massachusetts, is located seven miles north of Boston. Covering a geographical area of 4.76 square miles with a population of 28,150, the City of Melrose has three stops on the MBTA commuter rail, is located on the MBTA Orange Line, has MBTA bus service, and has convenient access to three major highways. Predominantly residential and known for its array of Victorian homes, Melrose also has a quaint downtown area with flourishing businesses and natural recreational areas in its boundaries, including Ell Pond and the Middlesex Fells Reservation. The city is home to two golf courses, one private and one public. Melrose High School students and staff members perform in the Melrose Symphony Orchestra, the longest continuously running volunteer symphony orchestra in the nation. A brand new Center for the Performing Arts is housed in the new Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and hosts a mix of school and community events. Two local cable channels provide opportunities for students who are interested in television production.

There is a significant range of income levels in Melrose. As of the 2000 census, the median income for a household in the city was \$62,811, and the median income for a family was \$78,144. The per capita income for the city was \$30,347. Families living below the poverty level make up 3.9% of the city's population. The unemployment rate in Melrose for 2008 was 3.9%.

Melrose-Wakefield Hospital is the town's largest employer with 1500 employees. The City of Melrose is the second largest with 929 employees. The two local grocery stores, Shaw's and Johnnie's Foodmaster employ 140 and 130 employees respectively. Several small local businesses employ a large percentage of the school's student population. Local businesses are generously supportive of school functions and clubs. For example, Johnnie's Foodmaster sponsors the annual Pancake Breakfast which supports the Melrose High School Permanent Scholarship Fund, and Petrone's, a local pizza and sub shop, regularly donates proceeds of an evening's dinner to various clubs and organizations at the high school. Many local businesses purchase advertising space in the yearbook and the school newspaper each year.

A strong partnership also exists between the school and the larger Melrose community. A partnership between Melrose High School and the Rotary Club results in bringing international students to Melrose High School through a high school exchange with Denmark. The Bridge: A School Community Partnership recruits community members to volunteer in the high school providing academic assistance. The Melrose Alliance against Violence and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition partners with the school to promote behaviors that reflect positive relationships and wellness choices. Many community organizations such as Friends of Melrose Football, Friends of Melrose Hockey, various other sports' booster clubs, the Choral Boosters and the Bandaiders support school activities.

During the 2008-2009 school year, Melrose High School had a population of 930 students. There is one middle school, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, with a population of 863 students. A small percentage of students come to the high school from St. Mary's, a local parochial school. Melrose has five elementary schools that feed the middle school: Hoover (270), Horace Mann (272), Lincoln (365), Roosevelt (355) and Winthrop (405). There are a total of 3,460 students in the Melrose School District.

In the 2007-2008 school year ten students opted to enroll as freshmen at the nearby vocational high school, Northeast Metro Tech High School. In the 2008-2009 school year, that number was 8. Also in the 2007-2008 school year, 26 ninth graders choose to go to nearby private schools such as Malden Catholic, Bishop Fenwick, and Arlington Catholic. In 2008-2009, that number was 34. The 2008-2009 school year has seen an increase in midyear enrollment. The Melrose School Committee has voted to not participate in school choice.

The Melrose School District expended \$9,932 per pupil in the 2006 - 2007 school year compared to the state average of \$11,859. In the school year 2007 - 2008, \$10,264 was the per pupil expenditure compared to the state average of \$12,497.21 In 2006-2007, 55% of the city's tax dollars went to public education in Melrose. In 2007-2008, 54% of the city's tax dollars went to public education in Melrose. In fiscal year 2009, 23 million dollars of local funds combined with 3 million dollars from state and federal funds and grants made-up the 26 million dollar school budget.

The School and the Students

As of October 1, 2008, Melrose High School includes students in grades 9 through 12 with a total population of 930 students: freshmen (246), sophomores (226), juniors (229), and seniors (229). The total enrollment is made up of 455 males and 475 females. As of October 1, 2005, the total population was 906 students. The school population has remained stable over the past ten years. The average daily student attendance rate is 94%. During the 2008-2009 school year, 53 students attend Melrose High School through the METCO program. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition at Melrose High School is 86.2% Caucasian, 7.5% Black/Hispanic or African-American, 2% Asian, .5% American Indian and 3.8% other. Melrose High School has seen an increase in its minority population in recent years. A small number of students who are daughters and sons of teachers working in the school district but residing outside of Melrose, attend tuition-free as a result of a contractual agreement between the Melrose School Committee and the Melrose Education Association. Twelve percent of the student population participates in the school's free or reduced lunch program.

Of the 86 staff members, there are 52 full-time teachers at Melrose High School with a teaching load of five classes. Teachers' daily attendance rate is 94%. Teachers carry an average load of 110 students with an average class size of 22. The new teacher mentoring program helps to support and to retain new teachers. Melrose has a support staff consisting of four guidance counselors with a student-to-counselor ratio of 225:1, a guidance chairperson, one school psychologist, one school adjustment counselor, one ESL coordinator, one district METCO coordinator, ten cafeteria workers, seven secretarial staff members, one full-time custodian, one nurse, one library media specialist, one school resource officer, three school monitors, and six paraprofessionals.

Melrose High School students go to school for 180 days. Staff members work 183 days. Melrose High School exceeds the state requirement of 990 hours of instruction by 36 hours with a total of 1026 instructional hours per school year. Melrose High School has a seven day rotating schedule. All classes meet six out of the seven days. All classes meet for fifty-seven minutes. First period is a fixed period for the purpose of sharing staff members with the middle school. Staff members have three full days of professional development. Some common planning time within departments does occur. During the school year there are monthly faculty meetings and school goals are addressed. Regularly scheduled department meetings provide

time for curriculum development. Curriculum coordinators meet with administrators in leadership meetings to discuss and develop curriculum.

All students are required to take 4 credits of English; 3 credits each of mathematics, science and social studies; 2 credits each of fine arts and comprehensive health; 1 credit of foreign language; and 6 credits in elective classes for a total of 24 credits. Students in grades 9 through 12 may select from college preparatory and honors level classes. Students in grades eleven and twelve may also elect to take Advanced Placement level classes. The percentages of students enrolled in honors and AP level courses for the 2008-2009 school year are as follows: 49% in English, 44% in Mathematics, 48% in Social Studies, 49% in Science and 52% in Foreign Languages. Wellness, fine arts and elective courses are all grouped heterogeneously. Seniors are required to successfully complete a research paper in English class as a graduation requirement. Twelve hours of community service per year and successful completion of the state MCAS are two additional graduation requirements.

Melrose offers a special education program for the 117 students (12.5% of the total population). The program includes separate classes, alternative classes, small group instruction, co-taught classes, and academic support classes. In the fall of 2008, a formal postgraduate program began for students who were in the undergraduate Life Skills Program. The postgraduate program prepares students for transition into the workforce and includes a life skills curriculum. The 7 ESL students are integrated into the general population for all classes except for one block of direct ESL instruction.

Melrose High School offers a variety of co-curricular activities for its students including twenty-six athletic programs for boys and girls, concert band, jazz band, marching band, color guard, chorus and orchestra programs, and twenty eight different clubs and student organizations including student government. The clubs and organizations have a total combined membership of 1001 students. During the 2008-2009 school year, 360 students participated in fall sports, 263 students participated in winter sports, and 292 students participated in spring sports.

Students participate in a graduation ceremony that allows the students to choose a person who had significant impact on their educational career to hand them their diplomas. In the class of 2008, 77% of graduates attended four-year colleges, 13% enrolled in two-year colleges, 2% enrolled in business and technical schools, 7% entered the workforce, and 1% entered the military. The dropout rate for the 2007-2008 school year was 1.3%.

For students who need credit recovery, two local evening programs exist that assist Melrose High School students. Somerville and Woburn offer an adult evening school as a way for students to make-up credits. Some seniors have participated in dual enrollment programs with Bunker Hill Community College and North Shore Community College. A handful of students take advantage of programs such as Job Corps, SCALE (GED program or adult diploma program) and classes at the Northeast Vocational Regional High School.

The City of Melrose in partnership with the Melrose School District has agreed to fund a three-year capital improvement project for Melrose High School. Phase I of the project was implemented over the summer of 2008 and supplied SMART Boards in all classrooms. Phase II and III of the project will involve physical and aesthetic improvements to the school building.

Melrose High School engages with local businesses and organizations primarily through the senior internship program. Seniors have the opportunity to participate in a senior internship during the last quarter of their senior year. Over the past several years, an average of 30 students participated in this program. In the 2008 school year, there were 62 students participating.

There are also opportunities for students to participate in job-shadowing at local businesses, including at the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments through a variety of means: Students in the News is for recognition of student achievement on the school's website, three bulletin boards in the building are dedicated to announcing students' accomplishments, and the high school newspaper, and local newspapers highlight academic and athletic achievements. The Boston Globe Art Awards, 100 hours of Community Service Award, Good Citizenship Award, SILS Award, National Honor Society and National Merit Scholars are achievements that are acknowledged during graduation. The Melrose High School Permanent Scholarship Committee, supported by individuals and business donations, awards over \$100,000 annually to seniors. Senior Awards Night and the Senior/Parent Breakfast recognize seniors who excel in a variety of academic and extra-curricular areas. The annual Thanksgiving Pep Rally presents another opportunity to highlight student achievement. Daily announcements over the PA system also recognize students, clubs, and teams for their achievements.

Eighty-seven percent of the class of 2008 took the SATs, and scores compared favorably with state and local scores. The average SAT score for the class of 2008 was 510 verbal, 505 math and 512 writing, while the national averages were 502 verbal, 515 math and 494 writing. Forty-two percent of the class of 2008 took the ACTs compared with the state figure of 17%. The composite score on the ACTs for Melrose High School was 23.5 compared with the state composite score of 23.6. In addition, all students who take Advanced Placement courses are required to take the Advanced Placement test for that course. Along with the standardized testing listed above, Melrose High School has met AYP each year on the MCAS. For the 2008 school year, Melrose High School students scored 88% in the advanced and proficient categories on the ELA portion of the test and 81% in the advanced and proficient categories on the mathematics portion of the test. This compared with the state average of 74% ELA and 72% Math in the same categories.

New initiatives at the high school have included a student-driven full day orientation program for incoming freshmen, a peer mentoring program for freshmen, monthly activity blocks for students, PTO mini-grants, faculty council, school-wide rubrics, core assignments, student assistance team, and on-site college admissions.

School Improvement Planning

The school council, leadership team, and faculty council are the three key groups involved in school improvement planning. School council is comprised of 8 students, 5 parents, 4 faculty members, 3 community members, and 1 administrator that meet monthly to discuss school issues and plan for improvement. Faculty council is comprised of a group of 8 teachers who meet monthly to address school-wide concerns, and plan and implement programs for change. The leadership team is comprised of the curriculum chairs for each department in the school, the assistant principals, and principal. They meet regularly to discuss, develop, and implement curriculum, instruction, and assessment improvements. Results of these meetings are then disseminated to the faculty through department meetings.

Some of the curricular improvements implemented this year through the leadership team include the development of core assignments and corresponding rubrics in all curriculum areas, matrices that organize and delineate core assignment information, course-specific goals, and course syllabi.

The results of the MCAS, SAT and ACT are used to assess students' strengths and weaknesses and assess delivery of instruction. The MCAS results are used to monitor and predict how students will do year to year. This information provides the basis for how to support those students who struggle academically. Programs such as MCAS prep were developed for grade 10 students who were not successful on the grade 8 exam. Additionally, after school, evening, and weekend programs have been supported by grant money from the state to better prepare students for the MCAS. An MCAS results analysis report issued each fall allows curriculum chairs and teachers to discuss areas of instructional weakness based on error patterns in student responses. Similarly, the guidance department issues a statistical report on standardized test scores like the SATs, ACTs, and AP exams. This report is used by curriculum chairs and teachers to alter and improve instruction weaknesses in the classroom as demonstrated by student performance on those exams.

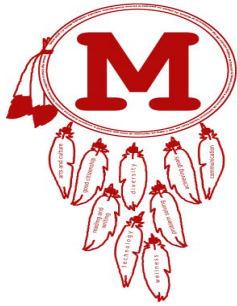
A pilot program in looking at student work is being implemented for the 2009-2010 school year. A group of teachers representing all curriculum areas trained in looking in student work protocols will meet to use those protocols to impact change in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. There is a plan to expand this program to a larger group of teachers for the 2010-2011 school year.

In conjunction with the school's mission and expectations, the following were identified as the most critical areas of need facing the school:

- providing focused professional development that is beneficial to all,
- integrating the school-wide goals and expectations into the curriculum,
- increasing students' and teachers' voices in the decision making process,
- concerns regarding the building and facilities,
- budget,
- creating a climate of respect for all members of the school community.

All of the stated goals are evolving as time goes on. Periodic assessments will show if any changes are needed to accomplish these goals. As with many other communities, the future will bring new challenges for academics and extra-curricular programs at Melrose High School. Creative ways to sustain and grow are vital in a future where financial avenues may be in question. It is important to keep the focus on our mission, goals and expectations as future decisions are made.

MHS MISSION STATEMENT



Melrose High School is committed to developing academic and personal excellence. In partnership with home and community, we foster a safe and caring learning environment. We encourage a passion for learning by providing an engaging curriculum with high expectations for all students. We prepare our graduates to become knowledgeable, respectful, contributing citizens of a global society.

MHS LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Melrose High School students will:

- *write effectively using standard English;*
- *demonstrate the ability to read effectively;*
- *demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively;*
- *demonstrate the ability to use technology responsibly and effectively;*
- *demonstrate the ability to problem- solve effectively;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of arts and culture;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of behaviors that promote wellness;*
- *demonstrate good citizenship;*
- *demonstrate the ability to plan and implement goals;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of diversity and exercise tolerance and respect for themselves, others and their school.*

Motto: What does RED mean to us?

Logo: RED: Respect, Education, and Determination

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS**

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of Student Learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

1

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

The mission statement and expectations for student learning were developed by a group of stakeholders in the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and the school council. Parents and greater community were provided with an opportunity to participate in the process, including a request for feedback when the mission and expectations were in draft form. The mission and expectations were developed over a two-year period beginning in the summer of 2008. The first committee, created by the new principal, was hired to work four days during the summer to brainstorm ideas. Results were reported to the faculty for further changes and revisions in September 2008. Next, the mission was presented to the students for their input. The mission standards sub-committee composed of teachers was subsequently formed. Some parents, students, and community members had an opportunity to contribute to the development of the document at school council, PTO meetings, and through surveys or homeroom polling. The mission statement was presented to and approved by the faculty and school committee on December 23, 2008. Although a variety of stakeholders was involved in the development of the mission, the bulk of the work was completed by the faculty. Students were involved in creating the school's logo once the mission statement was completed. Students reported they felt a part of the development of the mission as many mistakenly think of the motto and logo as the statement. All students interviewed are aware of the school motto, "What does RED mean to us?" and can identify what "RED" (Respect, Education and Determination) means to them. There was not a broad-based participation in the process of the development of the mission statement, however, so the revision process should entail a wider collaboration of the entire school community. (self-study, school committee, teachers, panel presentation, students, parents, mission standard committee)

The mission statement at MHS represents the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning. Students are prepared to have a passion for learning and to be knowledgeable, respectful, contributing citizens reaching for academic and personal excellence. In accordance with a 21st century philosophy, the MHS community believes learning is a collaborative, student-centered venture in which the school teachers act as catalysts and models for life-long learning. More work around identifying and clarifying connection to the community's civic and social values is needed for the mission to become a fully living document, however, the current principal has focused on improving the climate of the school, both socially and academically. Respect is shown by students for adults in the community, and an ongoing concern with student to student respect has been identified. The existing respect and the welcoming atmosphere of the school reflect the core beliefs and values as defined in the mission statement. Diverse academic opportunities, a strong connection to other countries through trips and exchange programs, many different community service opportunities, the senior internship program, varied choices of co-curricular activities, and the school's commitment to a safe and orderly environment support the mission statement and expectations. MHS can be considered a school that actively supports and lives its stated mission and expectations for student learning. Because it reflects the standards and goals of the school population, the mission statement is a guiding document helping to increase school unity. (students, teachers, panel presentation, leadership team, mission standard committee, Endicott Survey, self-study, parents, classroom observations)

MHS has defined school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that are measurable and reflect the school's mission. Learning expectations and corresponding rubrics were generated in June 2008 and adopted and distributed to faculty members in January 2009. All teachers have access to both school-wide and content-based rubrics. The faculty is aware of the importance rubrics, and they are posted in some classrooms. There are core assignments and common open response assessments each year in every class. These are used to help streamline content, provide common assessments, and ensure the use of school-wide rubrics in every class. To ensure that classroom expectations connect to school-wide expectations, a review of student work committee was piloted in January 2009. Now that MHS has generated measurable school-wide academic, civic and social learning expectations that reflect the school's mission, regular utilization of the rubrics would inform students of their progress toward meeting the expectations. (self-study, teachers, mission standard committee, student work, students, panel presentation, teachers, parents, school leadership team)

Each academic expectation in the MHS Mission Statement has an accompanying school-wide rubric to measure students' levels of success. Rubrics were created that break down each expectation into components and identify evidence to evaluate student performance. The rubrics identify four levels of performance in each rubric: *exceeds expectation*, *meets expectation*, *working toward expectation* and *below expectation*. The school has identified *meets expectation* as the required level of achievement for all students. Teachers clearly communicate their academic expectations, and students understand the requirements of each level of performance. The rubrics have aided students and faculty members to better identify what is necessary to achieve academic success. The continued utilization and implementation of the rubrics will allow students to achieve the goals in the mission statement. (panel presentation, self-study, students, teachers, mission standards committee, leadership team)

MHS does not have a process to assess the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations. MHS has indicators in place to measure achievement of civic and social expectations. There are opportunities for students to practice these expectations through co-curricular activities, athletics, and community service. The pride and collegiality among students and staff members is shown during the Mix-It-Up Day at lunch and in the students' shared school spirit about athletic events. MHS collects feedback about civic and social expectations from several sources. The school generates annual reports on data collected regarding referrals for student behavior. Incidents of harassments, fights, verbal abuse, and insubordination are annually compared using established benchmarks. The school also tracks student involvement in extra-curricular activities and participation in athletics. A community service graduation requirement of twelve hours per year begins in ninth grade. Students may participate in a job shadowing program that can culminate in a senior internship that provides work experience. Beginning in grade nine, guidance counselors track students' potential interests and career goals to create a plan for post-secondary life. Programs such as the early childhood day care site visits and job shadowing through the anatomy class introduce interested students to careers in these fields. Extracurricular activities such as a Red Cross Blood Drive, Toys for Tots, mock

accident/funeral, pep rallies, spirit week, and Mix-It-Up Day indicate that students are invested in improving their school and community. MHS should utilize the data available to assess student progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations. (panel presentation, teachers, students, leadership team, self-study)

The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning guide some of the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and the document is beginning to permeate the school culture. There are times when the school comes together in its decision-making process, but this is not part of the school culture. The vision of the principal and school leadership team has been clearly and consistently communicated to members of the school community. The mission statement is visible throughout the school in the main entrances of the building and in every classroom. The logo created by the students is painted in red on the window at the main entrance of the school. The mission statement is printed on written communications sent home to parents. The mission statement was reviewed many times in homeroom at the beginning of the school year. When the school year begins, administrators and guidance counselors hold meetings with each class to discuss the school's expectations. However, it appears that many parents are unfamiliar with MHS's learning expectations and many students are unfamiliar with the social and civic expectations although all students must complete forty-eight hours of community service, reflecting the social and civic expectations in the mission statement. School spirit is evident and students display a very high level of pride in their school. MHS has been successful in promoting the mission statement and has made progress in generating a positive school culture. Increased use of the mission statement will help guide decision-making in the area of policies and procedures. (self-study, mission committee, students, teachers, administrators)

The school does not regularly review the mission statement and expectations for student learning by using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards. The school needs a process to collect and analyze data to use to evaluate whether the mission and expectations for student learning reflect the community's beliefs and student needs. School leaders explain this is because the mission is so new. The previous mission statement was created for the 2000 NEASC visit and was not reviewed until it was time to create the current mission statement. This administration believes in a mission-driven school and has identified the need to institute a review process to ensure that the expectations continue to meet students' needs, community expectations, and state and national standards. Some faculty members have not yet embraced the new mission, expectations for student learning, and school-wide rubrics, however. With necessary faculty ownership and a comprehensive process to review and revise the mission and expectations for student learning, MHS will have an effective way to measure whether the chosen mission can guarantee that all students have an opportunity to achieve academic, civic and social success and keep the entire school community aware of advances in educational theory and policy requirements. The school needs to develop a plan to review the mission statement to determine if it reflects student needs. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team, panel presentation, students, administrators)

Commendations

1. Prominent display of the mission statement and learning expectations throughout the building
2. Clarity of the mission statement and learning expectations
3. Students' participation in the development of the logo and motto
4. The principal's leadership to support and implement the mission and expectations
5. Mission statement's accurate reflection of the beliefs and values of the school community
6. The school's efforts to improve the school's climate of tolerance, respect, and trust

Recommendations

1. Create a formal and regular review process for the mission statement and learning expectations that includes all stakeholders
2. Develop and implement a process to ensure that the mission and expectations are used when developing policies and procedures
3. Generate a formal process to gather and analyze data on how well students are achieving the learning expectations
4. Formalize a process to assess the school's progress in achievement of the civic and social expectations

2

CURRICULUM

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

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

10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum

Conclusions

Each curriculum area at Melrose High School (MHS) has identified the school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible. The school's mission statement is posted in every classroom along with the ten expectations for student learning. The mission statement also appears in the program of studies and the student handbook. Specific learning expectations accompany the description of each course in the program of studies. Each curriculum area has also identified school-wide academic expectations for which it is primarily responsible, and some curriculum areas have also identified school-wide academic expectations for which they have secondary responsibility. School-wide academic expectations are clearly identified in all curriculum areas. (teachers, curriculum guides, observations, self-study)

There are inconsistent opportunities for students to practice and achieve the identified expectations. The curriculum materials are not expressed in a common format, making it difficult to determine if the curriculum is aligned with the school-wide expectations. MHS has created core assignments and open-response questions in each academic area that correspond to the school-wide learning expectations in an effort to ensure that all students have an opportunity to practice and achieve some of those expectations. There is a variety of opportunities for students to receive additional academic support including extra help sessions offered by all teachers and programs developed by the student assistance team. MHS is in the process of implementing a co-teaching model with special education teachers to assist all students in achieving school-wide expectations. Although efforts have been made to assure that course work is aligned with these expectations, there is no method available to assess the effectiveness of these efforts. Thus, the school needs to implement a system to assess student achievement in mastering school-wide expectations so that it can ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each expectation. (self-study, teachers, central office administration, administration)

Melrose High School has available the following curriculum materials: district-wide benchmarks by content area, course syllabi including the Massachusetts Curriculum frameworks, the program of studies, common core assignments and open response questions. However, the written curriculum that is posted on the school's website is not in a common format at MHS that prescribes content, integrates school-wide learning expectations, suggests instructional strategies, and suggests assessment techniques including the use of the school-wide rubrics. Teachers in English and foreign language have completed significant work in curriculum development, assessment and instructional and more work needs to be completed in the other content areas. Instructional strategies and prescribed content come from collaboration among teachers in each department and the department chairs, but these are not systematically documented for all teachers with notes on their appropriate use. The collaborative work by departments to develop

core assignments has aligned courses with the expectations, but this notation must be included for all learning activities in all levels. There is a curriculum binder on file in the district office that includes for each content area the benchmarks based on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education standards. To be useful for every teacher in the classrooms, the school needs ensure that all curriculum documents are in a common format that includes all this information to inform instruction and integrate and support the learning expectations to guide consistent, effective curriculum delivery to all students and to allow teachers to integrate and improve curricula. (self-study, observations, teachers, central office administration)

Melrose High School has developed core assignments and open-response questions in each content area that all students complete regardless of level. However, the school is still developing a process to document these data to inform curricular decisions. Though school-wide rubrics have been created to ensure that all students are given an opportunity to practice higher-order thinking and problem-solving, there are inconsistencies in the assumptions and practices and the climate of expectation for students in the honors and in the college prep levels. There are opportunities for authentic application of knowledge and skills through the Melrose Senior Internship Program, the community service program, the study abroad programs, and other opportunities integrated directly into the curriculum. Thus, some students are not provided equal opportunity to participate in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. (curriculum standard committee, self-study, classroom observations, students, student work)

The lack of a consistent written curriculum document in all content areas using a clear, balanced format prohibits the determination of appropriate integration, but it is clear that the provided materials do not require consistent depth of understanding over breadth of coverage in many classes. Teachers shared student work during the interviews, but the very small sample of student work in the evidence box did not provide sufficient evidence of reference and use of expectations so depth of understanding cannot be assessed although Melrose High School's curriculum materials include essential questions for every course that could support critical thinking. There is documentation of depth and breadth of content in honors and AP classes so teachers can choose the focus. Some classroom observations did not indicate consistent awareness of the need for high expectations for all students that is identified as a priority in the mission statement. There are no formal interdisciplinary course offerings. Connections to other disciplines take place in some classrooms based on informal arrangements made by individual teachers, but none are documented. However, core assignments and open-response questions in each content area do provide students with an opportunity to think critically, and a process is being developed to measure student achievement of the expectations. Depth of understanding is thus not a focus in many classes, limiting student opportunities to achieve the academic expectations. (self-study, teachers, classroom observations, student work)

The Melrose Senior Internship program, the community service program, the study abroad programs, and other programs associated with specific classes are examples of opportunities for students to extend their learning beyond normal course offerings. An internship provides an opportunity for seniors to spend their final eight weeks of high school shadowing a professional and working in a field that interests them. Students have opportunities to serve in community service, subject-related clubs, athletic and travel opportunities, as well as independent studies

that are available in all departments. Specifically, anatomy and physiology students take part in a day-long shadowing with professionals at the local hospital; students in child development classes visit local daycare centers one day a week to observe and work with professionals. Also available is a dual-enrollment program at Johnson and Wales University. Discussions are currently being held for future extended learning opportunities, for example, a student-operated school store. There are a number of opportunities for students to expand their learning beyond the normal course offerings. (teachers, students, self-study, Endicott Survey)

There is limited curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas at the high school. Department heads are responsible for teachers from grades 6-12 and they meet regularly as a group with the high school principal. Curriculum is a regular topic of these meetings. There are no similar opportunities to meet with the middle school principal so that curriculum coordination and articulation is not currently taking place. The few curriculum materials provided do not provide details necessary to create coordination and articulation within and between content areas. There is currently a pilot program for common planning time for teachers, but shared planning time has not reached a functional level that would support curricular coordination and articulation between academic areas. The recent addition of ‘cracker-barrels’, voluntary meetings with the high school principal to address curriculum issues, is a positive step toward addressing the current deficiencies. Additional formal time is necessary for effective coordination between departments and the sending schools, and this work requires current, complete, understandable curriculum document to proceed effectively. (self-study, teachers, district administrators, parents)

Technology to support implementation of the curriculum has been recently upgraded, but instructional materials, supplies, staffing levels, facilities, and library/media center resources are still lacking. All classrooms at Melrose High School are equipped with SMARTBoard technology, and teachers have been given introductory training. There is a need for additional training to integrate the use of the equipment into the instructional program. Another new technology tool is the implementation of Edline, an online program for teachers to post grades and keep websites with information about courses, homework, and other assignments. The school needs additional instructional materials including textbooks, calculators, and printed materials for the library to further support the curriculum. During the development of the master schedule, efforts are made to keep class sizes below 30 students, but this is very difficult with the annual increase in the student population. Finally, the limited physical space in several triangular-shaped classrooms hinders the teacher’s ability to effectively implement curriculum. While the addition of a SMARTBoard in each classroom is notable, the need for textbooks, calculators and additional resources for the library/media center limits the implementation of the curriculum. (facility tour, classroom observations, parents, curriculum standard committee, teachers, administrators)

Faculty members have participated in some development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. The development of the core assignments in each academic area and the creation of open-response questions took place during department meetings. The students’ performances on core assignments are reviewed by teachers, and revisions are made to the assignments. There is a need to evaluate students’ performance on the open-response questions in all content areas as well. This work with student data is part of the curriculum revision process, and expanded

opportunities are needed for more time for curriculum development. Without additional time to evaluate and revise the curriculum, students will have inconsistent opportunities to meet the school-wide expectations and course-specific learning goals. (curriculum documents, self-study, teachers, administrators, student work)

Melrose High School has committed some time, financial resources, and personnel to the development of curriculum, but more time is needed. Some teachers have common planning time to review and reflect upon curriculum. The addition of common planning time has provided teachers with the time to review curriculum and begin discussing student work. Several teachers meet over lunch or after school to informally discuss curriculum. There are not enough financial resources or professional development made available for teachers to work collaboratively on curriculum development. While a pilot program using common planning time is available for some teachers, expanding the time to include all teachers and ensuring a focus and a protocol would support development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. (curriculum standard committee, self-study, teachers, administration)

Melrose High School has had some professional development activities that support revisions in curriculum, but more time is needed. MHS has initiated a program where pairs of teachers with common courses are given common planning time. Teachers relate different levels of effectiveness with the common planning time pilot program. Currently, the school is working toward providing professional development to the entire faculty by establishing a curriculum council and purchasing web-based software to begin the Curriculum Mapping process pre-K through grade 12. There is a need to provide more professional development activities for this implementation, but financial constraints have limited the opportunities offered to teachers. Since development and implementation of the curriculum is an ongoing process, teachers need more time to develop a standardized curriculum format and use it to produce needed curriculum documents. (teachers, self-study, classroom observations, Endicott Survey)

Commendations

1. Each curriculum area has adopted academic expectations for which it is responsible
2. There are core assignments and open-response questions for all courses
3. Progress in curriculum development made by the English and Foreign Language departments
4. The opportunities to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and school campus
5. Addition of common planning time for some teachers to review curriculum
6. Expansion of technology equipment throughout the school to support the curriculum

Recommendations

1. Create a formal, written, standardized curriculum using a complete curriculum format
2. Require high expectations for all students as defined in the mission
3. Ensure academic rigor and equity of opportunity in non-college course curricula
4. Describe the process used to appropriately integrate curriculum
5. Develop and implement a plan to emphasize depth over breadth of coverage throughout the curriculum
6. Increase the opportunities for formal curriculum coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as the sending schools in the district
7. Provide sufficient time and financial resources to develop, evaluate, and revise curriculum
8. Provide resources for additional instructional materials and resources for the library/media center that support the curriculum
9. Provide additional training to integrate the SMARTBoard and other technology into the curriculum
10. Purchase sufficient curriculum materials, including textbooks for implementation of the curriculum

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

3

INSTRUCTION

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

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

Conclusions

Some Melrose High School faculty members' instructional strategies align with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Each department has identified primary and secondary responsibilities for specific learning expectations. Departmental core assignments are aligned with the learning expectations for which each department is responsible. Students in all levels of courses complete the same core assignments and are assessed using the same rubrics. Several teachers post the learning expectations will be covered in the day's lesson. As a result, many students are aware of the mission statement and learning expectations as they relate to instructional practices. Some instructional practices reveal a lack of high expectations, thereby leading to inconsistency in seeking challenge for all students, infrequent application of higher-order thinking skills, and insufficient time on task. Some students do not have equal opportunity to meet the academic expectations of the mission statement. Thus, review of the meaning of mission principles in relation to classroom practices may reveal needs for professional development in specific student-centered teaching strategies. (panel presentation, classroom observations, student shadowing, teachers, department leaders, self-study)

The Melrose High School faculty sometimes employs instructional practices that personalize instruction, make connections across disciplines, engage students as active, self-directed learners, facilitate critical thinking, provide opportunities for students to apply what they have learned, and promote student self-assessment and self-reflection. Teachers personalize instruction and encourage self-directed learning by allowing students to choose their own topics for research projects, design their own lab experiments, or write their own problems to solve. Students can also choose among five different foreign languages. Independent study courses allow students to choose subjects of interest that may not be available in the program of studies. Variety of strategies of instruction and assessment serve all student learning styles as well. The co-teaching model provides students with both a content teacher and an instructional specialist, which also allows for personalized attention to needs and instruction. However, the absence both of training and of common planning time limits the potential success of such a model. As enrollment increases and staffing remains level, teachers find it increasingly difficult to personalize their instruction. While there are individual efforts to make connections across disciplines, interdisciplinary study is not a formal teaching strategy at Melrose High School. Some examples of students learning across disciplines are: English teachers providing historical background for literature, foreign language classes incorporating literature, art, history, and geography into their lessons, and science classes applying math concepts to solve problems. Students engage as active learners in a variety of ways including: working cooperatively, participating in Socratic seminars, PowerPoint presentations, engaging in role-playing, devising hypotheses and then performing science experiments, practicing public speaking, creating ecosystems, filming and editing videos, and teaching mini-lessons to their peers. Not all students are involved in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding, however. There are low expectations for students in many classroom settings that also involve teacher-directed lessons, insufficient time on task, and passive learners not fully engaged. Parents also express concern over the absence of high expectations in some classes, suggesting that this depends on the teacher and noting particularly the philosophy of the level of the course that restricts student opportunity. Melrose High School provides opportunities for students to apply what they have learned through participation in an internship program, job shadowing, foreign exchanges and academic extra-

curricular activities to expand their classroom knowledge. Ninety percent of teachers reports providing students with various opportunities for self-assessment and self-reflection. In some classes, students correct homework on their own or with a partner. Many departments offer students the opportunity to reflect on or revise their work at the end of assignments, assessments, or projects. For example, in English classes students maintain writing portfolios and reflect on their progress at the end of each year. In foreign language classes, students are encouraged to correct and reflect on their mistakes on written assignments. Student work and classroom observations reveal large discrepancies in the opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking and higher order thinking from class to class and level to level, leading to inequities among the learning experiences for some students. (student shadowing, students, teachers, self-study, classroom observations, parents, Endicott Survey)

Melrose High School teachers solicit feedback from students and colleagues as a means of improving instructional practices. Eighty-seven percent of teachers reports seeking feedback from their students, and 61% of teachers frequently seek feedback from other teachers. The expansion of the mentoring program to two years has allowed new teachers to receive continued feedback about their instructional practices from their mentor. Some teachers solicit student feedback at the end of units, at the end of a marking period, upon completion of an assignment, or at the end of the year. Only 35% of students agrees that they are asked for input to improve instruction. Melrose High School teachers do not solicit feedback from parents and community members as it pertains to improving instructional practices. Also, despite a newly implemented initiative to collect data via a walk-through protocol used by administrators and department chairs, teachers report that feedback is not delivered to them in a timely manner and in some cases not at all. Additionally, feedback from formal administrative evaluations is ineffective as a means of improving instruction. Teachers would benefit from more direct, frequent, formal feedback about instructional practices from supervisors, parents and students. (instruction standard committee, teachers, self-study, Endicott Survey, students, classroom observation)

Teachers at Melrose High School are expert in their content areas, knowledgeable about current research in effective instructional approaches and reflective about their own practices. More than 75% of teachers has a master's degree, and 98.6% of teachers is highly qualified. Department chairs share information relating to their content areas and best practices at department meetings and through email. Teachers share current research in their field with their students, access materials from professional organizations, and attend professional conferences. Some departments use meeting time to share best practices and current research from colleague to colleague. Mentors often share both content and pedagogical expertise with their protégés. The implementation of core assignments has provided teachers with increased opportunities to reflect on their instruction and revise their practices accordingly. The faculty would benefit from more regularly scheduled opportunities to reflect on their practice and deepen knowledge in their content area. (self-study, central office administrators, teachers, instruction standard committee)

Melrose High School faculty members engage in informal collaboration to discuss instructional strategies. Greater than 90% of teachers reports discussing instructional strategies with their colleagues. Development and revision of core assignments have provided an ongoing opportunity for teachers to share instructional practices. Common planning time provides some teachers in each department with an opportunity to work together to improve instructional

practices. The potential effectiveness of common planning time is mitigated by a lack of articulated expectations for purposeful cooperation of colleagues in the same department. In addition, some of the teachers who co-teach do not have common planning time to discuss instructional practices. Some department members eat lunch together, and informal discussions take place around teaching and learning. New teachers have an opportunity to discuss instructional strategies with their mentors as part of the formal mentoring program. Several teachers are involved in a “Looking at Student Work” group which provides specific protocols to reflect upon and revise instructional practices. More beneficial discussions will ensue as more teachers are trained in this methodology. The lack of formally scheduled time for teachers to collaborate limits the discussion of instructional strategies. (teachers, self-study, department heads, Endicott Survey)

Updated technology is pervasive throughout the building and supports teaching and learning in some classes. Teachers integrate SMARTBoard technology into the planning and delivery of their lessons. Some teachers use Smart Notebook software to share images, maps, paintings, or primary sources. Furthermore, teachers use the interactive components of the SMARTBoard to engage students of different learning styles. Students use the SMARTBoard to present projects using PowerPoint. Students in some mathematics classes use graphing calculators to enhance their understanding of the material. Teachers regularly bring their classes to the computer labs for various activities including Web Quests, on-line research, and to use Geometer’s Sketchpad. The foreign language teachers utilize the language lab for listening and speaking in the target language. Some teachers use Edline and Gradequick to efficiently and accurately keep and share assessment data and assignments with students and parents. Students take advantage of computer aided design, animation, and video editing classes. The amount of technology integration is directly related to the level of expertise of the individual teacher, however. Technology use by teachers that would be expanded and further integrated into the instructional program with additional training will be facilitated by consistent professional development in technology and opportunities for teachers to share information and experience. (teachers, self-study, student shadowing, classroom observations, students)

Melrose High School faculty members consistently report that the school’s professional development is inadequate. Melrose High School teachers have two professional development days throughout the school year. In preparation for NEASC accreditation, two delayed starts were added to the schedule. Many teachers state that continuing this practice would be beneficial to improving instruction as it would allow time for additional professional development as well as common planning time. Melrose High School has established a new committee of faculty members to plan teacher-driven professional development. Teachers also make suggestions for professional development topics in a needs assessment survey at the end of each year. Across all departments, teachers cite a need for content-specific as well as technology-focused professional development. Although the co-teaching model has been successful in some classes, additional training would be beneficial to set and clarify expectations for both the content teachers and the instructional specialists. Partnering with neighboring towns and utilizing in-house expertise have been effective methods of providing professional development on a limited budget, and continuation of this practice is encouraged. Teachers also attend conferences and find other sources of professional development individually. Additional

professional development in technology integration and content areas would improve instruction. (self-study, teachers, school committee, department heads, central office administrators)

The teacher supervision and evaluation process is not valued by teachers as a means for improving instruction. Supervisors observe non-professional status teachers twice a year for each of their first three years and formally evaluate professional status teachers once every two years. The current evaluation instrument includes indicators that cannot be assessed during a classroom visit and fails to provide a true representation of teachers' strengths and needs. Teachers report confusion about the tool. Furthermore, the checklist structure of the instrument is impersonal and inhibits genuine feedback about improving instruction. The implementation of the walk-through protocol last year has provided an opportunity for less formal observations and feedback. However, teachers report that follow-up discussions rarely take place. The current evaluation process does not provide sufficient input to assist teachers in improving instruction. (teachers, administrators, department heads, self-study)

Commendations

1. The development and use of core assignments and open-response questions
2. The variety of instructional strategies and practices in some classrooms
3. The expansion of the formal mentoring program to two years
4. The environment of collegial cooperation and support
5. The emerging use of technology to support instruction
6. The use of late start school days to facilitate continuing collegial professional development

Recommendations

1. Address the discrepancy for high expectations in some classes
2. Ensure that all students receive instruction and practice in higher order thinking
3. Develop and implement lessons and assignments that promote critical thinking for all students
4. Increase active engagement for all students
5. Review current staffing levels based on the increase in the student population and provide sufficient teachers to ensure effective instruction
6. Provide timely feedback to teachers after "walk-through" observations

7. Provide additional formal opportunities for teachers to collaborate and reflect about instructional practices and establish dedicated protocols for examining student work and discussing curriculum and instruction
8. Develop clear expectations and provide training for teachers participating in the co-teaching model
9. Provide professional development to support the full integration of technology and meet teachers' identified needs
10. Restructure the teacher evaluation process to focus on the improvement of teaching and learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

4 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

Melrose High School (MHS) has developed a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics. It is clear that over the last several years the MHS community has developed a mission based on high expectations for all students. Although the school promotes high expectations and has developed rubrics to assess those school-wide outcomes and expectations, the consistent use

of these instruments varies greatly across departments. Throughout MHS, departments are using the school-wide rubrics on a quarterly basis when assessing students' core assignments and open-response questions. The rubric for writing effectively using Standard English is used throughout classrooms in a variety of departments. It is clear that students were familiar with the rubric for demonstrating the ability to problem-solve effectively. However, all school-wide expectations rubrics are not consistently used for assessment within the departments or across the school. Although there has been an attempt to analyze student assessment data within the departments, the absence of a systematic process and a designated time for teacher groups to evaluate student progress together provides only minimal analysis of student proficiency and little consistency in the use of expectations. (classroom observation, teachers, administrators, parents, self-study, student work)

The MHS professional staff is working towards using data to assess the success of the school in achieving civic and social expectations. MHS has identified civic and social expectations in the mission statement and developed rubrics to correspond with those expectations. Different departments have also taken responsibility for assessing the varied civic and social expectations. The rubric to demonstrate good citizenship assesses students on meeting the expectation of 48 hours of community service to graduate and recognizes students who exceed this expectation. The guidance department curriculum incorporates formal recognition of the civic and social expectations. There is a variety of clubs and activities at MHS that allow students to meet their civil and social expectations. Although the school generates statistical discipline reports, this information is not formally shared with faculty members. The faculty thus has identified the civic and social expectations, but there is no formal use of collected data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations beyond that of students reaching the community service hours required for graduation. The faculty and administration have identified the need to gather more substantial data in order to assess students on these expectations and effectively report the information back to students, parents and community. This data collection and review plan will allow teachers to further develop rubrics and assess the school's and individual students' achievement of the school-wide civic and social expectations. (classroom observation, teachers, administrators, parents, self-study)

Teachers communicate curriculum area learning expectations to students in the classroom in different ways. The school-wide expectations are posted within classrooms, and departments have taken responsibility for communicating and assessing certain expectations. It is clear that many teachers post a daily agenda with learning objectives on the board or the SMARTBoard. Students know what the learning expectations are for the day. Students at a variety of levels in a variety of subject areas say they generally understand what is expected of them for their classroom work. Teachers consistently use cover sheets on core assignments that not only describe the assignment and assessment criteria but also list the learning outcomes and relevant course or school-wide expectations. Teachers report that core assignments and open response questions used across the curriculum have improved writing overall. Student work from several departments shows use of course or department-specific rubrics, but school-wide rubrics are not commonly used as an assessment tool. It is not clear that how students are performing is generally assessed based on all the school-wide rubrics. In addition, students at the honors and AP levels report that teachers across the curriculum also provide exemplars to inform students of the expected quality of work, particularly in regard to the open response and core assignments, but also for lab reports, projects, and research papers. This greatly assists students to understand

rubric use. In order for school-wide and departmental rubrics to follow the principles outlined in the mission statement, consistent clarification of academic expectations and course-specific learning goals is necessary to inform students of the requirements to achieve the school-wide expectations. (classroom observations, teachers, administrators, parents, self-study)

Teachers at MHS develop classroom assessments based on school-wide rubrics and often develop assessments based on course-specific rubrics. Course-specific rubrics have been developed, and several teachers report working to develop more of their course-specific rubrics based on school-wide expectation rubrics. Students are generally aware of the writing and problem-solving rubrics although the other school-wide rubrics do not seem to be consistently utilized and so are less known. Student work samples demonstrate that teachers use specific learning criteria to assess student work, but the specific language used for the criteria varied greatly across the school and even within departments. Thus, there is no uniformity across departments in the form and use of exemplars and rubrics for assessment. Students would greatly benefit from more consistency in the language of expectations and with regular use of all of the school-wide rubrics. Refinement of the rubrics and connection to classroom assessments would greatly assist students in meeting the school-wide academic expectations. (classroom observations, teachers, administrators, parents, self-study)

Teachers at MHS use various assessment techniques that acknowledge students' learning styles to determine student competence in subject areas. Examples of assessment tools used at MHS include pen and pencil tests (matching, short answer, and open-ended questions), quizzes, homework assignments, PowerPoint presentations, posters, open-response questions, writing stories and essays, research papers, and individual and group presentations. Although there are examples of these techniques, there is no consistency within and among departments. Some students are given opportunities to demonstrate their learning in creative and unique ways. Examples include comic book translation into a foreign language, skits, videography, and performance-based demonstrations of competency. The faculty at MHS has recently focused their efforts on developing rubrics that guide learning. Although there are school-wide rubrics and departmental rubrics, consistency from teacher to teacher and department to department in use and interpretation were not uniformly demonstrated. The faculty and administration of MHS acknowledge the continual evolution of multi-assessment approaches centered on rubrics. A review of documents indicated minimal utilization of rubrics from the available samples of student work. In addition, there is acknowledgement of rubric development, but there was minimal demonstrated school-wide use. Although there is a level of commitment to move in this direction, the documents reviewed do not demonstrate proficiency by faculty and students in effectively using the descriptive nature of the school-wide and departmental rubrics. The school must encourage or mandate consistent, frequent use of rubrics to ensure the consistency of assessment and the school's ability to assess student growth over time. (classroom observations, teachers, administrators, parents, self-study)

The staff and administration worked collaboratively over the past three years to design rubrics and align assessments. Although there has been work on assessment and rubric development, there was little demonstration of a direct connection to scope and sequence of the curriculum based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Currently, some teachers formally meet to discuss student work and assessments, and others meet informally using common preparation

times and time before and after school. Monthly department meetings allow collaboration on curriculum and instruction facilitated by the department chair. However, the fact that there is limited common planning time and professional development time for faculty members limits discussion of student work and assessment practices across the curriculum. The faculty has not adopted a formal protocol to examine of student work. Although some faculty members use student assessments to initiate changes in the curriculum, utilizing for example, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores, departmental assessments, and advanced placement (AP) test scores to propose changes, this practice is not consistent across all the disciplines. Increasing the dedicated time and refining the process for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work would inform the revision of the curriculum and improve instructional strategies. (classroom observations, teachers, administrators, self-study)

The MHS professional development program provides only minimal opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing student assessment strategies. The school calendar includes two full days of professional development, opening day and one full day of professional development during the school year. The professional development training sessions in the past have included specific sessions in standards-based instruction and assessment. Professional development specifically related to the NEASC self-study has also been the focus of professional development over the past year. Two delayed start days were added during the previous year to complete the self-study. In addition, professional development opportunities have been provided to help teachers to implement effective classroom assessment strategies as well as to utilize student data to develop instructional units that included specific teaching strategies and assessments. Thus, teachers were recently provided with some opportunity to develop student assessment strategies through professional development. While some teachers have developed successful assessment strategies, additional opportunities are necessary for all teachers to develop a broad range of assessment strategies. The establishment of time for collegial exchange and a protocol to do so with professional development such as that offered through Professional Learning Communities would greatly assist the school in achieving goals of improvement of teaching and learning. (classroom observation, teachers, administrators, self-study, Endicott Survey)

The faculty at MHS has no formal process for communicating individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families. Students and parents are made aware of school-wide academic expectations through the MHS Student Handbook and the school's website. At the beginning of each semester, teachers distribute course expectations that include grading policies and procedures. While student academic progress is communicated to students and parents through progress reports that are issued mid-way through each marking period and report cards that are issued at the conclusion of each marking period, there is no mechanism to demonstrate to students and parents the students' progress toward achieving the school-wide expectations. Some special education students also take home daily progress logs regarding academic achievement that are signed by parents and returned to the teacher. Parent/teacher conferences take place twice a year, usually after the first and third term report cards are issued. Individual MCAS and PSAT scores are also sent home. Some teachers have started utilizing Edline to communicate individual student academic progress. However, there is no formal method that ensures that members of the school community or the public have clear information about the school's progress in meeting the school-wide expectations expressed in the mission statement. (classroom observations, teachers, administrators, parents, self-study)

Commendations

1. The development of a mission based on high expectations for all students
2. The use of the school-wide rubrics for writing and problem-solving
3. The development of a formal program to look at student work
4. Teacher use of a variety of assessment techniques to meet different learning styles
5. Challenging assessments in honors and AP classes

Recommendations

1. Use teacher analysis of student assessment data to inform instructional and assessment practices
2. Develop and implement a plan to ensure the process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in the mission based on school-wide rubrics is consistently utilized by all teachers
3. Develop a procedure to assess the school's progress toward achieving the school-wide social and civic expectations
4. Develop and implement a plan to communicate individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families
5. Expand the formal opportunities for teachers to review student work and the results of student assessments
6. Explore Professional Learning Communities as a vehicle to improve instruction and assessment
7. Provide professional development for all teachers to develop a broad range of assessment strategies

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD

5 LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

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

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

9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.
11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning

Conclusions

The school board and superintendent have ensured that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. The administrative team consists of the principal and two assistant principals who have begun to work collaboratively to fulfill the day to day responsibilities of the school. The principal has been in his position for four years, of the two assistant principals, one has served for ten years, and the other is new to the position. The school board has shown confidence in the leadership of the superintendent and high school principal. The school board looks to these leaders for their expertise and to set the educational agenda. The school board members voice their respect for the principal's ability to lead the school and he also serves as a formal mentor for new district administrators. The principal is noticeably in the hallways before and after school and during the passing of classes. As a result of a level-funded budget for the past four years, the principal has limited options to adjust the budget to fit the needs of the school; however, with the confidence of the school board and superintendent, the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. (school board, administrators, central office administrators, teachers, self-study, students)

The principal provides leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision and focus for learning. The faculty council has been reinstated by the principal. There are

monthly faculty meetings, department meetings, site council meetings, and a leadership committee. The principal is present at all department meetings in a supportive role. The contract designates department heads as primary evaluators and instructional leaders. Department heads and building administrators conduct paired walkthroughs for frequent walk-through observations and formal observations of educators. The principal has a clear vision that all students can achieve high expectations. The principal provides leadership in the school by including department heads in the shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning. (teachers, teacher leaders, department leaders, self-study)

The principal has provided a range of opportunities for teachers and administrators to serve in leadership roles within the school. Recently, assistant principals have been included on the leadership council. Teachers serve as mentors, department heads, members of the PTO, faculty council and site council members, advisors to clubs and activities, members of department curriculum committees, and as professional development resources for their peers. Teachers participated in numerous leadership roles during the NEASC self-study and accreditation process. Teachers and administrators are afforded numerous opportunities to serve in leadership roles. (teachers, support staff, administrators, Endicott Survey, self-study)

The organization of the school and its educational programs work to promote the school's mission and expectations. Student course offerings at Melrose High School are designed to support the varying academic abilities of all students by offering college preparatory, honors, and advanced placement courses. Students consult with teachers and guidance counselors to make appropriate course selections. Parents have the right and are given an opportunity to override these recommendations. The high school partners with The Northeast Regional Vocational High School that allows students to attend who wish to pursue vocational training. The guidance department works with students who may require alternative programs such as the GED program, night school, summer school or dual enrollment through state universities. The guidance department offers programs to all grade levels such as; orientation and study skills for freshmen, career awareness for sophomores, college research process for juniors, and the college application process and transition process for seniors. The organization and structure of the educational program promotes the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (support staff, self-study, department leaders, students)

Student grouping patterns do not reflect the diversity of the student body and do not foster heterogeneity. Special education students are assigned primarily to co-taught classes. College preparation 2 courses are co-taught by a special education teacher, a regular education teacher, and a paraprofessional where required by an IEP. CP2 classes include a majority of identified special needs students. This grouping model does not reflect the diversity of the student body and foster heterogeneity. The students in these inclusion classes do not have equal access to the same core curriculum and learning experiences as regular education students. It also appears that the academic expectations assessments for these students are not conducted to the same high expectations as other "higher level" classes and as proposed in the mission. In addition, the classes that really support the academic expectations are clearly those reserved for advanced placement and honors students. The current grouping patterns do not reflect the diversity of the

student body and foster heterogeneity or support the school's mission. (teachers, student shadowing, school board, support staff).

The schedule is not necessarily driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning, and it hinders the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The master schedule is developed by student course selections. The current daily schedule was already in place before the newly revised mission statement was adopted. The high school has a rotating seven-period schedule whereby six classes are rotated daily except the first period. The first period of the day allows music students opportunities to participate in ensembles that are directed by both middle school and high school personnel. Co-teaching courses are taught by a regular education teacher together with a special education teacher, but special education teachers are randomly assigned to these co-teaching assignments without regard to their own area of expertise or caseload. This hinders a true co-teaching experience for students with the unpredictable variety of knowledge in educators. The school has begun a common planning time program for teachers to work on improvements in curriculum, instruction, and assessment and to develop interdisciplinary teaching activities. The current schedule that randomly assigns co-teachers and does not provide common planning time does not support effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (department leaders, classroom observations, teachers)

Meaningful roles in the decision-making process are accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. The decision-making process follows several avenues. The faculty council contributes to developing and renewing school policies. The school site council consists of the principal, the assistant principals, teachers, parents, community members, and students; this council meets monthly to write and review progress on the school improvement plan. Students share their ideas through many committees, such as student council, student government, school council, and through a member of the school board. The parent teacher organization (PTO) is made up of highly involved parents who have monthly meetings with the principal to discuss what is happening at the school and possible ways they can help. Focus committees have been formed on an as-needed basis, such as the professional development committee and the student handbook committee. There is a number of opportunities for students, faculty, staff members and parents to serve in the decision-making process in the school. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team, administrators)

The current number of students assigned to teachers does not meet the learning needs of individual students. The student population has grown by more than 100 students within the past four years, but staffing levels have not changed. Class sizes are created by the number of student requests. Every effort has been made to keep classes under 30, but in the 2009-2010 school year, there were 26 classes with over 30 students. In a class this large, it is difficult for teachers to meet the individual needs of students by providing sufficient personalization and to ensure student achievement of school-wide expectations. The teacher-to-student ratio has been reduced by the formation of co-taught courses, but this is not sufficient to reduce the overall student load. (self-study, teachers, department leaders, support staff, administrators)

There is no formal ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning. Students do not go to their homerooms daily. The high school has recently implemented the use of an alternative "activity day" schedule in which all classes are shortened to 48 minutes, including one 48 minute "activity period" that occurs twice a month. This schedule allows flexibility to accommodate school-wide assemblies, special events, and advisory periods. Other than visits to a student's guidance counselor, there is no formal program that personalizes each student's educational experience. (students, teachers, self-study)

The professional staff does some collaborating within and across departments in support of learning for all students. A professional culture that promotes both student learning and well-being are limited by the lack of shared planning periods for teachers. A common planning time pilot program was initiated during 2009-2010 school year by volunteer teachers who formally meet with others who teach the same course. Discussion topics include learning expectations, consistent grading standards, and the quality of student work, instructional practices, and curriculum revisions. This program has continued into the 2010-2011 school year. Department meetings are held monthly to discuss learning expectations, consistent grading standards, quality of student work, and instructional practices, and to work on curriculum revision. Informal meetings among teachers occur regularly to work on and discuss curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The *Looking at Student Work* group was initiated during 2009-2010 school year and has continued during the 2010-2011 school year, providing a group of volunteer teachers an opportunity to have cross-curricular conversations. The schedule does not allow for cross-department discussions to take place with any regularity, however. Cross-department collaboration is achieved only on a limited basis. Thus, these two groups have discovered that opportunities to plan curriculum and instruction during common planning time and the review of student work leads to improved teaching and learning, and the entire faculty would benefit from formal time to participate in these practices. (teachers, self-study, school leadership team, administrators)

All school staff members are actively involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students. The school nurse-practitioner serves as a liaison between students and teachers regarding health concerns. *Nurse's Notes* are included in the town's weekly newspaper with updates on health and wellness. Guidance counselors and the school psychologist are valuable sources of information and support for students and teachers. Counselors work closely to support student learning and student well-being. The library media specialist assists students by facilitating their research needs and creating a comfortable learning environment. The cafeteria manager strives to create healthy, nutritious food choices for students and staff members. The custodian and staff work to keep the school clean and safe for students and staff. The secretarial staff reflects genuine caring for all students and staff. All school staff members are committed to the promotion of the well-being and learning of students. (support staff, self-study, central office administrators)

Student success is regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed. In the daily announcements read by students, staff members, and administrators over the school-wide PA, students are acknowledged for achievements. Student work is displayed in several display

cabinets that showcase student products and awards. Individual student artwork is displayed throughout the building, and walls are painted to celebrate Melrose pride. Classrooms are tastefully decorated with motivational posters and student work/projects. The publications, *The Thistle*, *The Log*, and *The Imprint* showcase literary and artistic talents. In the fall, the senior breakfast recognizes students who receive the John and Abigail Adams scholarship. College acceptances are highlighted in the star display outside the guidance office. The honor roll is posted throughout the building and published in the local newspaper. A National Honor Society induction ceremony is held each spring followed by graduation in June. Several local newspapers, the school website, and television stations regularly highlight student accomplishments. Student success is regularly celebrated and proudly displayed throughout the school and community. (self-study, department leaders, teachers, parents, support staff)

The climate of the school is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. The majority of students, staff members, and parents feel that the school is safe. The school has an effective crisis management plan that is guided by a set of standard procedures. The school is also active in the STARS/NEMLAC program, a collaborative 10-town responder program and uses available resources in the event of bomb threats and other crisis situations. Discipline data reflects a 72% decline in the total number of infractions between 2007 and 2009. This trend reflects a positive reflection in the improvement of student discipline issues. Bullying awareness has been a shared focus between the middle school and high school. High school students have reflected positively on the effectiveness of this program. School pride is reflected in programs such as spirit week, Mr. Melrose, the art show, freshman orientation, senior awards banquet, scholarship breakfast, and student-run coffee houses/poetry nights. In the event of graffiti in the school, the custodian and administrators respond with its immediate removal. The climate of the school is positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. (students, self-study, Endicott Survey, student shadowing, classroom observations)

The school's mission and expectations for student learning are fully supported by the school board. The Endicott Survey reflected that the school board is in complete agreement with the school's mission and expectations of student learning. This is also shown in the strategic plan which encourages a safe environment for student learning and prepares students to become knowledgeable, respectful, contributing citizens of a global society. The school board supports the mission and expectations for student learning. (school board, self-study, teachers, Endicott Survey)

Commendations

1. The principal's consistent and positive presence in the school building
2. Participation of all administrators on the leadership council
3. Meaningful decision-making roles for students, parents and staff members
4. Common planning time pilot program

5. Caring, student-centered work of support staff including the custodian and secretaries
6. Regular acknowledgement and celebration of students' success
7. Positive, respectful, and safe school climate
8. School board support of the school's mission and expectations for student learning

Recommendations

1. Implement grouping patterns that foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the rotating school schedule and implement changes as necessary to support the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment
3. Provide regular, formal opportunities for professional staff to collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students
4. Create a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning
5. Review the current student load for each teacher, including the co-teaching assignments in light of the increasing student population

SUPPORT STANDARD

6 SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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

All Student Support Services

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

Guidance Services

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

Health Services

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

Library Information Services

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

Special Education Services

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

Conclusions

Student support services at Melrose High School are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Library/media services, health services, guidance, and special education services focus on creating a safe, caring, learning environment for students and staff members. There is a collaborative effort among the various student support services to ensure that students' social and emotional needs are successfully addressed. A continuing dialogue between student services, home, and community are evident via consistent use of email, the school website, Connect Ed, and partnerships with various academic, social, civic, and health resources in the community. The library resource center and guidance department have worked collaboratively to provide easy access to resources for student learning. The guidance

department implements a curriculum beginning in eighth grade through senior year to guide students in the planning and evaluation of a successful academic program to prepare for their future. The school resources for learning successfully create a caring learning environment that meet the social, emotional, and diverse needs of the student population. (panel presentation, teachers, support staff, parents, self-study)

The school has allocated resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. A recent shift in programming in the special education department is beginning to have some impact on the delivery of services to special education students. Until last year, many special education students were taught in small group settings, and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores were less than satisfactory. A new model of co-taught classes has been established and is meeting with mixed results. Some co-taught classes follow best practices while others have not embraced the best practices model. The special education department has implemented learning strategies, reading strategies, life skills, and Best Buddies classes to address the various learning needs of students. The guidance department is available to address the learning needs of all students. The library resource center provides computer access, print materials and online databases to support student learning. All students have equal access to support services to meet school expectations. (classroom observations, teachers, self-study, students)

Melrose High School support personnel enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. There is a student assistance team (SAT) in place to address the increasing needs of students identified with behavioral, emotional, and mental health issues. Staff members utilize the SAT forms to identify potential students who would benefit from evaluation for services. The SAT team meets regularly to review and address the referrals in a timely manner. Community resources are contacted to further assist students whose needs extend beyond school resources. Contact with substance abuse groups and community agencies are arranged by the school psychologist and adjustment counselors who also administer regular assessments for students with cognitive, learning, and social/emotional disabilities. In response to the Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Act federal initiative, a harassment policy has been put into place, and the guidance director serves as the harassment officer. The cooperative efforts among professionals meet the diverse needs of students. (teachers, self-study, department leaders)

Student support services are regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning. In response to MCAS scores, Melrose High School evaluated its delivery of services in small group classes and initiated a new inclusionary model to improve student learning. Results of this initiative should be reviewed to determine improvement in student learning. Health services, guidance, and the library/information programs are evaluated internally on an ongoing basis. Continued evaluation of student support services would reveal the changing needs of student learning. (teachers, self-study, department leaders)

There is a system for ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs. All student support personnel regularly make use of a variety of media to communicate with parents and teachers on an ongoing basis. The school webpage, Connect Ed, email, phone calls, and broadcast information on Channel 15 serve to inform parents, students, and the community of programs and resources available that support identified student needs. Recently, the Edline system has been made available for communication with students and parents/guardians. In addition to bulletin boards, fliers, and the library website, the updated Destiny software program in the resource center allows the librarian to inform parents and students of library resources. The special education department communicates regularly with the guidance department, various students, teachers, and some parents daily. Student support services information is provided in an ongoing and timely fashion to students, parents/guardians, and school personnel. (teachers, self-study, parents, department leaders)

Student records, including health and immunization records, are maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law. Confidential student information in the guidance department, nurse's office, and special education department are secured at the close of school. However, not all teachers had individual copies of student IEPs at the beginning of the school year. Copies of individual educational plans are available in a third floor office, and some teachers are not aware of the required accommodations for their students. The recent addition of locked cabinets for special education records ensures a secure location for the confidential materials. (teachers, self-study, facility tour)

Currently, there are adequate certified/licensed personnel and support staff members to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services. The student-to-counselor ratio of 225:1 is sufficient to support the guidance curriculum and meet the needs of students. Ten full-time educators in the special education department serve to meet the needs of the special education population at Melrose High School. One full-time nurse practitioner provides the services for all students. The library resource center is staffed for an extended day by a certified library media specialist and a paraprofessional. Sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff members are currently in place to provide the support services needed. (self-study, department leaders, teachers)

Melrose High School provides a full range of comprehensive guidance services to all students. The Melrose High School Program of Studies lists the following guidance department services: academic planning and course selection guidance; college and career exploration; monitoring of academic progress; motivating students to develop the skills to plan and implement goals; scheduling maintenance; orientation for new students; personal and emotional counseling; crisis intervention counseling; consultation with parents, teachers, and students; and on-the-spot admissions counseling with area colleges and universities. In addition, the guidance personnel work closely with the special education department, the school psychologist, and the school adjustment counselor. The guidance services staff is an enthusiastic group of individuals who are working to provide the most up-to-date and thorough services, including Naviance, to all students. The services currently provided by the guidance department adequately meet the needs of all Melrose High School students. (teachers, guidance staff, parents, self-study, Endicott Survey)

The school nurse provides a comprehensive health services program to address the needs of all students. The services include health appraisal, counseling, communicable disease control, emergency aids, and first aid. The nurse provides periodic health screenings for all students as required to insure the well-being of all students. The school nurse works closely with the other support service personnel to meet the needs of all students. Current health services provide the level of support necessary to enhance and improve student learning. (support staff, self-study, department leaders, teachers)

The library/information services program and materials are partially integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. Not all teachers make use of the library because of the lack of available materials. Two thirds of the staff members did not consult with the school librarian when developing or revising curriculum. Some of the current collection is outdated and needs to be replaced. Two computer labs are utilized by some teachers for classroom instruction. Full integration of library services and resources would provide greater support to curriculum and instruction. (teachers, Endicott Survey, students, self-study)

The library media specialist is knowledgeable about the curriculum and supports its implementation. The library is staffed by a certified library media specialist who serves on the school curriculum committee. Recent collaboration between the library media specialist and the department heads has increased support for the curriculum. Continued collaboration between the library media specialist and all teachers will increase the support for the implementation of the curriculum. (teachers, self-study, department leaders, administrators)

The library resource center does not offer a wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population to improve teaching and learning. While the library has an extensive selection of up-to-date, online databases, other materials do not support student learning or instruction. The Massachusetts School Library Association recommends school library media centers have a minimum of 24 up-to-date print titles per student. The library resource center currently has just over 10,000 volumes in the print collection, over half of which have a publication date of 1980 or earlier. Given the size and age of the print resources, the current collection is sub-standard. Priority should be given to updating the print resources to better support curriculum and instruction and to meet the diverse interests and needs of students. (students, teachers, self-study, facility tour)

Students, faculty, and support staff have regular access to library information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of the educational experience before, during, and after the school day. The library resource center is open before, during, and after school for student and staff member use. The media specialist reports that students are frequently in the resource center before and after school. Students access the library during the school day from academic classes; there are no study halls in student schedules. Some faculty members report utilization of the library facility for class research during the school day. More frequent access to the library by classroom teachers would expand the use of the services. (students, teachers, self-study, classroom observation, facility tour)

The library/information services program is limited in its ability to foster independent inquiry by students and faculty members because of the lack of a variety of school and community information resources and technologies. The librarian provides inter-library loans with community libraries and offers a variety of online resources. The InfoTrac database for student research is provided to all schools that have a certified library media specialist and is used by

some students. Additional online databases have recently been purchased for student research. The library resource center lacks a variety of up-to-date print resources that would promote independent inquiry by students and faculty members. Updates to the print resources depend upon donations from a variety of sources. A wider variety of materials and technology to support the mission and expectations would improve teaching and learning. (teachers, department leaders, students, self-study)

Policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet. The school board established policies for the selection and removal of school information resources. The Internet access network acceptable use policy was created in 2007 and is available on the school committee website and in the student handbook. Policies are in place and are current. (support staff, self-study, teachers)

Melrose High School provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. Students are referred for the special education services by a wide variety of individuals including parents, teachers, school psychologist, the student assistance team, guidance counselor, or the student. Students are monitored by special education teachers in the classroom setting and one-to-one contact. The Melrose High School Special Education Department is in compliance with local, state, and federal laws. (self-study, department leaders, teachers, district administrators)

Commendations

1. The welcoming environment in the library
2. The collaborative efforts of the support services personnel
3. Regular communication between support service personnel and students, teachers and families
4. The comprehensive services offered by the guidance department
5. The collaborative effort between the nurse and outside agencies
6. The collaboration between the library resource center, area businesses, and the Melrose Public Library to provide additional resources for staff and students

Recommendation

1. Allocate additional funds to update library print materials to support curriculum and instruction
2. Expand the use of Edline software for ongoing communication to students and their parents/guardians
3. Ensure that copies of student IEP's are distributed to appropriate staff

4. Increase communication between special education and regular education teachers about individual student needs
5. Increase teachers' awareness of the available resources in the library resource center

SUPPORT STANDARD

7

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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

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

Conclusions

Melrose High School engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and encourages their participation in school programs and parent support groups. The school uses Connect Ed, an automated telephone system to alert parents to upcoming events and Edline to allow parents to keep informed about their child's assignments and upcoming assessments. Edline is a recent addition to the communication process between school and home. Through Edline, parents are informed eight times a year via progress reports and report cards of their

child's grades in each class. Some teacher websites allow parents to access homework assignments and upcoming assessments. The school website is a source of valuable information for parents, students, faculty members, and the community. There is an active PTO with monthly meetings, and parents are encouraged to join the site council as well. Several other events, including 8th grade orientation, open house, senior/parent breakfast, junior/parent breakfast, freshman night, curriculum night, and financial aid night also provide opportunities for parents to interact with the faculty and staff members. Information is communicated to parents in a variety of ways to engage them as partners in their children's learning. (self-study, parents, teachers, school board)

Melrose High School fosters productive business, community, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. The BRIDGE program located within the high school provides free tutoring to any student by local volunteer experts from the community in a variety of curriculum areas. Local businesses also provide internship opportunities to seniors. The Alliance Against Violence, the Substance Abuse Coalition, and The Human Rights Committee are further examples of school-community partnerships. Some students needing additional class credit have the opportunity to supplement their education with courses at Bunker Hill Community College and North Shore Community College. A bulletin board with job opportunities is posted in the second floor guidance office. The introduction of the Naviance system to students helps facilitate the college application process. Melrose High School actively promotes business, community, and higher education partnerships. (self-study, students, teachers, central office administrators)

The school site and plant do not adequately support all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. Although significant efforts have been made to maximize the space of the aging school building, there are a considerable number of areas that need to be addressed. Each classroom was recently equipped with a telephone, computer, and SMARTBoard. This technological endeavor also required a complete upgrade of the electrical system. However, the maintenance control system is antiquated, and as such, the replacement parts are unavailable. Equipment is replaced only when it can no longer be repaired. On occasion, the grease trap in the cafeteria has overflowed and leaked through to the floor below. The temperature in classrooms varies significantly between hot and cold, and that lack of consistency detracts from student learning. Additionally, in some classrooms, the loud noise from the ventilation system is distracting. Several classrooms have no windows and no provision for natural light. Overcrowded classrooms do not allow teachers and students to move around as needed, and in some classrooms, this can constitute a fire hazard. In at least one classroom, empty boxes were stacked up and being used as a room partition while in another the boxes blocked a second exit. Areas with worn rugs have been "repaired" with duct tape. Throughout the school, the lockers do not provide adequate storage for student books, coats, and other belongings. There is no system to track, report, or prioritize maintenance issues, repairs, and frequency of problems within each mechanical system. Facility deficiencies negatively impact student learning. (facility tour, students, teachers, school support staff, student shadowing)

The physical plant and facilities are in compliance with most federal and state laws and local fire, health, and safety regulations. The school is inspected regularly and is deemed in compliance with state regulations. However, because of the age of the building, additional safeguards are needed to monitor major mechanical systems. Some vent hoods in science rooms are not up to state code and are labeled, "Do not use." This reduces the amount of equipment available to students. In addition, narrow hallways and single-door room accesses on the second and third floors create significant congestion problems during passing time. Emergency exiting

of the facility would be very difficult in these areas. Although these areas in the building complied with building codes during construction, the increasing student population requires more space and better design for safety and learning; there are areas that could cause potential hazards and be a safety issue. (facility tour, self-study, support staff, student shadowing, teachers, administrators)

Most equipment is adequate, properly maintained, and replaced when repairs can no longer be made. Equipment repairs that pose a threat to student safety are immediately addressed. There is no system to track problems and catalogue repairs and to prioritize non-threatening, day-to-day repairs. Requests for repairs are processed through a variety of personnel and dispersed to maintenance. One custodian is available for daily building maintenance and is responsible for the recycling program. The demand for attention to the aging furniture, floors, rugs, and leaks has increased. As aging equipment is replaced, strong efforts are made to purchase green equivalents. A district-wide maintenance team of four individuals is responsible for small repair, plumbing, carpentry, and some automotive repair. The team members are a resource for the high school if needed and are capable of addressing routine maintenance issues. They are also responsible for overseeing the summer custodial plan. However, due to other district priorities and budgetary constraints, they were unable to complete the planned list such as painting, furniture repair, and bathroom upgrades in the summer of 2010. Although the daily cleaning is contracted out to a private company, the resources from that company have decreased over the past few years. Melrose High School is challenged to keep up with the increasing demands for custodial and maintenance services. (facility tour, self-study, support staff, school leadership team, teachers, classroom observations).

The school has a planned program of building and site management that is not adequately funded. A private contracted cleaning service (4 cleaning people and 1 supervisor) for a total of 30 hours per week is responsible for mopping, vacuuming, cleaning all bathrooms and kitchen areas, and sweeping all floor surfaces. However, there is evidence of many neglected areas. Only 20 percent of students in the Endicott Study indicated that the school is clean and safe. In addition, many walls, doors, casings, mopboards, air ducts, vents, and ceiling tiles show evidence of excessive wear and tear that has not been addressed. More specifically, there is at least one classroom with a 12-inch hole in the floor (from a previous installation) that has been boarded over but is still a safety hazard. There is a five-year capital plan (2008–2012) in place that is intended to address these issues. Thus far, two areas have been addressed: replacement of the front entry doors and the electrical system upgrade for SMARTBoards. The generator was replaced four years ago. The next phase of the plan, including replacement of the roof, has had some initial approvals. In the meantime, the roof continues to leak whenever it rains and continuous patching does stop some of the problem. The leaking roof has resulted in wet ceiling tiles and insulation, a potential mold problem. Other projects, including painting walls, renovating bathrooms, and replacing carpets, are on hold. Although Melrose High School has a plan for building and site management, it is currently not adequately funded, and many areas show evidence of deferred maintenance. (facility tour, self-study, student shadowing, classroom observations, Endicott Study, administrators)

The school does not adequately address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs. Melrose High School has a school improvement plan, a three-year technology plan (2007–2010), and a strategic plan (2010–2015). As a result of some implementation, there has been a significant increase in technology for the building that includes SMARTBoards in every classroom, Naviance for the college application process, and Edline to expand communication with students, staff members, and families. A new middle school was

completed adjacent to the high school, and some of the facilities and staff members are shared with the high school, particularly in the area of music. However, there has not been sufficient professional development training to support the increased technology tools. In addition, faculty members agreed to no salary increase for two years (through 2012) in order to prevent loss of staff members. Many of the classrooms are very small and are now overcrowded, but enrollment continues to grow, and students are assigned to the small rooms with increasing class size. The enrollment has increased from 890 students three years ago to 970 for the current year. There is no formal plan to increase staff. All city employees agreed to change health plans in an effort to contain costs and to save jobs within the city, including the school department. Although Melrose High School has a plan to address future programs, it lacks a plan to ensure adequate staffing to accommodate increased enrollment. (self-study, students, teachers, school support staff, observation, facility tour)

The current budget is not adequate to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning. The partnership of the administration, the mayor's office, and the school board has led to increased allocations for the school, as exemplified by the SMARTBoards in the classrooms and the new athletic track/field. Although much of this funding has been through creative collaborative efforts that are effective in the short run, it is not dependable as a regular funding source. The budget for the past 4 years has been level-funded even though the facility needs a roof, classrooms are overcrowded, and regular maintenance is not completed. The budget is annually frozen within the first two months of the school year. The per pupil expenditure has consistently been below the state average. Students pay fees for supplies in certain electives as well as for lockers and to participate in athletics, and they also must purchase their own workbooks for certain courses. Partnerships with community organizations and neighboring towns help defray certain costs, but there is no plan for a reliable source of funding. Attempts to override property tax rate increases to benefit the schools have failed up to now. Textbooks are not regularly replaced, leaving many students with outdated materials. Class sizes which have reached as high as 36 continue to increase, but staffing levels remain constant. Office equipment like photocopiers is not reliable or repaired as readily as needed, specifically during periods of high demand. The inadequate budget does not support all school programs, staffing, equipment, and materials necessary for student learning. (self-study, teachers, school support staff, students, school leadership team)

Faculty and building administrators have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. Faculty members submit lists of needed supplies and repairs annually to their department heads. A master list of needs is maintained by the assistant principal. Curriculum leaders submit budget requests to the principal. Many requests are put on hold indefinitely as there are no funds available. Small requests, such as those for a change in AP programs can be funded, but larger requests, like content-specific text books go unfilled. There is a significant lack of books and materials for social studies classes. Although faculty members provide input to administrators regarding their budgetary needs, limited funding minimizes their actual involvement in the process. (self-study, classroom observations, teachers, school leadership team)

Commendations

1. The installation of SMARTBoards, telephones, and teacher computers in all classrooms

2. The upgraded electrical systems to support the new technology
3. The efforts to replace antiquated equipment with green equivalents
4. The support provided by local businesses and their involvement in school activities
5. The active partnership between the school and the city, specifically the mayor's office
6. The opportunities available through PTO mini grants to fund small projects

Recommendations

1. Replace the leaking roof immediately
2. Develop and implement a plan for the appropriate maintenance and repair of equipment
3. Develop and implement a plan to replace and upgrade the mechanical systems
4. Develop and implement a plan for the ongoing repairs of the current facility
5. Replace the HVAC system
6. Provide learning opportunities for students and parents to assist them to use the new online resources
7. Ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, families, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning
8. Evaluate the performance of the cleaning company to keep the school environment conducive to teaching and learning
9. Evaluate and report on the school site and plant to determine its support for all aspects of the educational program
10. Assess the facility for safety giving particular attention to hallways and exits for emergency evacuations

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 57. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The visiting team members would like to express their appreciation to the school faculty and staff members, students, and community members for the hospitality that was extended during the visit. We were provided with all the materials and required information necessary to develop the report. We successfully completed our work thanks to the support we received.

Appendix A

ROSTER OF TEAM MEMBERS

Evaluator	School
Carol Fritz	Maranacook Community High School Readfield, ME
William Nunnally	Dracut Senior High School Dracut, MA
Maria DiNola	Timberlane Regional High School Plaistow, NH
Kristina Doucette	Londonderry High School Londonderry, NH
Colleen Gacic	Scituate High School Scituate, MA
Anthony Hrivnak	Hanover High School Hanover, MA
Deborah Jordon	Walpole High School Walpole, MA
June Lantry	Oakmont Regional High School Ashburnham, MA
Gary Maestas	Plymouth Public Schools Plymouth, MA
JoAnne McCormick	Dedham High School Dedham, MA
Patricia Menard	Milton High School Milton, MA
Elyssa Miller	Marlborough High School Marlborough, MA
Christina O'Connor	Hingham High School Hingham, MA
Stacey O'Brien	Duxbury High School Duxbury, MA
Roberta Pierce	Gardner High School Gardner, MA

Appendix B

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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