

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

MEDOMAK VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

WALDOBORO, MAINE

SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2006

Peter J. Brown, CHAIR
Thomas Ward, ASSISTANT CHAIR
Harold E. Wilson, PRINCIPAL

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of Medomak Valley 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 (60) days 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 Medomak Valley 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 that 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 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 Medomak Valley High School, a committee of six members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included several parents and students who served during the initial phase of writing the Mission & Expectations statement, however, there were no other parents or students on any of the other standard committees.

The self-study of Medomak Valley High School extended over a period of 24 school months from March 2003 to June 2006. That self-study resulted in a final report, put together in a three-ringed binder; however, it did not include very many supportive materials. The visiting committee was very disappointed by the lack of appropriate, required supporting materials, however, the material that was sent to each committee member arrived in a timely manner. The lack of student and parental input on any of the other Standards but the formulation of the Mission & Expectations Statement was also a hindrance to the work of the visiting committee.

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, Medomak Valley High School also used questionnaires developed by the Global Institute at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for an assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of fifteen evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Medomak Valley High School. The Committee members spent four days in Waldoboro, Maine, 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 from Maine and New Hampshire, including a central office administrator, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Medomak Valley High School. The visiting team built its professional judgment on evidence collected from the following sources:

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 45 hours shadowing 15 students over two days
- a total of 20 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 that will make a decision on the accreditation of Medomak Valley 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.

Teaching and Learning at Medomak Valley High School

Medomak Valley High School has, in its self-assessment, identified its strengths and weaknesses and used the process as a means of identifying a way of examining its programs and services. The visiting committee has endorsed some but not all recommendations and commendations found in the self-study document. This report represents an honest attempt at portraying Medomak Valley High School as a school that should be on a mission of great importance to self-reflect and follow the new leadership now in place to provide all the necessary programs to support its mission and student expectations statement. The report also is an attempt to help provide the school a direction as it seeks to meet the ever-changing needs of its student body. Addressing the prescribed actions in this report will require a total commitment and total collaboration by all stakeholders who are a part of MSAD #40.

The mission and expectations for student learning was formulated in its initial phase by utilizing the ideas of teachers, students, and parents. The mission is based on standards listed in Maine's Learning Results, a document familiar to all teachers and one to which all teachers should be committed. The statement's beliefs are related to collaboration with the community and to being an effective communicator, a confident problem-solver, and an involved citizen. The statement reflects many of the fundamental values of the school community, but the statement is new, and, although all faculty members were given a copy of the statement at the beginning of this school year, it has not been fully internalized or used by the entire faculty. There are no clearly written indicators by which the school assesses student progress in achieving school-wide civic and social indicators and no method of collecting data related to the elements included in the statement. All stakeholders must become familiar with the mission statement and student expectations, teachers must use it in classrooms and lessons, and the entire school community must employ it as a guide during all decision-making processes affecting the school. The current mission statement does not drive or guide procedures, policies, or decisions of the school. Utilizing the data collected will also help in all decision-making processes. There is no formal procedure to provide regular review and revision of the statement.

Medomak Valley High School offers students a variety of courses as well as opportunities in co- and extracurricular activities, providing students with various ways to meet the expectations of the curriculum. The MVHS Freshmen Academy, which is in its first full year of existence for all ninth grade students, is the beginning of a process to lead eventually to group the entire school heterogeneously, except for AP/honors science classes. Teachers associated with the academy are all scheduled for common planning time that gives them the opportunity to plan and discuss educational issues related to their students. The few curriculum guides that have been written are out of date and do not stress a depth of understanding over coverage of content; higher order thinking skills were not evidenced in student work presented to the visiting committee; coordination

of curricula within departments is very limited; and there is little time for cross curriculum articulation. There is a director of secondary school instruction, in his second year, whose duties must still be completely defined. All curriculum documents must be updated or entirely created to provide for all students a documented rigorous curriculum based on the school mission and student expectations statement. When the whole school has joined to accomplish this, student aspirations and achievement can be raised.

Instructional practices vary among all faculty members at Medomak Valley High School, and some of them differentiate their instructional practices depending on the class taught. Recently, a workshop in differentiated instruction was presented, which should serve as the starting point for all teachers to acquire this kind of skill as the school moves toward total heterogeneous grouping patterns. Faculty members use a variety of methods to assess students. Some teachers use rubrics most of the time while others depend on the usual paper and pencil forms of assessment. Some students are given the opportunity to demonstrate and apply the skills and knowledge they have attained. Informal discussion about student work takes place occasionally within departments, but there is no scheduled time available for formal discussions nor is there a climate of collegial intent. Discussions of instructional strategies must be embraced by the entire professional staff. Administrator feedback based on classroom visitations and formal evaluations has been very limited.

Teachers at Medomak Valley use a variety of classroom assessments. Some teachers use rubrics to assess long-term assignments and projects. Written tests, oral reports, group projects, peer input, portfolios, performance and written quizzes are other means of teacher assessment. The results of these assessments and the compilation of that data should serve as a means for the entire professional staff to review and revise curriculum in all departments. Professional development activities for all staff members addressing the many areas of assessment have not been planned or carried out. Teachers are provided with opportunities to attend professional conferences on a requested basis.

Support of Teaching and Learning at Medomak Valley High School

There have been changes in the school leadership team at Medomak Valley as recently as the middle of August when an interim principal was hired and during the accreditation visit when an assistant principal was hired. The new leadership team should provide the impetus to bring the faculty together and provide the leadership necessary to help the school move ahead in a positive direction. The leadership will be best served by utilizing the knowledge and skills of all constituents including parents and students in the decision-making process. All faculty members must put aside personal differences to support the new leadership team to assure the success of the vision of the new team. This leadership team is dedicated to improving the education process at Medomak Valley High School for all students. The Panther Advisory Team (P.A.T.) provides each student with the opportunity to have an adult at school to serve as a mentor. The current communication process must be extended. Although students appear to be aware of important issues, many teachers and parents who are not familiar with Internet use are sometimes left out of the communication loop. It is essential that communication on all levels, from the central office to all community members must improve in order to gain the entire school community support to provide a quality education for all students. Students are generally well-behaved and respectful of each other and the faculty. A sense of school pride is on the increase particularly among the student

body. The faculty and administration acknowledge, celebrate, and display samples of student work in classrooms and school corridors.

Student support services at Medomak Valley High School are available for students throughout the school day. Guidance counselors, special education staff members and the librarian work to help students meet their needs and focus on learning. The lack of a full-time school nurse is a major problem that must immediately be addressed to provide the student body with all of the health services needed as they reach full maturity. The library is open before, during, and after school. The library collection is adequate at best, but the efforts of the librarian to increase the library budget and the use of interlibrary loans make up to some extent in some areas that are lacking. The librarian is not included in curriculum development or discussion in any area but English. Communication with families is done both formally and informally, sometimes using the school web page or e-mail.

The MSAD #40 school community has traditionally supported its school adequately. The five town communities have asked school administrators to practice fiscal restraint and responsibility in their requests to support education. With a new funding formula on the horizon, new and innovative measures will be needed to continue to support the schools financially. In an aging facility, it is necessary that all safety needs and ADA requirements are met. There are issues with some health, safety, cleanliness, and fire exit concerns. Blocking access to fire escape doors, finding storage for wrestling mats and furniture, and disposing of the improperly stored or outdated chemicals in the science area are important issues that must be dealt with immediately. The “glass corridor” must be either repaired or replaced. Although the building is relatively clean, daily maintenance schedules and assigned areas of responsibility for the custodial staff must be addressed. Long-range building and maintenance plans must be formulated and carried out to deal with the areas that need work and the equipment that needs to be repaired or replaced. A proactive plan of action rather than a reactive plan will better serve all the students at Medomak Valley High School.

Very few parents and students were involved with the self-study process, but there were always many parents available to meet with the visiting committee during our four days at Medomak Valley. Perhaps holding meetings in the evening instead of right after school would increase parent participation and support for the total school program. Parents are involved with and supportive of sports programs and booster organizations, but they are not often involved in committee work or programs related to academics. A better communication system must be implemented to include all parents all of the time. Medomak Valley is encouraged to develop ways to increase parent involvement in the decision-making process related to all aspects of the school. Parent and community support for the school will enable it to meet the goals expressed through its mission and expectations for student learning. Many members of the MSAD# 40 school community recognize the strengths and areas of concern highlighted in these paragraphs. This report is thus addressed to the entire school community, including all community members living in the towns of Washington, Waldoboro, Union, Friendship, and Warren, who will find this document to be a valuable tool as they move forward to help provide the best possible programs and opportunities for all students. Medomak Valley High School has many successes to be proud of in both the academic and extra-curricular areas. The members of the visiting committee wish to thank everyone who took part in or were supportive of this process. We want to formally thank the students we shadowed and came in contact with during our visit. The school can be proud of each and every one of them!!

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Medomak Valley High School is located in Waldoboro, Maine, which is in the mid-coast region of the state. Maine School Administrative District #40 (MSAD#40) is made up of the following towns that send students to the Medomak Valley High School: Waldoboro, Washington, Warren, Union, and Friendship.

The population, according to the 2000 census, of the five towns is 13,468. The household median income of the five towns is \$36,602. As of the 2000 census, the percentage of families living under the poverty level was between 3% and 10% depending on the specific town. The unemployment rate was between nearly 2% and just over 5% in 2005, again depending on the specific town.

The major local industries and businesses include fishing, lobstering, education, manufacturing, agriculture, health and social services, and retail trades. The average percentage of local property tax that is allocated to MSAD#40 schools in 2004 – 2005 was 72.48%. The individual towns' taxes are as follows: Friendship – 81%, Union – 71%, Warren – 76.42%, Waldoboro – 73.9%, and Washington – 60%. These figures are based on 100% valuation. A recent change in Maine law has been made and future figures will be based on 50% valuation and 50% student population.

The school district's student population in the year 2005-06 is 2007. The population of the elementary schools, K-6 is 1029; the population of the two middle schools is 296; and the population of the high school is 669, as of February 7, 2006. There are five public elementary schools located throughout the district; Friendship Village School, a K-6 elementary school, is located in Friendship; The Warren Community School is located in Warren and houses grades K-6; Prescott Memorial School is in the town of Washington and is also a K-6 elementary school. Union Elementary School is located in the town of Union and houses K-6, with an attached middle school; The Miller School is in Waldoboro and is also a K-6 elementary school. The two middle schools are the AD Gray School, located in Waldoboro, and DR Gaul School, located in Union and attached to Union Elementary School. Both middle schools house 7th and 8th grade students.

There are several private schools in the area, either Christian academies or community schools for the nontraditional learner: Coastal Christian Academy, Community Bible Academy, His Ambassadors Christian Academy, South Hope Community Church and Christian School have approximately 120 students from the MSAD #40 area in attendance, and Center for Teaching and Learning, Oakenwood School, Riley School, Royal Academy, and Watershed Community School have about 15 district students in attendance. Of these 135 students, 31% are of high school age.

During the school year 2004-2005, the average per pupil expenditure for grades 9 – 12 was \$5,914.35 and in grades K-8 for the same period of time, the average expenditure was \$6,376.00. The State of Maine average per pupil expenditure for a student in grades 9-12 is \$7,205.39, and for students in grades K-8 \$6,100.37.

As of February 2006, there were 669 students in Medomak Valley High School. Of that number, 194 were freshmen, 177 were sophomores, 158 were juniors, and 140 were seniors. The school

encompasses grades 9 – 12 only. Of this student population, there were 2 Asian/Pacific Islander students, 8 Black/Non-Hispanic students, 655 White/Non-Hispanic students, 3 Hispanic students, and 1 Native American/Alaskan student. There are also eleven nonresident students attending MVHS. The student population at the high school has dropped by approximately 70 students in the past ten years. Many of these students are now attending smaller private schools or Christian schools as well as being home schooled.

There are 54 professional staff members at the high school with a teacher/student ratio of 1:12, and there are several independent study opportunities offered to students. The average class size is approximately 15 students, and the average teacher load is approximately 105 students per teacher. This number includes the offering of many semester long courses, thus doubling some teachers' class load (160 students in the course of two semesters rather than 85 or 90 over the course of a year). These numbers don't include advisory teams or study hall students. The normal academic schedule is 370 minutes per day in an alternating block (blue and gold days) with four 80-minute blocks per day.

In 2005-06 school year, the following course groupings existed at MVHS: special ed/life skills, basic, core, tech prep, college prep, honors, and AP levels. However, the district is pursuing heterogeneous groupings for the high school with little or no leveling. During the school year 2005-06, the school instituted a pilot program called The Freshman Academy, which included teaming as its model. This approach was expanded in 2006 – 07, to include the entire freshman class. The faculty members who teach in The Freshman Academy all have common planning time; that is not the case with the rest of the faculty.

The average daily student attendance for the year 2002 – 2003 was 593; for 2003 – 2004 it was 637. The graduation rate, according to data collected from the state for 2002 – 2003 school year, at Medomak Valley High School was 91.19%, and in 2003-2004 it was 82.06 %. The average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score for MVHS students is a combined score of 1030, which is a bit below the state average,

Students at MVHS are recognized in many ways for their accomplishments, including but not limited to: All "A" Luncheon, top boy and girl in each class, academic plaques, student of the month, honor graduates, National Honor Society, DAR Good Citizen Award, principal's award, MVHS Academic Awards Night (Rensselaer College Award, Wellesley Award, etc.), KVAC All-Academic Team, Golden Key Art Awards, National Music Awards for Band and Chorus, the Philbrook Speaking Prizes, and many others. Recently, an award for the team in each of the seasons that has the highest cumulative grade point average (GPA) is rewarded with a plaque that hangs in the school.

As of November 2005, students receiving special education services made up 16% of the student population, and there are no students in bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) courses.

There is a high percentage of students at MVHS in the upper level courses (honors and AP) for the 2006 – 2007 school year. Advanced placement classes are offered in several subject areas and are among the most challenging courses available to students.

The following statistics are available in the guidance office for the post-secondary plans for students in the class of 2005: 35% enrolled in four-year colleges; 16% enrolled in two-year colleges; 11% in other programs; 3% into military service; and 13% of the student population entered the workforce.

There are also ATM capabilities available at the high school. This program is a remote broadcasting service for students who can take classes at other schools, not available at Medomak Valley. However, this program has not been utilized to its fullest capabilities due to scheduling and staffing/administration shortcomings. The University College campus in Thomaston, approximately eight miles away is another option for students to extend their education outside of the regular school programming as is Mid-Coast School of Technology (MCST), approximately 15 miles away in Rockland. There are 398 students at MCST, and 103 of those students are from Medomak Valley High School. Central Maine Community College is also considering offering college level courses for credit to the Medomak students.

As a result of mandates of Maine's Learning Results, the school's mission statement, the leadership committee, No Child Left Behind, and Great Maine Schools, reform is taking place at MVHS. There is a student advisory program called Panther Advisory Teams (P.A.T.) in place where students have access to an adult, not necessarily a teacher the student has in a class. There is also the MVHS Freshman Academy, which has increased common planning time for staff members and given direct accountability to students. The school has been awarded a 21st Century Grant that supports student achievement through extended day programs and summer school for those students who are deficient in particular skills. Beginning in April 2006, SATs were administered to all third-year students. The high school began a school reform initiative in the school year, 2004 – 2005, with the support and assistance of Great Maine Schools. Changes adopted include the "MVHS Freshman Academy", professional learning communities focused on student learning, the use of protocols, and faculty meetings becoming potential professional development activities. Additionally, several faculty members have attended "Differentiated Instruction" training to aid the effort to reduce and finally eliminate tracking.

The Mid-Coast region has a mixture of business offerings that provide support and services at the high school. A primary partnership with area business is the MVHS Cooperative Education Program. The average number of students served ranges from 30 – 45 students per year. Student at MVHS have been invited to participate in the annual business showcase hosted by two local Chambers of Commerce. Students are also encouraged to participate in job shadowing and apprenticeships.

At this point in time, MVHS has no service learning requirements although this graduation component has been discussed in the past and is being looked at for the future. This past October (2005), juniors and seniors participated in a "Futures Day"; while freshman had an orientation day, and sophomores took the PSAT's. Juniors and seniors had a choice of participating in a community service project, visiting a college, or job shadowing, and plans are underway to continue this program.

Data compiled in the course of the accreditation process brought several key issues to the forefront as a list of challenges facing the Medomak Valley School Community:

1. a lack of communication at all levels;
2. facilities and technology that need improvement and updating;
3. clarification of school-wide expectations in the mission statement;
4. implementing the expectations of the mission statement and establishing a process to determine student progress in meeting the expectations;
5. developing methods to increase parental participation and support of the school program.

While there are always good intentions to address these issues and many more not mentioned, the faculty and staff cites scheduling and budgetary constraints that often present roadblocks to meeting solutions. Although some of these concerns are solvable, everyone must work together to help provide solutions. New and creative ways must be found to communicate the needs of MVHS to the community, stressing that high student standards and performance will benefit the entire community and that support of the school district does not always come at a high cost to the pocketbook. Support may mean attending concerts, plays, sporting events, science fairs, and other activities of the students.

Strengths include, but are not limited to:

1. most teachers encourage high standards, deliver a good curriculum, and are caring and knowledgeable;
2. a wide range of learning opportunities is available to students;
3. a commitment to working together with administrators and the community in developing the mission and expectations and implementing school-wide changes to improve and enhance educational delivery to all students;
4. the improved safety for all students in school.

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS**

**MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS
FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT
LEARNING**

THE MEDOMAK VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Medomak Valley High School, through collaboration with the community and home, is to provide a safe environment where students learn skills to be effective communicators, confident problem-solvers, and involved citizens who embody sound character.

Expectations For Student Learning

Communication

- Listen for comprehension
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively
- Understand the need to be an effective communicator

Problem-Solver

- Demonstrate a capacity to understand a problem and use a variety of methods to solve problems

Involved Citizen

- Each student will participate within a community environment

1. Teaching and Learning Standard

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall identify and define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that are measurable and 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 initial development of the mission statement and expectations involved teachers, students, and parents. In October 2003, the mission committee attended a LEAD New England Seminar in preparation for the revision of the school mission statement and expectations. At an evening workshop, participants recorded ideas and organized them into categories (academic, social, civic). In June 2004, a presentation of the mission statement and expectations was given to the school board. The school board followed this presentation with its approval of the funding for the accreditation process. In the spring 2004, a draft mission statement was prepared and given to faculty members, students, and parents for feedback, and the statement was then revised after feedback adjustments. In June 2004, the revised mission statement was again presented to the school board and approved. The development of the mission statement has defined the school district's academic, social, and civic expectations for student learning. Although the mission statement is displayed in classrooms, the library, the industrial arts area, and main office and is contained in all students' agendas, teachers have not embraced how the statement applies to student achievement. The school board mission statement and the high school mission statement are similar in nature, but the school board does not give the mission the prominence it deserves as a guide to all decision-making related to the school. (panel presentation, executive summary, proposed mission handout)

The school's mission statement represents the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning. Teachers, students, and most of the parents interviewed communicate a sense of trust and confidence within the school environment. School communication with parents and the community is accomplished through newsletters, the Power School computer program, and Community of Learners Network (CLN). Community connections have been established through activities like the business leaders breakfast for students and representative area businesses. A pre-apprenticeship program allows students to experience education in fields of work that are available in the local area. Successful completion of the program leads to acceptance into a post-secondary registered apprentice program. These programs have enhanced the development of connections with community business leaders, raised student aspirations, and provided school to career opportunities. There are several students participating in post secondary education who are enrolled at Medomak Valley High School. Establishing partnerships with colleges and community colleges will provide a vehicle for raising aspirations for post-secondary educational opportunities in the local area. (parents/students/teachers, standards committee, program of studies, guidance department)

School-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations are listed in the student handbook and are visible throughout the school. There is one school-wide rubric that measures academic skills including problem-solving and the effectiveness of communication, but the school has not fully defined the civic and social learning expectations so that they are measurable and reflect the school's mission. The school-wide rubric, released for the second time in September, is a new document that hasn't been used by many teachers. Most teachers received this rubric during the first week of school in 2006, so its effectiveness cannot be measured yet. As a result, there is no shared or clear understanding of what a student should know or be able to do before he or she graduates from Medomak Valley High School. (self-study, executive summary, and teachers/students)

A school-wide rubric for problem-solving and communication has been created and approved by the staff with a targeted level of success being a score of 3 or 4 for all students. The indicators of the rubric do not encompass a means for measuring all content areas of the curriculum, and teachers

state that their lack of understanding of the application of the rubric for measuring academic progress is confusing for all. Many faculty members do not know who created the rubric, as there was no opportunity for the faculty members to provide input into its creation. The combination of these concerns combined with the recent distribution of the rubric has resulted in very minimal use by the faculty. The English department prefers to utilize English language arts (ELA) rubrics (the Writing Prompt Scoring Guide and the Writing Scoring Guide Conventions) to assess student work. The special education department also chooses not to use the school-wide rubric as it does not meet the needs of the special education students. There is no mention of the school-wide rubric listed anywhere in the program of studies. All faculty members must be involved in the development, revision and approval of the school-wide-rubric. The school-wide rubrics need to represent all curriculum areas and measure the progress of all students over the course of their high school careers. (teachers, mission committee, executive summary)

At this time, the school has not written or developed clearly defined indicators by which it assesses student progress in meeting school-wide civic and social expectations. The school does observe and record student involvement in athletic teams, theater, discipline and attendance reports, student participation in school and /or community service programs, and the presentation of recognition awards to students throughout the year. There is no clearly indicated policy that states which department(s) is responsible for teaching each academic, civic, or social expectation. Completion of the task of compiling the above information into measurable terms with targeted levels for successful achievement is the basis for the assessment of student success in their civic and social achievement. (school-wide rubric, guidance department, self-study)

The mission statement and expectations do not guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school. To meet the social, civic, and academic expectations of the mission statement, the school has been able to successfully implement programs that are evident in the culture of the school. The school's involvement with Great Maine Schools promoted the development of a number of new initiatives. The MVHS Freshman Academy was created and implemented to provide team teaching and transition assistance to students entering high school. Two English teachers collaborate to deliver the English curriculum to all sophomore students, providing consistent instruction. The Panther Advisory Teams (PAT) assist all students in achieving expectations. Peers Assistance With Sincerity (PAWS) provides individual peer assistance to freshmen students, fostering social and academic success. Students interested in becoming a member of PAWS complete an application showing academic and extra-curricular achievement and must provide a written statement about their commitment and ability to carry out the responsibilities of the PAWS program. Students are proud of their school and respectful of each other, as observed during student shadowing and unstructured times. The implementation of the 21st Century Grant provides after school and summer programming and gives students an opportunity to make up missing credits. Including the mission statement in the student handbook, program of studies, and student agendas and visually displaying the mission throughout the school in classrooms, the library, and offices reminds the school community of its importance. It may be necessary to provide professional development programs for the entire faculty in the creation and use of rubrics to assure that both the school's expectations and course objectives are satisfactorily measured and that the mission and expectations guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school. (program of studies, student handbook, student agenda, teachers)

At this time, the school has not yet begun to review or schedule a review process of the mission statement and student expectations for student learning to ensure that they continue to reflect student needs, community expectations, the school or district mission, and state and national

standards. The school does plan to implement a regular review process by involving the director of secondary instruction, the freshman academy team, the academic coordinators, parents, and students, who will evaluate data gathered during the 2005-06 school year. The collection of student data is critical in the revision process of the mission and expectations of student learning. The guidance department consults with recent alumni to collect data identifying the school's strengths and needs, helping to guide curriculum changes for high school students. The review process will enable the mission statement and expectations for student learning to be a living and working document through which all decision-making will be filtered when the school is implementing change. (self-study, guidance department, standards committee meeting)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The initial involvement of students, staff, and community members in developing the mission statement and expectations
2. The wide dissemination and prominent display of the mission statement and expectations throughout the school
3. The improvement in school climate
4. The positive communication between students and faculty and staff members
5. The P.A.T. program
6. The PAWS program

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide professional development opportunities clarifying the use of the school-wide rubrics for academics and descriptors for social and civic expectations
2. Connect the specific academic expectations to classroom assignments and assessments, emphasizing the connection to the mission statement
3. Develop indicators for assessing student progress towards meeting the social and civic expectations
4. Provide a scheduled time for the regular review and revision of the school's mission and student expectations statement
5. Assure that school-wide assessment rubrics are used in all curriculum areas
6. Ensure that the mission statement and student expectations guide all school-related decisions
7. Design measurable indicators that each graduate can demonstrate success in each academic, civic, and social expectation and designate a targeted level of achievement identified in a rubric

8. Ensure that the faculty is committed to the school's academic expectations
9. Expand the awareness of the mission statement to all stakeholders
10. Ensure the use of the school-wide rubric by all teachers in all departments

2. **Teaching and Learning Standard**

CURRICULUM

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the commitment and involvement of the professional staff to 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; and 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, shall 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 goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

Medomak Valley High School has recently rewritten its mission statement to include academic, civic, and social expectations for its students. There is no clear delineation of responsibility for school-wide expectations. A general statement in the self-study guide states “All expectations for student learning are applicable to all academic and career disciplines.” Consequently, as validated through interviews with staff and in the provided documents, primary and secondary responsibility for school-wide expectations has not been determined. A substantial amount of work needs to be accomplished before the expectations for student learning are strongly and clearly supported in the curriculum of Medomak Valley High School. Each curriculum area must clearly indicate those school expectations for which it takes responsibility. Thus, despite the recent completion of the mission statement, faculty, students, and parents remain unaware of how the curriculum connects to the academic expectations and how and when students find the opportunity to meet the academic expectations. (self-study, teachers, provided documents, central office personnel, leadership team)

The curriculum as written has been aligned with the Maine Learning Results (MLR). Nevertheless, no evidence of alignment to the school’s mission and expectations statement has been included in the curriculum documents. The curriculum documents were developed prior to the creation and implementation of the mission and expectations statement and have not been updated for several years. The faculty and administration of Medomak Valley High School has not developed a curriculum plan for assuring that each student will meet the learning expectations. Most subject areas offer required sequential courses and a variety of electives to meet student needs. However, work needs to be done to delineate clearly the relationship between the curriculum and the mission and expectations statement. (self-study, teachers, panel presentation, department leaders, central office administrators)

The written curriculum partially prescribes content but does not integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations in a clear and explicit format. Some course documents provide learning objectives, sample lessons, and suggestions for assessment. However, few of the curriculum documents presented provide a method for students to successfully meet the academic expectations of the school’s mission statement. Because these documents are published separately and there are no explicit connections, it is difficult to perceive the overarching connection to the mission statement’s academic expectations. The curriculum documents presented to the visiting committee were not up-to-date, had not been reviewed or revised in several years, or were incomplete. The documents presented (out-of-date and/or incomplete) were in English, foreign language, math, social studies, health and physical education and technology. These documents did not reflect changes in the curricula after the addition of the MVHS Freshmen Academy. No other curriculum documents were available. The position of director of secondary instruction is vital for the leadership in any of Medomak Valley High School’s efforts to develop a curriculum aligned with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) standards. A common template for all curriculum documents must be created in a collaborative and collegial process and all curriculum guides must be completed. The template must include course specific learning goals, instructional strategies, suggested assessments, links to the mission statement, and suggested use of school-wide rubrics. While members of the learning community agree that the mission and expectations statement reflects their beliefs and practices, until the faculty has incorporated them as the explicit guiding forces in the development and review of curriculum, student learning continues to suffer. (self-study, teachers, department leaders, central office leadership team)

As delivered, the curriculum provides for inconsistent engagement of students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. However, through teacher interviews, classroom observations, student interviews, and the examination of student work provided to the visiting committee, it is evident that several departments such as mathematics, English/language arts, technology education, science, and modern and foreign languages are engaging students to a limited degree in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. Classes such as woodworking, small boat design, horticulture II, furniture making, seamanship, introduction to robotics, and some courses in the core subjects use lessons in which students are required to exhibit authentic applications of knowledge, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. However, the provided student work and classroom observations show that few core subject courses offer students a platform for inquiry or authentic application of skills and higher order thinking. According to the curriculum self-study, although the school system “has adopted the State of Maine’s mantra of ‘everybody college ready,’ refining exactly what that means and interpreting it to apply to curriculum, instruction, delivery, and cost, requires greater more explicit detail.” Therefore, as part of the process of curriculum development, review, and revision, opportunities for inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, and the authentic application of knowledge must be an integral part of the described curriculum, or student learning will continue to be negatively impacted and inadequately directed. (self-study, classroom observation, student shadowing, student work, teachers, department leaders)

While curriculum guides do not formally provide for application of interdisciplinary instruction, the faculty does provide some opportunities, but MVHS has not made the interdisciplinary approach to curriculum and instruction a major focus for student learning. While teachers are able to cite various examples of integrated learning in several subject areas, there is no consistent effort to develop lessons co-taught by teachers from different disciplines or to develop interdisciplinary units in the common practices of the school. There was very little evidence of interdisciplinary instruction in the student work provided. Some faculty members emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage; however, as cited in the self-study, approximately 40% of the faculty does not see emphasis of depth of understanding over breadth of coverage as part of their departmental curriculum. The faculty at Medomak Valley must invest the time needed to develop a curriculum model that includes the application of system-wide interdisciplinary instruction that emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage to deepen students’ independent thinking skills and powers of judgment. (self-study, student work, teachers, department leaders)

The school offers many opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus. Students may attend the Mid-Coast School of Technology or the Cooperative Education Program and participate in Futures Day and Career Kaleidoscope, or they exhibit may exhibit art at a private gallery and at the Portland Museum of Art, and some participate in the Women and Weights course offered at the high school. Co-curricular activities are available to all students and consist of many different areas of interest that students can pursue beyond the normal classroom setting. However, according to the self-study survey, only 43% of students and 40% of parents responded that MVHS provides opportunities for learning off-campus. Despite the large number of opportunities available to all students, a significant number of these students and their parents remain unaware of what is being offered for extended learning beyond the school campus and traditional curriculum. All participants in the school system must make every effort to promote these opportunities to the student body and parents to accent the many excellent opportunities offered by this school. (self-study, student shadowing, teachers)

There is very little formal, effective curriculum coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. Medomak

Valley High School is fortunate to have a full-time grade 9-12 curriculum specialist. However, there is a disconnect between the K-8 curriculum coordinator, the director of secondary instruction at the high school, and the building academic coordinators (AC's). There are meetings of the high school curriculum specialist and the K-8 coordinator, but there is no concrete coordination or articulation, especially between sending schools and the high school, which affects the smooth transition from the middle school to the high school. According to the self-study, high school academic coordinators are partially responsible for implementing curriculum. The AC's do have some authority to promote and/or make recommendations for changes in the development of curriculum, instructional strategies, assessments, rubrics, and coordination between and among departments at the high school. Coordination with the two sending schools must have a vertical alignment for a better understanding of the K-12 curriculum to provide equitable understanding of instruction. A well-articulated curriculum is essential for the district to ensure that the student expectations are being addressed. (self-study, teachers, department leaders, central office personnel)

Recent budget restrictions have hampered the effective implementation of the curriculum. Revenue shortfalls have caused the district to cut funds that were earmarked for equipment, supplies, technology repair and replacement, professional development, and staffing. Recent budget constraints have caused increased concerns among staff members about the school's ability to provide both information and instructional technology commensurate with student needs. Several English, science, and foreign language classes do not have sufficient and/or current textbooks. There is a lack of coordinated and funded time to adequately update, revise, and implement curriculum that must be documented and aligned with the school's mission and expectations statement. Immediate attention must be paid to routine maintenance of classrooms, library/media center, computer rooms, health and physical education areas, and fine and applied arts spaces. The lack of adequate funding is having a detrimental effect upon the ability of the faculty and staff to deliver an appropriate, challenging, and up-to-date curriculum for all students at MVHS. (self-study, facility tour, teachers, students, community members, panel presentation, central office, leadership team)

A formal procedure for the periodic review of the curriculum based on student performance data has not been established at this time. While teachers review the results of assessments used in their classes, there is no process for gathering student data related to student performance on the academic expectations for learning. Data is not used in the revision of curriculum. Minimal compensated time is available on a regular basis for teachers within each department to review and revise curriculum to align it with the academic expectations of the mission statement. According to the self-study survey, only 6% of the staff believes that the school provides sufficient time to evaluate, revise, and align curriculum. It is necessary for the school to develop an annual review process and gather longitudinal data to ensure effective curriculum revision. Currently, the review of curriculum is sporadic and reactive to discrete situations as teachers perceive needs from an informal exchange about courses. Although awareness of the need to align curriculum with the mission and expectations exists at the leadership level, a formal plan is not and has not been a priority. Until there is a curriculum that is written and eventually updated on a regular basis, meaningful review cannot take place. The high school director of curriculum must oversee this process, make it a priority, and provide the leadership necessary to accomplish this most important task. Thus, the process currently used by the high school is haphazard, lacking in any form or system, and only marginally related to student performance data. (self-study, teachers, school board, department leaders, school leadership team)

Sufficient time has not been provided for professional development activities that relate to curriculum development. The faculty and administration of Medomak Valley High School must develop, in a timely fashion, a formal plan for curriculum review and revisions that relates to the academic, civic, and social expectations and allows for the thoughtful consideration of what changes will benefit students. Common planning time for teachers of the freshman academy is an example of effective structure to support curriculum development. This is the second year of the freshman academy and its unlevleed classes require care in curriculum delivery. Ownership for the review and revision process needs to be taken by all components of the instructional process at all levels - especially at the high school administrative team level. The current method is only marginally related to student performance data and is not tied to the school's mission statement and expectations or the standards for curriculum as set forth by the NEASC, therefore student learning is negatively impacted. Providing sufficient time, including common planning time, funding, and personnel will encourage effective evaluation and revision of curriculum. (self-study, panel presentation, central office, department leaders, school leadership team)

Professional development activities that specifically relate to and support curriculum development are needed for the improvement of learning. While significant time in the last five years has been dedicated to Maine's Learning Results training, no system-wide training has been allocated for specific professional development activities for curriculum development or for alignment of the curriculum with the mission statement and academic expectations or for implementation and assessment of curriculum. While some of the staff development activities provided by the district have proved helpful in the areas of teaching, assessment, advanced placement courses, and lesson preparation, most have had narrow application. Little in-service time has been dedicated to the curriculum development, review, and implementation process. A "lack of common planning time within each department" is cited in the self-study guide. Faculty members and administrators need to develop a method for providing focused opportunities both by department and for the entire faculty, at local or regional conferences and workshops that will assist in the development, implementation, and alignment of the curriculum. (self-study, teachers, department leaders, school leadership team)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The range of learning opportunities offered beyond the school campus
2. The MVHS Freshman Academy
3. The Heirloom Seed Project
4. The position of director of secondary curriculum
5. The system of incremental de-tracking of curriculum
6. The wide range and variety of elective courses
7. The annual school-wide science fair
8. The student exhibits of art at Julia's Gallery and the Portland Museum of Art

9. The 21st Century Grant (second year) which funds after-school and summer school programs

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Identify and align all areas of the curriculum with the academic expectations of the mission statement
2. Identify primary and secondary responsibility by discipline for the implementation of the school-wide expectations, including academic, social, and civic expectations
3. Develop and implement a written curriculum for every course using a faculty-created format that prescribes content, integrates relevant school-wide learning expectations, specifies course specific learning goals, and suggests instructional strategies and assessment techniques, and includes interdisciplinary teaching and the use of school-wide rubrics
4. Ensure that the curriculum is appropriately integrated and emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage in all curriculum areas
5. Establish a system for the coordination and articulation of curriculum in all departments within Medomak Valley High School and the sending schools
6. Update technology, equipment, supplies, and facilities to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum
7. Develop and implement a five-year plan to ensure adequate and up-to-date materials including textbooks that are available to teachers and students
8. Collect and use assessment data to guide curriculum review and revision in all areas
9. Provide sufficient time and financial resources for the professional staff to develop, evaluate, revise, and align the curriculum with the mission statement and the NEASC standards
10. Continue to implement the plan to extend the freshmen academy concept to grades 10-12
11. Provide a system of professional development activities that will support and maintain curriculum development and writing and reviewing curriculum documents
12. Provide the leadership necessary to coordinate the process of developing, writing, reviewing, implementing, and aligning the curriculum
13. Revise all curriculum documents to include inquiry, higher order thinking skills, problem-solving and authentic application of knowledge and skills
14. Review, update, and align the K-12 curriculum on a regularly scheduled basis
15. Create a syllabus for every course taught
16. Expand the work of the departments increase the number of interdisciplinary units

17. Develop and implement strategies that will include common planning time for all faculty members to formalize opportunities for coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas
18. Actively promote the participation of students in partnerships with colleges and community colleges
19. Provide professional development for teachers to support them in aligning individual curricula with the three learning expectations of the mission statement

3. Teaching and Learning Standard

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 and practices 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 programs 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 purpose of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

CONCLUSIONS

At Medomak Valley High School, many instructional strategies are consistent with the school's stated mission and expectations for student learning. Relationships between faculty and staff members and students are cordial and mutually respectful, and parents who met with the visiting team are satisfied with the instruction provided to their children and speak highly of the teachers at the school. The broad range of course offerings provides students with opportunities to expand their knowledge in typical "college prep" areas, fine and applied arts, and practical life skills. The development of young people who are able to communicate effectively in a variety of modes, to be creative and practical problem solvers, and to participate responsibly within the community is a value universally held by the faculty. A rubric designed to measure student success in some of these areas has been created and distributed, but it is not yet a useful, familiar document to everyone in the building, nor is there a clear expectation as to who is responsible for what aspects of its implementation. There is no systematic collection of data reflecting student achievement of these learning expectations, no formal means of employing data to inform instruction, and no consistent approach to providing teachers opportunities to collaborate by either grade level or content area. It is indisputable that some high quality teaching and learning are happening at Medomak Valley High School; however, neither is driven by a mission and expectations under which the community is united. Instead, it is the result of hard work and commitment by a group of caring, responsible individuals. Therefore, the school's ability to assess degrees of student success in meeting these standards and, consequently, the effectiveness of instruction is compromised. (teachers, students, self-study, panel discussion)

There are numerous instances of instructional practices within the school intended to promote personalization and student-directed learning. Actively engaged learners, as evidenced by students' participation in their classes, are the rule, rather than the exception. In many different classes, there is an expectation that students will demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge and skills from a range of assessment product options. The impressive list of elective offerings available to students indicates the range of teaching and learning that occurs at MVHS. These choices ensure college readiness for students choosing that route, career preparation for those who will enter the world of work directly after high school, the opportunity to learn basic life skills for others, and the freedom to sample across the content areas for all. Students are engaged--often physically-- in their work at the school. Fitness programs enhanced by the well-equipped weight room, small boat building, jazz and concert bands, visual arts classes, video production, and theater courses literally require hands-on activity. With an average class size of fifteen, teachers and students get to know each other quickly, engagement and participation in class are easily monitored, and the mutually respectful atmosphere permits comfortable interactions between students and staff. Students are clearly informed of class-specific expectations and are able to use the rubrics, when provided, in order to assess their own work. Many students have the opportunity to reflect on their work, even in some unexpected ways; fitness journals are a good example. A more formal purposeful use of interdisciplinary connections will benefit all students, but teachers need common planning time to make this work as it does in the freshman academy. Most students are appropriately placed in their course selections although this is not always the case, and all students are not clearly engaged in higher order thinking, as is evidenced by the sampling of student work available. There is concern among faculty members and parents that the reduction of course levels now on the horizon will leave some students struggling beyond their abilities and will fail to challenge others. Thus, more information for parents is necessary along with development for teachers in differentiated instruction in unlevleed classes. (parents, teachers, self-study report)

Students at Medomak Valley High School will be able to gain the knowledge and skills they need to choose their own next steps for future planning, if strong support is provided to both students and faculty members as heterogeneous groupings become more prevalent. Students are not always aware that they can combine skills acquired in one content area to solve problems, communicate clearly, or produce quality work in another, thus the ability to demonstrate their learning is limited. Thus greater personalization and differentiated instruction, with students taught to connect learning elements, solve problems, and to be responsible for their own learning will enable students to achieve the expectations and to take pride in their own work. (self-study, standards meeting, teachers)

A number of teachers use feedback to improve instruction. In addition to using student performance data on class-specific assessments to determine the need to re-teach particular content, teachers rely on many different sources of feedback to improve instructional practices, such as informal discussion with peers, content area meetings, formal observations by administrators for new teachers, and “progress reports” solicited from students. While small class size and close working relationships with their students also provide crucial information about students’ instructional needs, some, but not all, teachers have begun to use monthly department meetings to tune their practice by evaluating student work with protocols. These meetings do not take place in all curriculum areas, however. The introduction of the freshman team is an example of a change in structure and instructional strategy driven by feedback; its continuation and expansion this year reflects the belief that the change was effective. This judgment is based on lower failure rates and a reduction in discipline referrals among those freshmen who participated in the program. However, there has been no formal collection of data as yet and no specific examination of what worked and what didn’t work. Such analysis must be made before the program is greatly expanded. Parents who have accessed the Community of Learners Network /Power School are pleased to have easy access to their students’ progress and appreciate that e-mail allows direct communication with their students’ teachers. Without a systematic approach to gathering feedback, professional development activities to support differentiated instruction, or schedule changes providing dedicated time for examining student work, many teachers’ ability and willingness to develop appropriate teaching strategies for all students cannot be effectively focused. (parents, teachers, self-study)

Many teachers at MVHS are highly qualified, experienced professionals, and nearly all are certified in their content area. Numerous teachers currently hold master’s degrees while others are enrolled in master’s programs. Some faculty members teach at the college level as well as at Medomak Valley, and a Fulbright fellow on the staff recently opened a show of her artwork at an area gallery. Of concern are the number of novice teachers currently on staff, and the inability of the system to support them adequately through an effective mentoring program. The district often supports membership and participation in professional organizations although requests for content-area specific professional development are not always granted. The district administration has attempted to provide professional development in the area of instructional strategies on workshop days, but continuity and follow-up are lacking. In an effort to assure that teachers are reflective about their practice, all are required to set annual goals for professional growth. Teachers with fewer than two years experience in this district are observed according to the mandate in the teacher evaluation handbook. Teachers who are beyond step two report inconsistent application of the evaluation process and virtually no follow-up or useful feedback from administrators. These factors combine to undermine the self-reflective work done by the teaching staff, erode their sense of professional worth, and may be influencing the turnover rate. (teachers, central office personnel, administrators, self-study)

The MVHS faculty cites limited formal opportunities to discuss instructional strategies. Faculty meetings are scheduled twice a month but do not deal significantly with instructional strategies. There have been instances when the second faculty meeting has been cancelled, and there are sometimes when meeting agendas are not published in a timely manner. Department meetings in most curriculum areas are scheduled to meet twice monthly and are more likely to address instructional issues than faculty meetings. Only 11% of the faculty felt that discussions about instruction played a significant role in the school culture. The freshman academy schedule does provide some time for teachers of freshmen to meet during their common planning time. Teachers and administrators report that this common planning time will enable teachers to address instructional strategies in the future. Currently, when teachers do meet, it is informal and they do not usually target instructional strategies. The lack of common planning time and the absence of scheduled formal instructional discussion limit the effectiveness of teachers and negatively affect student learning. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

Teachers and students effectively utilize technology to communicate. Teachers, students, and parents can access student progress, attendance, and behavior data on-line, as all teachers use Power Grade. Use of the comment component and more complex communication features of the program is limited to fewer teachers, however. One hundred laptops were purchased at the beginning of the current school year, and faculty members and students report that they have more than adequate access to computers in the school. Faculty members report that technology is used in their classrooms often (54.8%) and very often (14.3%). Ten different forms of technologies were cited by teachers in their classrooms. There is an Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) system located in the computer lab that is not currently being utilized because of scheduling conflicts and a lack of its availability to students. There are mobile laptops available to most classes and computer labs and some networked computers are also available. Continued use of computers and a variety of other technologies will continue to foster differentiated and personalized learning for students. (Self-study, teachers, students)

There are no formal professional development programs except for literacy programs, which are currently in place. Some professional development opportunities have been planned and presented, but teachers report that they have had little input in their planning and implementation. The opening day speaker at the beginning of this school year (2006) was well received by the staff, but the presentation did not relate directly to instructional practices. The implementation of the position of director of instruction for the secondary school includes the responsibility by which professional development programs are supposed to be developed. Several faculty members have attended a workshop on differentiated instruction at a neighboring high school. Teachers are asked to submit goals every year, but follow-up meetings to discuss these teacher-driven goals are not provided. Teacher involvement in planning professional development activities around improving instruction would create a more positive academic environment for the collaboration of teachers. (teachers, self-study, administrators)

A formal teacher supervision and evaluation plan is in place to provide regular observation of teachers. Continuing contract teachers are to be observed every three years while new teachers are supposed to be observed six times during their first two years. The district plan for all teachers requires a pre-observation meeting, observation, and a post-observation meeting. Faculty members and administrators review those areas of the teaching process that will be targeted during the observations. Improvement of instructional practices is one of the areas available for teachers and administration to emphasize in the evaluation process. The supervision and evaluation plan has clear and extensive directions for teachers and administrators to follow. This process requires

significant time to complete, and teachers and administrators both report that, although observations often do take place, there are often no pre-observation and post-observation meetings, and those that do take place are not effective in improving instruction for the purpose of enhancing student learning and student needs. The certification team also has a system in place to address instructional concerns with new teachers. This system assigns mentors to each new teacher to work together to develop an action plan that may, but is not required to, target instructional practices as a primary concern. Teachers are required to follow their action plan to address their certification needs. The certification chair reports that it remains a challenge to match up all new teachers in the district with mentors and to complete action plans. Several teachers admitted that they used to be mentors but are no longer involved in the process because of time constraints or changes in the requirements set by the certification committee. A more practical evaluation and supervision system and observational feedback would encourage the sharing of instructional strategies among all faculty and staff members, enhance student learning, and help meet student needs. (teachers, certification chair, administrators, self-study).

COMMENDATIONS

1. The positive learning environment resulting from close connections between students and faculty and staff members
2. The overall enthusiastic instruction and actively engaged learners
3. The use of rubrics and expectations for learning that are clearly communicated to students
4. The number of teachers actively pursuing advanced training in their content areas
5. The MVHS Freshman Academy
6. The use of technology to improve contact between school and home
7. The hiring of a grade 9-12 director of secondary instruction

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure that instructional practices are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning statement
2. Implement a professional development plan that reflects teachers' instructional needs
3. Formalize a system for all teachers to collect, examine, and use feedback to inform instructional practices
4. Expand the freshman team concept of common planning time for teachers to all grade levels
5. Use faculty meeting time to address instructional strategies such as personalization and differentiation

6. Create and implement an on-site mentoring system by which new teachers have the regular opportunity to pair with experienced educators to share instructional strategies
7. Provide opportunities for teachers to partner with the intention of creating interdisciplinary instructional plans and collaboration
8. Ensure that all faculty members employ differentiated instructional practices which reflect current research and practice
9. Ensure the use and understanding of the school-wide rubric
10. Formulate and publish strategies to inform the faculty and parents while moving toward heterogeneous grouping in all courses
11. Develop and implement consistent strategies that foster higher order thinking in all subject areas and by all faculty members
12. Develop and implement a plan that utilizes the formal collection of student achievement data to improve instructional practices by all faculty members
13. Increase student access to and the use of the ATM system in a timely manner
14. Align classroom goals with school-wide learning expectations

4. Teaching and Learning Standard

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 school success 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 their classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals.
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 purpose 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

The Medomak Valley High School (MVHS) mission committee has developed a rubric to assess student achievement in the areas of communication and problem-solving. These are two of the three areas that have been targeted in the MVHS Mission Statement as expected outcomes for student learning; the third expectation is that each student will be an “involved citizen.” Although teachers generally confess that they are partially addressing these three expectations within their respective classrooms, there has been little or no opportunity for teachers to apply the rubric or to assess student success and to discuss techniques and effects. Although not completely tied to the mission statement, there are three other school-wide rubrics that have been developed to assess student performance across the curriculum: a writing rubric, an oral expression rubric, and a research rubric. These rubrics are not yet used consistently across the content areas although students and teachers report the extensive use of these rubrics in the area of English/language arts. Other content area teachers report that they rarely use these rubrics or they don’t use them not at all. There is clear use of well-developed rubrics to assess problem-solving and product completion in woodworking technology class. Fine arts faculty members report the use of rubrics in assessing student work. The school-wide rubric is not applied consistently and effectively to assess student progress in achieving the learning expectations specified in the mission statement. Assessments must be developed that align with these expectations and that can be assessed using this rubric. The school has not yet designated which department is responsible for each student expectation. The mission statement is not an effective guide to student learning expectations if specific classroom activities are not aligned with it, and if they are not consistently assessed using the school-wide rubric. Students face inconsistent expectations from their teachers and are not familiar with the rubric that is an indicator of what constitutes quality work in all subject areas. (panel discussion, self-study, teachers, mission statement)

The mission and expectations for student learning does not include indicators to assess civic and social success, and there has been no systematic collection of data to measure civic and social involvement. However, there is anecdotal evidence that many students are engaged in activities that foster civic and social responsibility. There are approximately thirty students involved in the Peers Assisting With Sincerity (PAWS); twenty to twenty-five students involved in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program; and a number of students on the Civil Rights Team. There is no formal collection or maintenance of data within these programs to indicate that students are achieving success with respect to the social and civic expectations. Additionally, there are no indicators to assess this expectation so students have no clear indication of what they must do or the level of achievement they must attain in order to meet the civic and social expectations. While many students are involved in social and civic activities, there is no clear connection of these activities to the learning expectations of the mission statement, and students generally seem unaware of the purpose of the mission statement. (teachers, students, self-study, panel discussion, mission statement)

Many teachers include course-specific learning goals in their class syllabi, but these are not consistently linked to school-wide academic expectations. Students are provided with rubrics and self-assessment tools to guide them in the completion of learning activities, particularly in most English/language arts, social studies, technology, foreign language, and fine and applied arts classes. Although school-wide writing, oral presentation, and research rubrics exist, the use of these rubrics is limited, and some faculty members seem unaware of their existence. Teachers are required to create syllabi for all classes, but there is no consistent format required for the syllabi. Some syllabi indicate clear connections between curriculum and school-wide learning expectations, but others do not. Not all teachers provide models of exemplary work. Well-crafted rubrics exist

for some learning activities, but the use of these rubrics is limited and inconsistent. There is no consistent format for course syllabi or rubrics, and many syllabi and rubrics lack a clear connection to the learning expectations of the mission statement. Student achievement of the school-wide learning expectations is somewhat limited by lack of clear and authentic connections to curricula and assessments. (teacher syllabi, students, teachers, student work, classroom observations)

There are well-crafted and teacher constructed, course specific rubrics, that contain measurable indicators for some learning activities, as observed in the areas of most English/language arts, social studies, foreign language, technology, and fine and applied arts classrooms. The use of these course-specific and school-wide rubrics to assess student performance is inconsistent and is limited to only a few content areas and then not necessarily by all members of the department. Some faculty members are unaware of the existence of course-specific rubrics created by other teachers in their own departments. Parents were unaware of the use of rubrics in assessing student work. Although course-specific and school-wide rubrics exist for assessment of school-wide academic expectations, the use of these rubrics is very inconsistent. Rubrics are not used consistently to inform instruction. Lack of communication among faculty members, with parents, and within the school community limits the use and instructional value of school-wide and course-specific rubrics that are intended to make assessment clear and understandable. (teachers, classroom observation, students, teacher rubrics, teacher syllabi)

Some teachers use a variety of dynamic and engaging assessment strategies to instruct and to measure student knowledge, skills, and competencies, but this practice is not widespread across all content areas. The following strategies have been observed: literary analysis, oral presentation, objective test, readers' theatre, class round-table discussion, self-reflection, and examination of provided student work and visual products. However, parents indicate that the majority of learning assessment is traditional "paper and pencil" objective testing. The Reader's Advantage System is used to assess literacy levels of all grade nine students. Literacy levels are reassessed in tenth grade using the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) Assessment. The use of two different assessment tools to measure literacy progress can result in inaccurate measures of student achievement. In accordance with state mandates, Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs) are administered to all eleventh grade students. Faculty members report 95% participation in the testing while PSATs are administered to all tenth grade students. There is no real assessment of student academic growth over time. Teachers report that no records are kept of student achievement on content area common assessments. Grade records are available via the Power School program, but these records do not contain student performance on common assessments or standardized testing. Teachers report that there have not been professional development opportunities in the area of assessment strategies. Teachers must be supported and encouraged in their efforts to use a variety of assessment strategies, so that they will be able to meet the varied needs of individual students. (teachers, administrators, self-study, parents)

Teachers do not have formal time to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and to analyze and share the results of assessment. These opportunities are available during some faculty meetings and/or during departmental meetings of those departments that meet. Except for the freshman academy there is no common planning time built into teacher schedules. Teachers say that they meet informally whenever possible, usually before or after school or during lunchtime, but discussion tends to center on instruction, not curriculum development, assessment, or improving instructional strategies. English/language arts teachers meet once or twice yearly to score common assessments. There is no school mandate for consistent content area department meetings, and there is no formal interdisciplinary planning time built into the schedule. There is no district-wide

curriculum planning committee at this time. All content areas currently have academic coordinators. Curriculum guides for content areas are unavailable or several years old and not updated. These guides are not used consistently or referred to by teachers who often say the guides are “outdated”. At present, there is no vehicle at MVHS to create consistent curriculum guides or to revise the existing outdated guides. The administration does have the resources to begin this extremely important process. Student learning is negatively impacted as a result of teachers not having the opportunity to work collaboratively to revise curriculum and to improve instructional strategies or to consult assessment data to analyze it. (teachers, administrators, self-study, panel discussion)

There are limited professional development opportunities for teachers to collaborate on the development of a broad range of assessment strategies. Recently, most of this time has been devoted to development of a local assessment system (LAS) and assessments to address the mandates of the Maine Learning Results. Student early release days, often used for teacher collaboration, have been reduced from six days to four days this year. Offsite professional programs have been offered to faculty members, but they have not been widely attended even though funding has been available. When individuals do attend offsite professional development offerings, there is little opportunity for school-wide follow-up or integration. Student academic growth and success is negatively impacted by the lack of broad opportunities for teachers’ professional development in the area of assessment and by limited opportunities for peer collaboration among teachers. (teachers, self-study, administrators, school committee members)

The staff at Medomak Valley High School uses a variety of methods to communicate student progress and the achievement of school-wide expectations to students and families, but there are fewer ways to communicate the school’s progress in achieving these expectations. All faculty members are required to distribute course syllabi and guidelines at the beginning of the school year or the beginning of each semester. Teachers provide copies of these documents for parents who attend the parent/teacher open house. Cumulative student grades and individual assignment scores are available to parents and students via the Power School program, and parents, students, and teachers give positive feedback about this program. According to a parent survey administered in 2003, 86% of parents responding to the survey have Internet access, either at home, work, or at the local library. Report cards and progress reports are each distributed to students four times during the school year. Individual student achievement is recognized through visual art exhibits, both on and off campus; drama performances; music concerts; science fairs; the Philbrook Speech competition; the athletic team GPA award; honor roll postings; the selection of MVHS student of the month; and at an annual academic awards night. Recognitions are made public through assemblies and press releases. The school’s progress in achieving its stated school-wide expectations is regularly reported by administrators to the school board. Information about the school is conveyed to the community in a variety of other ways including the school website which is maintained and updated frequently. The *Panther Pride News* is published weekly and an online version is posted on the school website. While parents and community members have various ways to receive information about individual students’ progress and achievement, there are fewer opportunities to be informed about the school’s progress in achieving school-wide expectations. Parents and the community have no accurate way to measure school progress with respect to the expectations. (school board members, self-study, administrators, parents, teachers, school newsletter)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The development and use of school-wide rubrics for writing, research, and oral presentations
2. The well-crafted and constructed rubrics created for some content areas
3. The use of varied assessment strategies to evaluate student learning
4. The use of a wide variety of methods to publicize and recognize student progress and success to parents and the community

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop measurable indicators and establish several methods for assessing and reporting student progress in meeting the social and civic expectations of student learning
2. Provide professional development opportunities for all faculty members to collaborate and develop department-wide rubrics
3. Schedule regular content-area department meetings to develop and assess curriculum and assessment strategies
4. Provide professional development opportunities for all departments to develop varying assessment strategies and data review and strategies to use assessment data to revise and develop curriculum
5. Provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate on the scoring of common assessments
6. Train students in the use of rubrics when self-assessing their work and that of other students
7. Provide all students with course-specific rubrics including descriptions of exemplary work
8. Develop and implement strategies that improve communication with all stakeholders in the education communities
9. Ensure that all faculty members use the results of classroom assessments to evaluate and revise curriculum
10. Ensure that the professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to families and the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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 support 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 principal of Medomak Valley High School has the autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. The principal has been in his current position for only one month and is working under a one-year contract. Since he has served as a science teacher and assistant principal of the school, he knows the school and community well. The principal feels that the superintendent is supportive of his ideas. His desire to work with the faculty and student body is evident, but he must provide clarity of his vision and the direction of the school. The composition of the school board has changed in the last six months, resulting in a board that no longer tries to micromanage the school, although many faculty members are watching carefully to observe expected changes. In a recent survey, only 22.4% of the faculty agreed that the principal has autonomy and decision-making authority. There is also a new assistant principal who took over his duties during the month of September. He too was a member of the faculty in the social studies department. The administrative leadership team is visible, accessible, and has very good interpersonal skills. With the recent change of administration and the endorsement of his autonomy to make critical decisions, the principal has the opportunity to provide the leadership necessary for achievement of the mission and expectations. (principal, school board, self-study, teachers)

Leadership in creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus on student learning is emerging but is not fully developed or communicated. The principal intends to use the previous principal's plan called a "Timeline for Improvement" as a springboard for his vision. The "Timeline" was initiated in 2004 as a way to "restructure instruction, professional development, and teacher leadership practices to align with Maine Learning Results and research-based recommendations." Several important changes during the last two years, have resulted from the implementation of this plan. The MVHS Freshman Academy, instituted in the school year 2005-06 has led to more heterogeneous grouping and differentiated instruction. The current principal plans to evaluate this timeline for the positive progress made and then move forward. Time is very important, and it is essential that the current administrative team should move at a controlled pace and include the faculty in making those decisions that will affect the entire school community. The vision, direction, and focus need to be connected. Only about one-third of the faculty indicated that they felt the former principal was clear about what he wanted the school to accomplish. The school community has made some significant improvements under the "Timeline for Improvement," but there is a need of a clear vision by the new principal to marshal the forces of all faculty members and determine of the direction of the school. A shared vision will unite the school in providing an optimal community for learning for students and teachers. (self-study, principal, teachers)

Teachers and administrators other than the principal provide leadership in the school in an effort to improve the school, but this leadership is lacking in definition, clarity, and consistency. Two groups of teachers provide the leadership structure for the faculty; the academic coordinators (ACs) and the leadership team (LT). Two departments are currently lacking academic coordinators, but the appointed ACs hold meetings every other week and subsequently meet with their respective departments to share information. Departments do not have a regular meeting schedule but do meet approximately once per month. At these meetings, teachers discuss issues of the school and teaching and learning. The LT is a voluntary group of teachers with a changing population that meets sporadically to discuss topics of interest. For example, at a retreat last summer, the leadership team discussed a revision of the daily schedule, but it hasn't yet had the opportunity to discuss the plan with the entire faculty. There is also very little scheduled time to communicate

within and among content areas, and except for the freshman academy teachers, there is no common planning time. (teachers, self-study, administrators)

On the administrative level, the newly appointed assistant principal is a leader in many ways. Recruited from the ranks of the social studies department, he is well respected and positive about the school. Students are comfortable talking with him, and he is perceived as understanding and fair. Since he has been in the position only a short time, his leadership role is not yet clear. His history as an AC shows him to be a well organized, understanding, and efficient leader and the school community appears very pleased with his appointment. The high school administrators see the superintendent as accessible, helpful, and involved. The superintendent is seen as trustworthy by the principal. The school also had a unique opportunity to hire a director of secondary instruction, but even though he is in his second year in the building, there remains ambiguity around his primary responsibilities as there are no written curricula for the high school. In an effort to improve students' attendance and behavior, the school resource officer (SRO) has assumed additional disciplinary duties in the last two years. The lack of consistency in scheduling meeting times and in the composition of the leadership team results in an ill-defined role for the faculty in improving the school. Some faculty members feel frustrated by a lack of communication and movement forward on issues of concern. (teachers, administrators, students, standard's committee, superintendent)

Many parts of the organization and structure of the educational program promote the mission and expectations for student learning despite the lack of a specific reference to them in the development of the programs. Medomak Valley High School is in the second year of a new program called the MVHS Freshman Academy. The goals of this restructuring effort were to increase personalization and reduce the failure rate in the freshman class. In the freshman academy, students are grouped into two heterogeneous teams. The lowest levels have been eliminated, resulting in only two class levels; honors and college prep. This move toward heterogeneous grouping moves with the students so that this year the sophomores have only two levels of classes as well. Two other programs in the school also provide personalized experiences for the students. In Panther Advisory Teams (PATs), students spend time each day with an advisor and a group of their peers. These groups and advisor are together throughout the four years of high school with the goal of fostering camaraderie in the group and a relationship with an adult whom the student may not know in another context. Another group, Peers Assisting With Sincerity (PAWS) is a group of students who help freshmen acclimate to high school and plan and carry out a variety of activities for the school as a whole. For example, PAWS members play a pivotal role in the planning of homecoming activities. While the school has made good changes in restructuring for personalization, little has been done to coordinate curriculum with the mission and expectations. Without using the mission and student expectations as a guiding document, restructuring and curriculum development may be haphazard and less productive in reaching the stated goals. (self-study, teachers, students)

The grouping patterns of the school, which are increasingly heterogeneous, reflect the diversity of the student body and are in the process of developing true heterogeneity. The student body of Medomak Valley High School is diverse in its socio-economic make-up, but there is little diversity of race or ethnicity. Anecdotal evidence suggests that student achievement does not depend on the economic status of the students' families. Children from the same family often have very different achievement levels. The freshman academy with its heterogeneous teams and two levels of class difficulty provide a more level playing field for the freshmen students. The "de-tracking" of other grades will be an effort to better challenge all students and prepare them for success after high school. Much work still needs to be done and professional development opportunities must be

presented to prepare the entire faculty on this complete change to heterogeneous grouping. All elements must use the mission statement and student expectations as a guide to this most important change. Most students are generally satisfied that they have been able to take the classes that they want. Special education students are mainstreamed and are included in all aspects of the curriculum. Some students, however, express concern that there may be less opportunity to select courses of their choice with fewer levels of classes. Furthermore, some students and parents are concerned that not all students will be challenged to meet their potential if there are only two levels of classes. These changes have been made without formal consideration of the mission and expectations for student learning. Heterogeneous teams and the elimination of the lowest level classes have improved the academic performance and social adjustment of freshmen. This early success in high school is designed to keep more students in school to finish the high school process and become involved citizens. (teachers, students, parents, administrators, self-study)

The schedule supports the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, but there is no evidence that the mission and expectations statement drive student learning. The schedule was adopted according to research that found that eighty-minute classes increase the opportunity of in-depth learning and decrease non-academic time during the school day. There is general support for the schedule among the staff although some would prefer to meet their students more frequently. There is apparently some dissatisfaction with the schedule since the leadership team discussed it at their summer retreat and plans to propose changes to the schedule. The schedule allows for a variety of activities during a class period. Some flexibility is available, as shown by AP biology and honor science classes meeting every day. While interdisciplinary learning is not formally undertaken, the schedule could support it. The schedule provides the opportunity for faculty and staff members to support the school's mission and expectations for student learning in most academic classes. However, with very few written curriculum documents, it is very difficult to meet the needs of all students. It also provides opportunity for students with sufficient time periods to pursue learning experiences outside the school. For example, one student volunteers at an elementary school in the district before she comes to school in the morning. Others follow internships, independent study projects, and other out-of-school activities. Some teachers have expressed concern that the block schedule needs to be revisited in an effort to find ways to meet the needs of all academic classes. Students expressed satisfaction with the selection of courses and the schedule in general but expressed concern that the elimination of the lowest level of courses could limit their course selections. They also were thankful for the opportunity to receive help from their teachers during the class period. The failure to use the mission and student expectations as a guide in developing the schedule leads to a haphazard approach to decision-making. (self-study, teachers, students, administrators)

Teachers, secretaries and parents have played a very limited role in the school's decision-making process. Faculty and staff members have expressed the concern that students, staff members and parents have limited access to administrators. While there are several committees to discuss school issues and provide their input to help make decisions, their work is often fragmented, overlaps, or is never completed. Methods of selection for membership on these committees has not been transparent and has led faculty members to feel left out of the decision-making process. Information on school issues is included in the school newsletter, which is published weekly, and parents have access to their students' grades via Power School. This information is relayed over the Internet, however, and the percentage of students' homes with Internet access is 86%. A hard copy of the newsletter is available in the office, but the geographical size of the district makes travel to the school difficult for some parents. Students feel they can participate in the decision-making process by voicing their opinions in their PATs or by making a proposal to the student council or

their class officers. Several students also report, however, that their parents never know about meetings or activities at school unless they tell their parents themselves. The school rarely mails information home, only posting it on the web site or sending it home with the student (including progress reports and report cards). Getting parents to participate in school decisions has been difficult unless they, the parents, are reacting to a crisis or controversy. The current principal explained his decision-making protocol to the staff at the first faculty meeting, but he is still unsure of the role of the AC and LT. The lack of participation in the decision-making process, and the lack of clarity around how decisions are made has led parents and faculty and staff members to feel that decision-making is very top-down and that their opinions are not valued by the administration. (self-report, teachers, parents, administrators)

Most teachers have a student load that allows them to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers have a student load that ranges from 55 to 137 students. Class sizes also have a wide range, from six to 26, with an average class size of fifteen. Class type, classroom limitations, and the needs of students are factors contributing to this range. As a result of staffing and scheduling constraints, it is not always possible to make class size equitable from one teacher to another. Special education caseloads meet state requirements. The majority of the faculty teaches six classes over a two-day period and generally has a maximum of four different classes to prepare for. Teachers in the freshmen academy also have a common planning period every other day. Students and parents report that the teachers are regularly available for the assistance and academic support that the students need although they expressed concern about the size of some English classes. (self-study, students, parents, observation)

Medomak Valley High School's PAT ensures that students have an adult who personalizes their educational experience. Students remain in the same PAT group for four years, and their teacher assists them with their course selections, creates a supportive learning environment, fosters each student's ability to communicate, provides information on extra and co-curricular opportunities, and answers general educational questions. Many PATs that were observed appeared to provide students with a social setting, an opportunity to listen for school announcements or to do homework. Sixty percent of students surveyed reported that they had at least one adult, in addition to their guidance counselor, to whom they could talk if they had a problem. Some students reported that the one thing they most like about school is the personal relationships they have with their teachers. Parents also felt that their children's teachers are very supportive although the parents do not meet with the PAT teacher. The school has two PAT coordinators who organize activities, but many days are unstructured. The PAT program helps to ensure that each student is given the personal attention needed to meet the school's mission and expectations. There is an active SAT Program also available to help students. (self-study, teachers, students, parents, observations)

The lack of consistent, on-going communication within and between departments negatively impacts student learning. The faculty has the opportunity to meet twice a month in staff meetings, twice a month in AC meetings, and periodically in leadership team meetings. Most departments meet at least once each month. Communication of the decisions made in these meetings is not always relayed to the entire staff. Teachers do little to no interdepartmental collaboration, and what little happens is often "by accident." At scheduled faculty meetings, there is an opportunity for comments from the faculty to discuss student learning; however, some faculty members feel the time allotted is inadequate. Although the director of secondary instruction has been in the building for over one year, some faculty members still do not fully understand his role. The lack of collaboration and poor communication leaves faculty and staff members feeling disconnected from

one another and gives them a perceived sense of isolation and mistrust. (self-study, administrators, teachers, parents)

School personnel treat students in a respectful and supportive manner and demonstrate a general interest in their well-being. Parents and students praise the guidance personnel for their assistance and support during the college application process and when making schedule changes. They also report that school secretaries are very friendly, supportive, and helpful. In addition, the school employs two tutors to provide help to students with problems in mathematics, science, English, and social studies. The school resource officer (SRO) enjoys working with students and helps them with their individual problems in order to become self-reliant community members. Lunchroom personnel are friendly, helpful, and encouraging. Students and staff do, however, greatly miss the presence of a school nurse in the high school building. The nurse has been assigned full-time to a student at one of the elementary schools, and although there are first-aid responders in the school, many problems that high school students' encounter requiring the knowledge and professional awareness of a registered nurse can not be taken care of. Without a nurse on school grounds, student health and safety are compromised. With the support of school staff members, students feel they are valued and can achieve academic success. (students, parents, self-study, teachers)

The faculty, administrators and staff members of Medomak Valley High School regularly acknowledge, celebrate and display student successes. Student success is noted in the honor roll posting, student of the month assemblies, academic award nights, MVHS Freshman Academy quarterly awards, sports teams GPA awards, daily announcements, press releases, senior teas, and MVHS Pride Cards. Senior honor graduates also select the graduation and baccalaureate speakers. This consistent public acknowledgement of student success motivates the MVHS students and creates a sense of pride in each student's individual accomplishments. (self-study, students, teachers)

The climate at MVHS is generally safe, positive, and supportive and has greatly improved over the past several years. The school resource officer appears to enjoy working with students and the administration. With the addition of the SRO who has assumed some administrative responsibilities relating to discipline and attendance, the addition of security cameras, and increased teacher presence in the halls, disruptive behaviors have been significantly reduced. The PAWS program has helped give incoming freshmen an enjoyable and smooth transition to high school. The students, with guidance, the athletic director, and coaches, have become vocal and respectful supporters of the school's sports team, earning MVHS the Sportsmanship Award in 2005. The core crisis team and the use of the safety procedures flip chart have improved fire and bomb drill procedures. Students report that they like coming to school, and they actively participate in the MVHS Homecoming and Spirit Week activities. Co-curricular activities also provide a means by which students can foster a sense of pride and ownership. An MSAD #40 Code of Conduct was adopted in 2002, but many teachers feel enforcement is inconsistent among teachers and administrators. The faculty is especially concerned about the lack of uniformity in dealing with student absences. Communication of feedback on disciplinary referrals is also inconsistent. While maintenance of the building has improved, several areas of concern (e.g., JV locker rooms, mold and standing water in the glass corridor) still exist. The improvement in discipline and maintenance has enabled students to feel safe at school and enhanced the positive and respectful interactions between students and staff. (self-study, students, teachers, SRO, parents)

The school board supports the principal in his efforts to promote positive change in the school. The chairwoman of the school board states that the district-wide vision blends well with Medomak

Valley's mission statement and expectations for student learning. The board also has an extensive policy manual designed to support and enhance teaching and learning. The school board supported the school's recommendation to start the freshman academy and to eliminate the basic and core levels of courses. The rejection of the request for funding for an additional school nurse and the vote to reduce stipends, while also increasing the student load for ACs, has caused some concerns for the school. The superintendent occasionally visits the high school, but several faculty members suggested that they would like to see her presence more often to provide an avenue for meaningful educational conversation. Several years ago, the school board also ended the practice of having student representatives on the board, restricting student access to district discussions and debates. The support of the school board, which has had a major replacement of twelve new members in the last five years, ensures teachers that their efforts are acknowledged and appreciated and better motivates all faculty members to participate in the change process, thus implementing the mission statement and student expectations. (school board, central office, administrators, self-study, teachers)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The assumption by school board of its appropriate role
2. The autonomy of the principal to make educational decisions
3. The improvement of academic performance and social integration of freshmen through the MVHS Freshman Academy and heterogeneous grouping
4. The increase in heterogeneity of classes
5. The varied instructional practices utilized through use of the block schedule
6. The opportunity for students to pursue learning experiences outside of the school
7. The improvement of school climate and personalization through the MVHS Freshman Academy, P.A.T.S, and PAWS
8. The positive relationships between the students and their teachers
9. The dedication of the staff to the growth and development of the students
10. The continuation of the frequent and visible celebration of student success
11. The presence and active role of the school resource officer
12. The installation of security cameras
13. The safety procedures flip chart
14. The weekly newsletter
15. The opportunities for student participation in decision-making

16. The implementation of the MVHS Freshman Academy

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop and implement effective strategies to resolve communication issues between the central office, high school administration, faculty, students, and parents
2. Review, revise, and coordinate curricula in all content areas utilizing the professional staff from each content area to assist the director of instruction in the process
3. Assure that the administrative team and faculty are focused on achieving the mission and expectations for student learning and provide clarity to the entire faculty on the direction of the school
4. Define the composition of the leadership team, to include the administrative team and a representative from each department, to form a consistent core group representing all faculty members
5. Develop a schedule of meeting times for all departments and the leadership team
6. Utilize the mission statement and expectations for student learning as a guiding document in designing all programs, curriculum, and schedules
7. Develop strategies that will increase the opportunities for the faculty and parents to participate in the decision-making process
8. Review class sizes and room use when creating the master schedule to ensure an even distribution of students
9. Provide opportunities for teacher collaboration on a regular basis, and create a consistent policy for the regular dissemination of information
10. Ensure and document the consistent enforcement of rules and regulations and provide feedback to the staff on student referrals
11. Ensure for health and safety reasons that the high school facility is adequately maintained and repaired
12. Renew the policy that allows student representatives to sit on the school board
13. Continue to improve the current attendance policy
14. Provide professional training and a written curriculum to all staff members ensuring the effective use of PAT groups
15. Formalize a process to integrate the mission and expectations for student learning into the decision-making process for future heterogeneous student grouping

16. Develop and implement a schedule that increases the time available during the school day for formal teacher interdisciplinary collaboration
17. Develop and implement a schedule that addresses the need for classroom observations and teacher supervision and evaluation in a regular and consistent manner
18. Plan and implement strategies that involves parents in all phases of the school environment
19. Develop and implement strategies to improve communication within and among all content-areas
20. Schedule regular common planning time for all content areas

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 school resources for learning 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 involvement in, and support 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 resources shall be available to students and faculty in a variety of formats, used to improve teaching and learning, and responsive to the school's student population.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
14. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.
15. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

Special Education Services

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

CONCLUSIONS

The student support services at Medomak Valley High School are consistent with the spirit of the school's mission and expectations. Student support services personnel are supportive and caring and show a positive attitude towards students at MVHS. The guidance department provides a number of student services including career counseling, personal counseling, classroom and academic counseling, and help to seniors with the college admissions process. The guidance department does not have a written curriculum but follows the recommendations of the Maine Education Counselor's Association. The library provides an adequate collection of print and electronic materials with easy access for students and teachers. The special services department provides a number of programs to support students with special needs. There are four resource room teachers, two life skills teachers, a day treatment teacher and ten educational technicians providing special education services to the education program. However, health services are extremely limited, especially so as a result of the elimination of the school nurse's position at the beginning of this school year. There is however, no clear relationship between the ideas expressed in the mission and expectations and the services provided by health, guidance, special services, and the library. The professional practices of the student services personnel are not formally structured and not used universally; therefore, they limit attempts at improvements. Though many of the policies and practices of health, guidance, the library, and special education departments align with the school's mission and expectations, there is not a conscious effort to use the mission and expectations as the basis for decision-making. (teachers, self-study, faculty survey)

Medomak Valley allocates resources, programs, and services so that students have an opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. Most classes are homogeneously grouped except for the ninth grade students who are all heterogeneously grouped in the freshmen academy. Block scheduling allows students the opportunity to take a variety of classes during their high school careers. Students receiving special services are placed in a consulting model with some direct supervision. There are also a life skills program, day treatment program, social services worker, and graduation transition programs available. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and participate in the pupil evaluation team (PET) meetings. The guidance department provides academic and personal services and access to the school to work program, extended day program, summer school, vocational school, and on-site alternative school. Based on the self-study survey, parents and students feel that the school resources are adequate. In addition, health personnel provide vision screening for grade 9 students and the Life Skills Choices program, and they maintain a health bulletin board. The health aid is on duty 32 hours a week, and a registered nurse is only on duty from 7:30 am - 8:30 am every school day before she leaves for the elementary school. The library also provides access to Marvel, an extensive electronic database of literature, that can be accessed at school and home. However, the library does not have adequate resources to maintain an up-to-date collection of materials and technology, and the limited presence of the registered nurse negatively impacts services the health center can provide to students. Inadequate staffing for the health center and an insufficient commitment to library/media support services limit the opportunity to provide all students with the necessary resources to meet the school's expectations for student learning. (teachers, self-study, students,)

The student support services personnel at MVHS interact and work with professional and other staff members in some ways within the school, to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. The school nurse works too few hours to adequately work

cooperatively with other professional staff members, and there is no faculty or student advisory component to the health services. The special services department personnel work well with the faculty through the PET process; however, there is limited support for individual education plan (IEP) implementation. The guidance department plays a minor role in the distribution and explanation of standardized test results but provides personal counseling and refers students to various community agencies when necessary. Library/media services do not participate in curriculum development except in English. Teachers do have input into the selection of library resources, and the library works with teachers to provide materials for special projects. The Mid-Coast Mental Health Agency, New Hope for Women, the police department, the University of Maine Extension Service, local libraries, the Passages Program, and shadowing with local professionals are all examples of external agencies utilized by student support personnel. The use of external agencies and encouragement of student participation in the PET process are effective in promoting the school's mission and expectations; however; more collaboration between student support services and the faculty is needed to improve services designed to meet the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of the students. There is no method of tracking student participation in or fulfillment of the school's social and civic expectations. Though there is communication between faculty and support personnel, more formalized structures for communication would greatly improve collaboration. (teachers, survey, parents, self-study)

Not all student support services programs have a formal evaluation process to determine how well they support student learning. The special education department is currently undergoing an audit process as part of the Maine Department of Education review of special services programs. The health service program has an advisory board comprised of health professionals representing each community and each school in the district. This advisory board serves in an advisory capacity but does not have student representation. There are three certified guidance counselors who provide support for students, but the guidance area does not appear to have either an internal or external evaluation system. The library does solicit anecdotal input from students and teachers but does not have a formal evaluation system. The special education department will respond to the recommendations of the state audit; however, the other student support services do not have adequate internal or external evaluation systems to affect positive change or improvement. While four of the student support services provide valuable student support, a lack of formal evaluations hinders their ability to meet the school's mission and expectations and improve student learning. (teachers, self-study, students, faculty survey)

Medomak Valley High School provides some opportunities for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents, and school personnel designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services. Each student, parent, and faculty member has access to the student handbook. Power School is an electronic "real-time" system that provides parents with information about student academic and general school data. Local newspapers are also used to inform parents of services as well as open house evenings, parent teacher conferences, and special events nights like the guidance sponsored MVHS Financial Aid Information meetings. The school also maintains an informative web site and has a regularly published school bulletin called The Panther Pride News, but there are few mailings that are sent home. There are many services provided by the special education, library, and guidance departments, but there is no broad-based knowledge of how to access these services. Current strategies have helped inform the school community about school services; however, parents who do not have access to the Internet are limited in their ability to obtain information about student support services or student academic performance. The school's lack of a systematic approach to parent notification and publicity limits the school's ability to properly inform the

school community of available services and student progress and limits the parents' involvement and participation in school activities. (students, teachers, self-study)

School records are kept in secure areas; however, not all cabinets can be locked or are fireproofed. The health and guidance departments maintain student records in secure, private, locked areas. However, the special services department does not have locked, fireproof cabinets to store their records, and these records are kept in a classroom. Each department is responsible for maintaining student records germane to their department. Transcripts are kept in a vault located between the guidance office and the principal's office, away from the public and locked at night. Failure to have locked, fireproof cabinets leaves the school vulnerable to violations of FERPA and the possibility of fire damage. While each department has taken responsibility for its student records, the lack of a consistent safe means of storing these records does not provide these confidential records with adequate safeguards. (teachers, standards meeting, self-study)

Medomak Valley provides a sufficient number of certified personnel and support staff members in all areas except school health. The school has a registered nurse to staff the health office as well as an assistant, certified in CPR/First Aid and several other health credentials. The registered nurse works 7:30 am-8: 30 am every school day before leaving for the elementary school. The assistant works approximately thirty-two hours per week. There is sufficient staffing in special services with certified teachers, educational technicians, and supervision from in-school special services coordinators. Student records are kept in locked cabinets in the health office. A certified library/media specialist staffs the library with the assistance of a library educational technician. The guidance department has three full-time counselors, one of whom serves as director of guidance. There is also a full-time school resource officer who works with legal issues in the school as well as working directly with students on school, community, and civic concerns. However, there is no formal process of collecting and/or reviewing data that would ensure that all students meet the requirements of the social and civic expectations. The level of well-credentialed personnel staffing is providing students with adequate support in library/media, guidance, and special education services. However, the lack of a full-time registered nurse in the health area seriously limits the school's ability to provide for the personal and social well-being of the student body. There is also a need to assess the need to provide an athletic trainer at home athletic contests. While there is currently adequate staffing in three of the four areas of student support services, the abrupt removal and ambiguity of current health services sets a negative precedent for diminishing services in all four areas. (observations, teachers, students)

The guidance department provides regular individual counseling and provides limited group counseling. The typical student meets frequently with guidance personnel during the transition to and beginning of the high school career, during course scheduling periods, and during the senior year for post-secondary planning. A four-year plan is developed with individual students and suggestions are made for selecting appropriate courses to meet the student's needs. There are official structures for group counseling, bereavement, and for individual student crises. There are also contracted services with a private social services agency that provide students with access to a social worker and referrals made to Mid-Coast Mental Health when necessary. The guidance counselors spend equal amounts of time divided between scheduling/course selection, personal counseling, and post-secondary planning. The guidance department counselors participate in special services referrals, and the counselors attend PET meetings. These practices provide students with adequate counseling services. Although adequate services are provided, these services should be more directly linked to the mission and expectations of the school through a written curriculum. (observation, teachers, standards meeting)

The inadequate number of hours the registered nurse is assigned to the school makes it impossible to provide adequate preventative health measures, intervention services, emergency response mechanisms, and ongoing health assessments. There is inadequate time to schedule meetings or to communicate with school personnel to address student health issues. The health personnel are able to access community health services on a limited basis. The health personnel maintain a health bulletin board outside of the health office, provide pamphlets on various issues, and keep a log of the number of student contacts that they have had. During the 2004-05 school year, there were 3,176 log-ins. The health history of every student, kept in locked cabinets in the health office, is updated at the beginning of every school year. The nurse also checks the immunization history to make sure the school meets state mandates. The health staff provides information to the faculty on blood borne pathogens, use of the Epie-pen, seizure protocol, and diabetic emergency management. Inadequate staffing and inadequate professional credentials make it impossible to provide the full-time health support to meet the needs of the student population. A school of this size requires a full-time registered nurse to meet the needs of the student body. (staff, teachers, self-study, students)

The librarian is a member of the language arts team; however, there are no formal information literacy skills integrated throughout the curriculum, nor is there any collaboration between the library/media services and the development of curriculum and assessment. There is communication between teachers and library/media personnel regarding specific projects, but there is no official alignment of media/library services with the curriculum. Students may make individual requests for materials, and faculty members are consulted for acquisition of new media/library resources. Despite the lack of intentional alignment with the curriculum, the services provided by the library do support the school's mission and expectations. The library is used on a regular basis by the faculty for individual and group assignments, and all freshmen receive a library orientation during the first few weeks of school. There were minimal monies made available through the budget process until the 2004-05 school year. With input from departments and students, the librarian was updating the collection in the library at that time. During the first year of increased monies, the fictional section was updated, and during the 2005-06 school year, the social studies section of the library was developed. Much still needs to be done. The librarian, with district permission, has begun to purchase books online to supplement the collection. Although the library provides quality services, the lack of curricular alignment and deliberate coordination with the mission and expectations limits the effectiveness of the services. (librarian, teachers, self-study)

The library media center at Medomak Valley High School is accessible to staff and students before, during, and after school (from 7:10 am to 2:40 pm). The library/media staff strives to provide for the individual growth and development of students and the growth of the faculty and staff. Aside from membership on the language arts team, there is no mechanism to ensure the librarian is fully aware of curricular content for all other subject areas. There are no formal structures to involve students in the implementation, evaluation, and revision of the library curriculum. Library/media personnel provide both group and individual instruction on services, technology, and collections within the library. Lack of integration of library/media services into the broader curriculum of the school limits the ability of the students to benefit more fully from both library/media services and the richness of the curriculum. More integration of curriculum development and library/media services would provide students with a more consistent and meaningful learning experience. (self-study, librarian, teachers, students)

The library has significant technology to support an extensive array of electronic materials including the Marvel program (Maine Online Database) and an adequate print and electronic

material to support the school curriculum, language arts in particular. However, many of the electronic resources are outdated. The library web site is also a very helpful tool for faculty and students alike. The school has a very homogeneous student population, yet the holdings of the library represent the points of view of multiple cultural and ethnic worldviews. Various teachers, particularly English teachers, utilize the library/media center to support instruction although use by other departments is limited. The library/media services attract extensive use by both students and classroom teachers. There are approximately 11,000 books in the library, an audio book collection, 42 laptops with Internet access, and two carts with fourteen computers that can be taken from the library. More extensive use of the library/media services by all departments would improve the learning experiences of the student body and further meet the mission and expectations of the school. (observations, librarian, students, teachers)

Students and teachers have easy access to the library/media center with the facility being open before, during, and after school hours. Study halls also provide an open opportunity for students to utilize these services. Teachers may, and some do, coordinate with the librarian to facilitate research projects in the library/media center. Information resources can also be accessed through technology throughout the building. The library is almost always filled to capacity with students and teachers. The central location and the ease of accessibility allow the library to be a major focal point for student learning and engagement. Expanded services, increased money available through the budget, and increased use by the faculty would further support teaching and learning and the objectives of the school mission and expectations. (observation, students, librarian)

The librarian provides research skills instruction within the library for both groups and individuals. Research skills utilizing both print and electronic materials are provided. The libraries in the five towns representing MSAD #40 also provide students with access to research materials. There is information provided on the web site, teacher handbook, and student handbook regarding library/media center materials and services; however, there are no formal structures to ensure this is done consistently and effectively. A lack of communication structures to fully inform students and faculty members of library/media resources and materials limits the full potential of the library/media center to support teaching and learning in accordance with the school's mission and expectations. More formal communication structures could help maximize utilization of library/media resources and materials (observations, students, teachers, self-study)

The library has a well-defined policy for the selection and removal of information resources. The school abides by the school district's Appropriate Use Policy for technology. The school has a well-developed policy to handle books that are challenged by students, faculty members, and/or parents. The school has a weeding policy, but because of a lack of sufficient appropriated money for the library, it has not been used as often as necessary for the last several years. The school utilizes Dan's Guardian, a filtering system that meets state guidelines for school technology. These safeguards ensure that the school library/media services provide the students with a non-threatening learning environment. Continued attention to selection, removal, filtering, and resource challenges will continue to ensure that the library/media center provides quality services with limited student problems. (documentation, teachers, students, self-study).

The special education department is made up of seven certified special education teachers and ten educational technicians. The school provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students and meets local, state, and federal guidelines. Students may be referred for special services by parents, teachers, and the guidance staff or by the student's self-referral. These referrals are forwarded to the special services building coordinator(s), who document the individual student. There is an official referral form provided

to facilitate this process. Special education personnel communicate with teachers, utilize Power School to check grades and attendance, and have individual teachers who may contact the special services department to discuss individual student progress. Parents also contact the special services department to discuss student performance. Early identification and pre-identification tends to occur in the earlier years of a student's education. However, high school personnel are made aware through official records of those who have been identified and/or screened for special services. There are educational technicians who provide support in the mainstream classes, and there is a guided study hall for special education students where the students receive assistance with assignments and preparation for assessments. There is also an educational technician who is available to special needs students for academic support. The support provided to classroom teachers for individual education plan (IEP) implementation varies. The special services department has a comprehensive system of meeting needs for those students who have learning disabilities, but personnel (especially new teachers) may not have adequate training to implement the IEP. Direct support of teachers for IEP implementation is likely to improve the services provided to special needs students and the quality of instruction provided by teachers allowing these students to achieve to their highest level. (standards meeting, teachers, administrators, self-study)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The use of Power School that provides timely information to those who have Internet access
2. The school's informative web-site
3. Guidance personnel who participate in the PET and IEP process
4. The library's easy access for all students
5. The library's regular capacity operation
6. The extensive electronic resources
7. The well-staffed special services departments
8. The extensive use of community agencies by all special services departments
9. The well designed and informative school newsletter
10. The full-time school resource officer
11. The caring and supportive student services personnel
12. The continued attempts to upgrade the library
13. The assignment of a special educator to the freshmen academy

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Immediately provide the high school health center with a full-time registered nurse
2. Provide the resources to the school nurse to provide preventive health outreach, healthy practices, and school community public information
3. Develop methods to allow students, faculty members, and community members to serve in an advisory capacity for health services
4. Develop and implement a written guidance curriculum linked directly to the mission and student expectations of the school
5. Involve the librarian in the development and implementation of the whole school curriculum
6. Develop and implement a plan for regular and formal evaluations of all student services programs and personnel using as a filter the school's mission and student expectations
7. Provide lockable and fireproofed file cabinets and secure storage locations for student records in all student services areas
8. Establish and utilize direct mail contacts for the dissemination of student information in all areas of student services
9. Provide support to all teachers when implementing student services information such as IEPs
10. Develop stronger communication links with all facets of the school community for all student services programs
11. Provide an adequate and consistent level of funding to update and expand the print and non-print collections in the media center to support all areas of the curriculum
12. Implement the weeding policy
13. Assess the process and the methods used to ensure that each student has his or her educational experience personalized
14. Provide meeting times, in addition to regularly scheduled faculty meetings, for students services personnel to meet
15. Develop and implement a policy for the repair and replacement of all technology needs
16. Assess the need for a full or part-time athletic trainer available at all sporting events

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Active community and parent participation, facilities that 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 students and their families as partners in students' education as well as 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

Medomak Valley High School (MVHS) attempts to engage parents to play an active role in their students' education. Parents can access student information, school news, and activities on the Internet through the district and school website. Parents can view their student's grades on Power School, which they access through the Community Learner's Network (CLN). The MVHS website also provides daily announcements, the weekly newsletter (Panther Pride News), and dates and times of school events. Parents report that e-mail has improved their ability to communicate with teachers. Students may also obtain a hard copy of the newsletter through the main office. Opportunities for parents to meet with school personnel are made available through open houses, parent-teacher conference, freshman orientation, and the eighth grade parent night, yet turnout is minimal for most of these events. There is a strong interest in athletic events which are well attended, and the Sports Boosters Club has an active membership. Although individual parents tend to positively acknowledge their students' accomplishments and affirm the faculty for their efforts, there is a large contingent of parents who are not engaged in their students' education. As some evidence of this, there were no parents on any of the accreditation self-study committees despite efforts by the steering committee to invite parents to participate in the process; however, most of these meetings were held right after school. Parents did, however, attend preliminary meetings related to the formulation of the school's mission statement and student expectations. In the past, parents have not been advised of changes, other than by e-mail, regarding curriculum changes; such as the future elimination of basic and core courses and The Freshman Academy. The school has endeavored to fully engage parents in their students' education although its attempts have not been successful in creating a strong partnership between parents and the faculty and school and in addressing the social and civic expectations of the mission statement. (self-study, parents, teachers, administrators, students, observations)

There are limited outreach opportunities to produce partnerships with businesses and post-secondary institutions. The school-to-career program allows students to earn credit while working at a job in the community. This program is coordinated through the school's career resource center. In addition to job placement, the coordinator collaborates with the two local Chambers of Commerce and is a member of the Waldoboro Business Association. Planned activities include the business breakfast, futures day, business showcase, and Maine Department of Labor presentations. Articulation agreements between the Mid-Coast School of Technology and Maine community colleges afford students the opportunity of earning college credit. Seniors are able to enroll in college level courses through statewide programs such as Academ-E and the High School Aspirations Program. Asynchronous Transmission Mode (ATM) equipment is available at the high school although no students or faculty members are taking advantage of the opportunity. A systemic school-wide approach to career education based on Medomak's learning results document has not been instituted. While opportunities exist for students to connect with businesses, this service and the dual enrollment in college credit courses are under-utilized because of a lack of awareness and promotion of available programs. (students, teachers, classroom observations)

The school site and plant do not adequately enhance the educational and support services for student learning. Medomak Valley High School was originally built in 1968 and has not received major renovations except for the auditorium, the gymnasium, and the weight room. Outside athletic facilities are in need of work and regular maintenance. The lack of classrooms and storage space within the main building has forced the district to add nine portable classrooms to the main building. Students must travel outside for class, regardless of the weather, and there is no protection for them between the building and portables. There is also a concern that there

are no bathrooms or drinking water in or near the portables. Besides the portables, some teachers must travel from room to room as a result of the number of courses offered. Teachers assigned to the portables feel isolated from the school as a whole although the freshmen academy is located in the portables and the clustering of these teachers serves as an advantage to them and their students. The isolation has in part contributed to the lack of collaboration between disciplinary and interdisciplinary teams. The teachers in the portables also do not have reliable connections to the school's technology/Internet system. Teachers in the portables as well as teachers in the main building stressed concern that they could not always get onto the network thus limiting their ability to serve their students. A science classroom is housed in a portable making it difficult to have science labs. The lack of access to the glass corridor has increased congestion in the hallways and time needed to get to classes. Storage and teacher space has been lost to the need of expanding special education services. Additionally, there are other space needs including storage rooms, office space, number of bathrooms, and the number of parking spaces. This has contributed to low morale and undue stress for the faculty and student body. The electrical system is overloaded, at times causing short-circuiting during the school hours. There is no handicapped accessibility to the greenhouses, the art room, and in the girls' locker room. A large sum of money was recently spent to repair the school sewer system that was backing up, causing the closing of the school. Classroom teachers can often use only one or two outlets during their classes, limiting the use of technology. The present facility makes it difficult to enhance the educational programs for all students to learn equitably. (tour, self-study, teachers, parents, students)

The physical plant and facilities meet some applicable federal and state laws, and there are areas of concern. The documentation for local fire, health, and safety regulations was not provided in the self-study. Although the documentation was lacking, the visiting committee found evidence that the building was in compliance with state fire and safety codes. The custodian's office and foodservices area display building safety and health certificates. Custodians provided the Life Safety Code and District Required Inspection check sheets. Dates of fire drills are recorded, and custodians substantiated that there is an updated alarm system and many fire extinguishers. The Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are centrally located in the main office. There are some chemical materials that are stored in unsuitable containers (V8 bottles, soda bottles, mayonnaise jars, etc.) and they are not always stored in locked cabinets but are in locked offices or closets. Some fire exits are partially blocked creating safety hazards. Due to lack of storage space, the school's wrestling mats and unused school furniture are stored in high traffic areas (exits near the auditorium, the fire exit near the glass corridor at the end of the foreign language wing, a portable classroom, and by the weight room). The lack of toilet stall doors and shower curtains in male and female bathrooms as well as the condition of the girls' locker room limit privacy. The guidance office is not handicapped accessible. The glass corridor also presents health concerns from growing mold and standing water. This area has been locked and access to it is prevented and it is now being used as a storage area for janitor's equipment and school supplies. The physical plant and facilities need to better comply with state and federal laws in order to create a safer and more comfortable environment for the school community. (infrastructure tour, observations, teachers, students)

Equipment is inadequate, minimally maintained, poorly catalogued, and replacement is delayed due to budget constraints. An unreliable computer network system limits the use of computers for instruction, learning, and maintaining accurate student data. There is confusion regarding the number of computers throughout the school because there is no accurate inventory. There are not enough printers and photocopiers, creating a delay in producing student materials. Teacher time is wasted in acquiring copies throughout the building. Equipment is not properly

maintained, and there is no long-range plan for regular routine maintenance and repair, so technology frequently is not available for teacher use. There is no regular plan to identify textbook needs, capital equipment needs, library books, musical instruments, and supply needs. The building remains clean in most areas, due to the efforts of the custodial staff. There has not been a comprehensive maintenance and replacement schedule developed, nor is there a daily maintenance schedule available. Storage space limitations make supply and equipment inventories very difficult in some academic areas. The school district is constructing a new parking area in preparation for the building of a new on-site middle school. This will help with the current congested state of vehicle parking. The lack of plentiful working equipment negatively affects the productivity of the professional staff. (facility tour, teachers, students, parents)

The school has a long-term maintenance and repair plan, but it is inadequately funded. Although the custodial staff is understaffed, the cleanliness of the building is not jeopardized. Maintenance requests at the high school are made reactively although the central office proclaims that there is a three-year maintenance plan and district maintenance is done proactively. This long-term maintenance plan is available, but emergency repairs often become the focus instead of regular maintenance, as for example, the new septic system. Due to previous financial problems and a lack of funding, repairs that are not critical are delayed. Because MVHS is an aging building, the condition of the building is of major concern. The air quality and inadequate ventilation within the building and portables create health concerns. The lack of a proactive maintenance and repair program creates an environment that is not conducive to a healthy educational facility for students and faculty members. (facility tour, parents, teachers, school support staff, central office)

There is minimal evidence that the school is addressing future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs, as well as capital improvements. The self-study report states, "No collaborative plan exists that addresses all components of this indicator" and data for this indicator is insufficient. There is a three-year technology plan on the district website. This plan was collaboratively developed by a number of individuals throughout the district. Attention should also be given to the high quantity of staff turn-over in recent years. Plans have not yet been developed by the current administration to address future programs, staffing, and facility needs. The technology director submits a yearly technology plan that addresses the needs, cost, and purchasing of equipment. It appears, through viewing the maintenance budget requests, that many areas of concern by the visiting committee were addressed in the past year's budgetary request. However, most of these requests were cut during budgetary negotiations. The school system, through the use of Power School, should be aware of the projected enrollments for the next several years. However, an articulated plan that is properly funded and budgeted for must be developed by all stakeholders, incorporating a vision that will communicate the MVHS mission and expectations to students, parents, and staff members. (teachers, parents, students, self-study)

The school needs more assurance regarding the district and community's commitment to properly fund school programs, personnel, facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies for student learning. Teachers stress that budget cuts have had a negative impact on the students. Stipends have been decreased in many student services such as class advisors, yearbook advisor, and academic coordinators (ACs). Due to the decrease in stipends and planning time, some departments do not have a department member who is willing to assume this leadership role. The perceived lack of communication within departments has fostered an environment of confusion and disorganization. The lack of funding has negatively impacted access to diverse

course selection, school supplies, and use of technology. Though the district's goals state that it would like to provide staff "time for reflection and collaboration" and funding for teachers, these principles are not always given priority. Another concern for the school budget is the new property assessments that could decrease the amount of funding coming into the school district. The school was awarded the 21st Century Grant that has been used for the freshmen academy and literacy programming. The community and district's governing body are encouraged to work together to address budget concerns because lack of funding does impact the educational programs for all students. The budget process provides for open debate at all levels as the public is invited to express concerns and ask questions at district budget committee meetings. The superintendent meets with town officials to explain the budget while emphasizing fiscal restraint yet still expecting support for the educational process. The potential of limited funding will negatively impact the services and education provided to all students. (self-study, school board, teachers, administrators, central office, students)

Faculty members and building administrators are actively involved in the ongoing process of initially preparing for the budgetary process. Professional staff members develop budget requests based on need and submit them to the academic coordinators. Once the academic coordinator submits the budget to the administration, the coordinators go over it and justify items that are included. The building principal submits the initial request to the business manager and superintendent. The superintendent and/or principal sometimes make cuts without the knowledge of teachers, and teachers voice their concern that these budget cuts are made without their input. The building administrator and academic coordinators then review any changes or revisions that the school board deems essential. Once the budget is finalized, teachers use an on-line requisition process to expend funds. Although teachers are involved in the preparation of the budget, they are not consulted in the final process of reducing the department budget, if needed. (self-study, school board, teachers, administrators)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The parents' recognition of the positive relationship between students and faculty members
2. Student and parent access to Power School, CLN
3. The cleanliness of the building
4. The three-year technology plan
5. The parental involvement in school booster organizations
6. The use of the 21st Century Grant
7. The newly installed security system
8. The school-to-career program

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Identify and implement a variety of outreach methods in addition to computers and the Internet as a means of engaging parents and gaining their support
2. Increase awareness and implement a program that further pursues existing business/community/higher education opportunities for members of the school community
3. Develop and implement long-range planning to address repair and maintenance of equipment, on-going repairs, funding for supplies and equipment, and the repair and replacement of technology equipment
4. Ensure that the school is in full compliance with state and federal fire, health, and safety regulations
5. Schedule immediate maintenance to address the growing concerns of growing mold and standing water in the glass corridor
6. Develop and implement a plan to address future programming and staffing needs
7. Assure that a dependable source of revenue is available for school programs, personnel, facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies
8. Include teachers in all phases of the budgetary process, including the reduction phase
9. Develop and implement a daily maintenance schedule that includes specific responsibilities for all custodial staff members and ensures appropriate cleaning and maintenance of facilities
10. Establish a standardized schedule of maintenance, repair, and replacement for all educational equipment
11. Properly store or dispose of old and unneeded chemicals in the building immediately
12. Fully comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility laws
13. Develop and implement the use of a common template for school-wide inventory and cataloging
14. Establish priorities for budget purchases in anticipation of budget shortfalls
15. Conduct a space utilization assessment with faculty input and implement the recommendations
16. Clear corridors of all materials causing a blockage in student passage
17. Provide appropriate storage areas for all supplies and equipment
18. Investigate ways to improve ventilation in science labs and in the portable classrooms

19. Develop and implement a plan for the yearly maintenance and upkeep of all outdoor athletic facilities
20. Repair or replace all broken doors and bathroom stalls and provide privacy in these areas
21. Provide opportunities for better use of the ATM by students and faculty members
22. Develop and implement communication programs to better inform parents, students, and the community of the availability of out-of-school opportunities
23. Provide for the immediate inspection and repair of the school's electrical system
24. Develop and implement strategies that will provide protection during inclement weather for students and faculty members when passing to the portable classrooms

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 Medomak Valley 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 that 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 Medomak Valley 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 (60) days of occurrence any substantive change that 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 that 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 67. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two-and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report that 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* that was given to the school at the onset of the self-study. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by Commission staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting committee again wants to thank the entire Medomak Valley High School community for all of its help during our visit. During the entire visiting committee stay, everyone was cordial, helpful, and informative, especially the students who were interviewed and shadowed. There is a caring attitude at the school that should continue to generate respect between teachers and students and continue to build a positive learning environment.

APPENDIX A

VISITING COMMITTEE ROSTER MEDOMAK VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 24TH – 27TH 2006

Peter Brown---Chair
Retired Principal
Jay, ME

Tom Ward---Assistant Chair
MSAD #21
Dixfield, ME

Kenneth Atcheson
Caribou High School
Caribou, ME

Irene Jacobs
Hampden Academy
Hampden, ME

Ruth Chaffey
Calais High School
Calais, ME

Craig King
Mt. Ararat High School
Topsham, ME

Peter Galamaga
Goffstown High School
Goffstown, NH

Beverly Knowles
Washburn District High School
Washburn, ME

Jan Gauger
Oxford Hills Comp. High School
South Paris, ME

Jennifer Major
South Portland High School
South Portland, ME

Martha (Marty) Grant
Falmouth High School
Falmouth, ME

Glenda Metcalf
Sacopee Valley High School
Hiram, ME

Susan Grimaldi
Windham High School
Windham, ME

Charlie Raymond
Telstar Regional High School
Bethel, ME

Linda Hunt
Bonny Eagle High School
Standish, ME

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 that 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 that 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 support staff
- ✓ decreases in student services
- ✓ cut 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