

**New England Association of  
School and Colleges, Inc.**

**Commission on Public Schools**



**Committee on Public Secondary Schools**

**Report of the Visiting Team for  
Torrington High School**

Torrington, CT

May 05, 2019 - May 08, 2019

Tony Gasper, Chair  
Lisa Sepe, Assistant Chair  
Andrew Skarzynski, Principal

# STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

# **STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION**

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The Committee on Public Secondary School's Standards for Accreditation serve as the foundation for the accreditation process and by which accreditation decisions are made. The seven Standards are qualitative, challenging, and reflect current research and best practice. The Standards, written and approved by the membership, establish the components of schools to ensure an effective and appropriate focus on teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning.

## **Teaching and Learning Standards**

### **Core Values and Beliefs About Learning**

#### **Curriculum**

#### **Instruction**

#### **Assessment of and for Student Learning**

## **Support Standards**

### **School Culture and Leadership**

### **School Resources for Learning**

### **Community Resources for Learning**

# CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

# CURRICULUM

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

# INSTRUCTION

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

# ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
  - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
  - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
  - student work
  - common course and common grade-level assessments
  - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
  - standardized assessments
  - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
  - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's

core values and beliefs about learning.



# SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

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## Support Standard

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
  - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
  - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
  - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
  - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

# SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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## Support Standard

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - deliver a written, developmental program
  - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
  - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
  - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
  - use an appropriate referral process
  - conduct ongoing student health assessments
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
  - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
  - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
  - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
  - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
  - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students

- perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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## Support Standard

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

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

# School and Community Summary

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## School and Community Summary

### SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Nestled in the Litchfield Hills, the city of Torrington maintains a small-town feeling despite being the largest city in Litchfield County and the industrial and commercial hub of northwestern Connecticut for over a century. A rich industrial history was fed by the Naugatuck River, and by the early 20th century the brass industry, among others, was firmly entrenched. Today, Torrington is a combination of manufacturing, retail, and tourist attractions and is still home to a great many manufacturers.

With a projected population growth of 0.7 percent per year anticipated into the foreseeable future, Torrington's population of 35,493 in 2015 is growing more diverse as well. The largest minority group is Hispanic, representing approximately 8.7 percent of the population; no other identified minority group comprises more than 4 percent of the population. The median household income from 2011-2015 was \$56,264, and the poverty rate for the same period was 10.7 percent. The city's major employers include Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, White Flower Farm, Walmart, and Valerie Manor. The 2015 unemployment rate was 6.3 percent, 135 families were receiving Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), and 2,914 members of the population were receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Torrington Public School District serves a total of 3,980 students from grades K-12. The student body is distributed throughout five elementary schools, one middle school containing grades 6-8, and one comprehensive high school containing grades 9-12. The elementary school population is distributed as follows: East School has a total of 434 students, Forbes School has a total of 347 students, Southwest School has a total of 311 students, Torrington School has a total of 542 students, and Vogel Wetmore School has a total of 442 students. Torrington Middle School serves a total of 1,039 students, and Torrington High School has a student body of 865 (as of November 30, 2017). Districtwide, 8.6 percent (367) of the total student enrollment have been identified as English language learners, 51.9 percent (2,215) of the total student enrollment are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and 19.3 percent (822) of the total student enrollment has been identified with disabilities (students with Individualized Education Programs only). In all three of these categories, Torrington's enrollment percentages are higher than state averages.

The per-pupil expenditure is approximately \$15,986. Districtwide, 133 students with disabilities have been placed outside the district, 48 in public schools in other districts and 85 in private schools or other settings. As a percentage of special education expenditures for 2014-2015, tuition to other schools represented 31.2 percent of expenditures and special education transportation represented 6.9 percent of expenditures. Overall expenditures by revenue source in 2014-2015 were as follows: local funding accounted for 60 percent of expenditures, state funding accounted for 36.3 percent of expenditures, federal funding accounted for 3 percent of expenditures, and tuition and other funding accounted for 0.7 percent of expenditures. In 2015-2016, 126 students from Torrington attended other schools for grades 9-12 under the CT School Choice Program, including CREC, Region 6, and Region 7 schools. The cost of tuition paid by the district for these students was \$757,883.

Torrington High School (THS) is a comprehensive 9-12 school with an enrollment of 865 students divided between 393 females and 472 males. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition includes approximately 3.8 percent Asian, 4.3 percent Black or African American, 20.9 percent Hispanic or Latino, 3.1 percent Two or More Races, and 67.5 percent White. The student body has 5.3 percent of students identified as English language learners, 43.4 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and 17 percent of students identified with disabilities (based on 2015-2016 enrollment data). The school's 2014-2015 four-year cohort graduation rate was 87.6 percent, and the drop-out rate was 7.0 percent; that same year, only 14 students were qualified as truant under state statute, and the rate of chronic absenteeism was 15.6 percent.

THS has 71 teachers, creating a ratio of 12:1, and 100 percent of classes are taught by highly qualified teachers. The average number of FTE days absent for 2014-2015 was 11. Teachers have a 186-day calendar, while

students attend school for 181 days and for a minimum of 991 hours of instruction. Students are required to earn 22 credits for graduation, distributed as follows: 4 credits of English, 3 credits of social studies (including U.S. History and .5 credit in American Citizenship), 3 credits of mathematics, 3 credits of science, 1 credit each of applied education, health, physical education and fine arts, and 5 credits of electives (including .5 credit in computer applications). A wide variety of elective choices are available to students across the disciplinary spectrum, including several world languages. Students in grades 9 and 10 are placed in either honors or college preparatory level courses; students in grades 11 and 12 may be placed in general, college preparatory, or honors-level courses, or may choose to challenge themselves through an array of AP/UConn Early College Experience (ECE) courses. One hundred eight (108) AP exams were administered in 2017, and 40.8 percent of the students participating received a score of 3 or higher on those exams.

THS students participate in a wide range of co-curricular activities, ranging from the AFJROTC to the Ceramics Club, as well as numerous interscholastic athletic teams, a nationally-recognized Unified Sports program, and a multiple award-winning marching bands. Students' academic achievement is recognized not only through the honor roll, but also through induction into any of several active chapters of national honor societies, including Rho Kappa for social studies, Mu Alpha Theta for mathematics, Thespians for drama, and the National Honor Society. Every spring, students from all grade levels are recognized at an academic awards night, and similar recognition ceremonies occur for athletic and other achievements. In addition, seniors from the Class of 2017 were offered over \$70,000 in local scholarship monies at scholarship night.

Among the members of the Class of 2017, 36 percent chose to attend four-year colleges, 22 percent to attend two-year colleges, 4 percent to enter military service, and 27 percent to transition directly into employment or other pursuits. Graduates had a diverse selection of post-secondary educational opportunities available to them, as students were accepted into such colleges and universities as Boston College, Columbia University, Georgetown University, the University of Connecticut, and Yale University. Graduates of the Class of 2016 also displayed this tradition of excellence with acceptances to such institutions as Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Princeton University, and Tufts University.

THS has established a number of effective partnerships with local businesses and organizations to enhance student learning. For example, a cooperative agreement with Northwest Connecticut Community College allows students to take one-credit college courses at THS for free, providing students with an invaluable opportunity to preview the college classroom experience and engage in career exploration. THS is also involved in the Junior Leadership program in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and hosts a Financial Reality Fair that is attended by students from several area schools in addition to THS students. In addition, THS students are active in the community, conducting a range of activities such as food drives, fundraisers, blood drives, and other volunteer opportunities. THS students participate in internships with local government and business agencies, and the Pre-vocational and Vocational Exploration (PAVE) program provide work experience for students with special needs.

#### **Related Files**

- [2018-02-01-09:39\\_neasc-jan-2018-school-and-community-summary.docx](#)

## **Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations**

### **Core Values and Beliefs**

THS believes that a community of self-motivated individuals who exercise personal responsibility and respect, demonstrate intellectual curiosity and resiliency, and value hard work and integrity will create life-long learners and productive members of society. Students will uphold TRADITION, and bring HONOR and SUCCESS to themselves, the school and the community.

### **Motto**

Quod facis bene fac - What you do, do well...

## **21st Century Learning Expectations**

### COMMUNICATION

- Communicate orally, visually, and in writing
- Address purpose, use evidence, organize information
- Cite sources and honor discipline-specific standards.

### INQUIRY / PROBLEM SOLVING

- Demonstrate intellectual curiosity
- Creatively pose questions to identify problems
- Successfully utilize critical thinking skills to solve problems
- Reflectively analyze results

### VALUE CHARACTER

- Uphold the tradition of good citizenship
- Take personal responsibility and accountability for your actions
- Show respect and tolerance for others
- Contribute to a positive school and community

### INFORMATION LITERACY

- Comprehend visual and written materials
- Effectively utilize technology to obtain and generate information
- Successfully demonstrate ability to analyze and evaluate information
- Make inferences and connections

### COLLABORATION

- Effectively meet common goals by sharing responsibility for learning
- Honor the input of others
- Regularly contribute information in class or group assignments



# Introduction

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## Introduction

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

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

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

### Teaching and Learning Standards

- Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment of and for Student Learning

### Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

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

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

### Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Torrington High School, a steering committee of six members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. While the self-study committees were made up of faculty members, other individuals, including students, parents, and central office personnel, were frequently consulted to provide insight and evidence to help support the committees' conclusions. The self-study of Torrington High School extended over a period of 38 school months from September 2015 to April 2019. The visiting team was pleased to note that the Torrington High School Governance Council and the Board of Education School Improvement Committee provided feedback to the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

### The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of 16 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Torrington High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Torrington, Connecticut, 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 aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, school counselors, library/media specialists, school administrators, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Torrington High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 56 hours shadowing 16 students for a half-day
- a total of 8 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 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

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

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Committee on Public Secondary Schools, which will make a decision on the accreditation of Torrington High School.

# Standard 1 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

The Torrington High School (THS) process to create the core values and beliefs included faculty, students, and parents. The slogan, *THS: Tradition, Honor, Success* was created by students in a contest run during the advisory period in the 2013-2014 school year. The next year teachers, administrators, and students worked to create the core values and beliefs statement which also included the THS slogan and the Latin phrase *Quod facis bene fac*: What you do, do well, an original element from early in the school's history. In the 2015-2016 school year teachers, parents, students, and administrators created the Communication, Inquiry/Problem Solving, Value Character, Information Literacy, Collaboration (CIVIC) learning expectations, and work on the rubrics was begun shortly thereafter. The learning expectations were approved by the school governance council.

The core values, as well as the CIVIC learning expectations, are identified in the student handbook which is also published online. Some parents, teachers, and students can identify the core values and learning outcomes; however, many are unsure of the role each plays in reference to student learning.

Because the school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning, it can have confidence that the school's guiding documents represent the broader community's priorities.

## Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- parents
- community members

# Standard 1 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school purposefully created challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies. Each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, with school-wide rubrics which define targeted high levels of achievement.

The school created a list of Communication, Inquiry/Problem Solving, Value Character, Information Literacy, Collaboration learning expectations symbolized by the acronym CIVIC. The expectations and CIVIC acronym can be found on posters/signage in the hallways and in the classrooms in the school. Some teachers, in some departments, have begun to list the applicable CIVIC expectations at the top of student handouts. The CIVIC expectations and accompanying rubrics share the same measurable terminology, allowing students to develop a common understanding of expectations and level of achievement. To date, a few departments, such as science and English, have slowly begun to implement these documents in their practice. Implementation can be found in other areas by individual teachers.

Some posters in school highlight a single one of the CIVIC standards. The proliferation of such posters adds to students' awareness of these guiding documents. While the district mission statement identifies the adult actions that will result in the desired outcomes, the language of the school's core values implies that students are expected to come to the school already self-motivated in order to be successful, and the beliefs about the role of the school's adults in creating successful students are not identified.

Because the school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success with school-wide rubrics which define targeted high levels of achievement, students, parents, and teachers have a means of understanding how to meet the expectations or learning.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents

# Standard 1 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are not consistently reflected in the classroom; however, some examples of the use of CIVIC expectations are scattered throughout disciplines and classrooms which positively impact the school culture although the use is not widespread. Due to the sporadic implementation of the core values, beliefs, and CIVIC learning expectations, currently, they are not regularly guiding school policy, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

At this time, the implementation of the CIVIC rubrics has been inconsistent. There is a discrepancy between what many stakeholders believe is occurring and what can be supported with evidence. Faculty members not involved in the development of the core values, beliefs, and CIVIC learning expectations have stated that there has not been professional development on how to implement the CIVIC rubrics in their lessons. Based on student work samples and discussions with faculty and students, many faculty members are confused about how to use the rubrics and how to assess various types of assignments with fidelity.

In some disciplines, the implementation of CIVIC rubrics has resulted in changes to curriculum and instruction, but completing this work is a goal for the future. For example, in many classes, collaborative work is used as an instructional strategy; however, inquiry, another element of CIVIC, is not addressed in the many teacher-directed lessons delivered. The professional staff believes that the adoption of restorative discipline practices has the potential to support the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, but they are not overtly connected at this time. Students demonstrate a strong community of caring, despite the inconsistent implementation of the core values and learning expectations.

When the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are consistently actively reflected in the culture of the school, they can be better used to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom and to guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 1 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

The school does not yet have a process to regularly review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

The school revised its core values in 2015 through a process that involved a wide variety of stakeholders and points of data and evidence. Teachers, community members, students, and parents were all given opportunities to have input into these guiding documents.

Once Torrington High School creates and implements a process to regularly review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, and the school-wide expectations outlined in CIVIC, the school will be more assured that its guiding documents are in alignment with the district and school community priorities.

## Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 1 Commendations

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## Commendation

The posting of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations throughout the building and online

## Commendation

The design of the school-wide rubrics which target high levels of achievement

## Commendation

The involvement of stakeholders such as parents, community members, students, faculty, and staff in the development of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

## Commendation

The adoption of restorative discipline which connects to the elements of the Communication, Inquiry/Problem Solving, Value Character, Information Literacy, Collaboration (CIVIC) learning expectations

# Standard 1 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Ensure that the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in all aspects of school operations, such as curriculum, instruction, policies, procedures, discipline, and assessment, and resource allocations

## Recommendation

Create and implement a process to regularly review and revise the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations to ensure alignment with school community expectations and student achievement

## Recommendation

## Recommendation

## Recommendation

## Recommendation



# Standard 2 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

Torrington High School's curriculum is not purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

According to the Endicott survey, only 34.8 percent of teachers agree that the school's formal curriculum design ensures that all students practice and achieve all of the school's learning expectations. Some departments and teachers use a binder system to centralize their written curriculum based on each content area. In 2011 and 2013, professional development was given to some teachers in an attempt to align curriculum in the Understanding By Design (UbD) format. The English department worked extensively with this design to successfully align curriculum for its classes. In the 2013-2014 school year, the district's curriculum director promoted UbD design but, due to budget cuts, this position was eliminated. In the 2017-2018 school year, the district provided teachers professional development on creating common formative assessments. There is a plan for teachers to continue curriculum work in the summer and fall of 2019.

The majority of teachers understand the learning expectations that they are responsible for teaching but feel they are not given enough time to purposefully design curriculum along with their subjects' content. Teachers use PLC time and department meetings, alternately once a month, to meet with their teammates, e.g., the 9th grade world history teacher meets with the other 9th grade world history teacher to work on common assessments. These meetings have been recently used for other district initiatives. Teachers occasionally meet informally outside of their contractual time to create and revise classroom assessments. The science department has effectively used the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) to align the majority of its department's curricula. They have worked with the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), to accomplish this. School-wide rubrics are used in classes in some departments to assess student achievement. Teachers have begun to incorporate rubrics, through their work with inspirEd, into their academic lessons in an attempt to have students practice and achieve Collaboration, Inquiry, Value Character, Information Literacy, and Communication (CIVIC ) expectations.

When all curriculum is completed and purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations, students will be assured of a curriculum that prepares them for future success.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The Torrington High School curriculum is not yet written in a common format. The curriculum sometimes includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and instructional strategies. The vast majority of the curricula have measurable criteria for success, such as a school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics. However, alignment with the school's 21st century learning expectations (CLEs) is limited in the existing curriculum documents.

According to the Endicott survey, 70 percent of teachers feel that there is a need to create a purposeful, systematic, and formal curriculum template that is used in all subject areas. Formal time was set apart for the English and math departments in the 2014-2015 school year to explicitly create curriculum maps, but the creation of a commonly formatted curriculum map across all disciplines is currently lacking. Although teachers were provided training in UbD curriculum writing in the 2014-2015 school year, the implementation is inconsistent and not systematically found across the content areas. Older pacing guides, previously written curriculum, course blueprints, NGSS curriculum, and state-released curriculum is not always explicit and deliberate across all departments. A district-wide curriculum council is planned to develop vertical articulation by grade levels K-12 to build connections, common 21st CLEs, units of study, essential questions, instructional strategies, and consistent assessment practices to support Torrington High School students to show their mastery of the 21st CLEs.

When the curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; the school's 21st century learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics, the learning process will be enhanced to improve student achievement.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 2 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The curriculum at Torrington High School sometimes emphasizes the depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology.

According to the Endicott survey, 65.4 percent of students find the content in their courses challenges them to think critically and solve problems. The curriculum supports depth of understanding and application of knowledge in some content areas. In the Child Development course, students learn and apply their knowledge in the Torrington High School preschool. The Yearbook class designs and creates the *Torringtonian* school yearbook each year. The music department offers internationally-recognized course offerings and has students apply their knowledge in real-world applications through podcasts and other forms of media. Students who successfully complete the Emergency Medical Training (EMT) course earn a state certification endorsement. The English department curriculum uses the Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose (CRAAP) method for assessing internet source validity and MLA and Chicago citations. The Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) program allows students to access real-world experiences, such as wearing official uniforms, military customs, and leadership skills that can be applied in their future careers. The emphasis of depth of understanding and application of knowledge is inconsistent, and curricular time is seldom designated to create and enable these skills to occur in the content areas and interdisciplinary activities. Some content area and school-wide rubrics focus on how students should use technology effectively. Students and parents sign an Acceptable Use of Private Technology Device form, outlining Torrington School District's policies regarding acceptable technology usage. Teachers use various technologies to help students practice and hone their technology and academic skills. Teachers use Google Apps for Education, including Google Classroom and Google word processing programs. Infobase and Gale Virtual Reference Library are used in academic skills in tandem with the library/media center. Upon entering Torrington High School, freshmen complete a library/media unit, taught by their English teacher and library/media specialist.

When the curriculum consistently emphasizes the depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology, student learning will be more aligned to current real-world experiences and future academic pursuits.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

Torrington High School does not yet have alignment between the written and taught the curriculum.

Due to not having a documented curriculum for many courses, the school can not establish alignment. This lack of written curriculum severely hampers the school's ability to guarantee vertical alignment across the grade span and horizontal alignment to support interdepartmental collaboration.

When the school has clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum, the content and rigor of classroom instruction will be aligned with a formal, board-approved curriculum, and all students can receive the same opportunities for growth.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 2 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation is infrequently exhibited between and among all academic areas within Torrington High School as well as with sending schools in the district.

In the 2013-2014 school year, curriculum time was designated for the English department to work on UbD. The English department curriculum has been completed, approved, and audited but needs continued time to be reviewed, revised, edited, and formatted. The science department has vertically aligned with the middle school and high school courses with the onset of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The English and science departments participated in a formal cycle to review and renew their curricula. Science teachers were also given per diem time over the summer to continue work on integrating NGSS into the science curriculum. There are some examples of limited vertical articulation in other subject areas, such as the physical education and the world languages departments: In the physical education department, the Vertical Articulation Matrix exists across sports and fitness courses, and the world languages department has aligned the Spanish Vertical Articulation Matrix.

When effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district, curriculum standards and expectations will be better met to ensure that all students achieve.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

# Standard 2 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

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

Torrington High School has begun the development and implementation of SRBI practices by hiring a reading interventionist for Tier II students. The purchase of new instructional materials for the library/media center and health/physical education is not currently a continual process but rather unpredictable in its frequency and sufficiency. Inadequate Wi-Fi, hardware, and software malfunctions disrupt the instruction and assessment requirements of the curriculum. The three computer labs in the building are not always adequate to accommodate all of the requirements of the curriculum and do not have the staffing levels necessary to ensure all equipment is working correctly.

The facility is outdated and often interferes with the effective implementation of 21st century learning expectations. The classroom temperatures are unpredictable and interfere with student learning. A recent leak on the gym floor highlights building and roof issues. The low ceilings and lack of sound treatment in the band and choral rooms affect the instruction of classes nearby. Broken windows and blinds need replacement.

Co-curricular activities are completely or partially self-funded, and, according to the Endicott survey, 90 percent of teachers indicate that co-curricular programs are not adequately funded to provide students with co-curricular activities. Eighty percent of teachers believe that they do not have sufficient instructional material to implement the curriculum, and 75 percent feel that the facilities do not support its implementation.

When staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities, students will be ensured of a sufficient curriculum to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents

# Standard 2 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, over 74 percent of teachers disagree that they have or are undecided about having sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. The district and school leadership coordinated and provided teachers training on common formative assessments. Teachers received UbD training on curriculum development. The faculty incorporated innovative thinking and practice related to the curriculum through local, state, and national programs, such as Model UN, Mu Alpha Theta for mathematics, National Honor Society, Financial Reality Fair, Chamber of Commerce, internships, and Northwest Community College. The math and science departments have received some dedicated time for curriculum revision since 2011 that continued during the 2013, 2014, and 2015 school years, but the templates are not uniform across content areas. The English department has been able to revise its curriculum but a consistent and systematic articulation with a common template throughout the district and among different content areas at the high school has not been developed. Additional time is allocated through the district calendar, albeit inconsistently.

When the district consistently provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research, students will receive an equitable, consistent vertically-aligned educational learning experience.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 2 Commendations

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## Commendation

The development of curriculum maps in the science, English, and math departments

## Commendation

The use of school-wide and content-specific rubrics in some content areas for inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, and collaboration

## Commendation

The development and posting of lesson-specific essential questions to guide instruction by some teachers

## Commendation

The strong relationships created by school staff with outside organizations and agencies to support learning opportunities for students

## Commendation

The vertical alignment of the science curriculum focusing on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in grades 6-12

## Commendation

The introduction of SRBI practices to support some students in need of academic intervention

## Commendation

The emphasis on the informed and ethical use of technology through a variety of online and communication tools

## Commendation

## Commendation



# Commendation

# Standard 2 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan for the district to consistently provide the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research

## Recommendation

Ensure that the curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; the school's 21st century learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics

## Recommendation

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

## Recommendation

Ensure that the curriculum consistently emphasizes the depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology

## Recommendation

Ensure that there is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum in all courses

## Recommendation

Ensure that effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district

## Recommendation

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

## Recommendation

Ensure that the district consistently provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and

financial

resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research

## **Recommendation**

## **Recommendation**

# Standard 3 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

In some areas, teachers' instructional practices are examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

The vast majority of teachers are familiar with the school's motto of tradition, honor, and success as well as the school's 21st century learning expectations, Communication, Inquiry, Values Character, Information Literacy, and Collaboration (CIVIC). Posters are present in hallways and classrooms throughout the school building. Various departments have adopted individual elements of CIVIC and incorporated them into their instructional practices. For example, the science department focuses on Inquiry and Values Character. Although the school's core values and beliefs about learning as well as 21st century learning expectations are clear and recognized throughout the school building, the teaching practices in all classes inconsistently use them. Some teachers have reflected upon these practices and are beginning to incorporate them into their daily teaching practice.

When teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, students will be better able to meet them.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teachers

# Standard 3 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

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

Teachers personalize their instruction through various strategies. The social studies department uses a layered curriculum to address student needs. The English, math, social studies and science departments have success with co-taught classes' reaching the needs of all students in their classrooms. The English department collaborates with the SRBI interventionist to make individual course recommendations using student data from NWEA-MAP and SAT tests. The SRBI interventionist coaches the English teachers on appropriate instructional strategies to meet the needs of the learners using the same data. Members of the math department spiral the curriculum and practice learning circuits in the classroom in which students can work at their own pace. Although these differentiating strategies exist, they are inconsistently employed across the school. According to the Endicott survey, only 36 percent of students feel that their instruction is personalized. Additionally, out of 59 classroom visits, personalization was observed in 27 of them, approximately 46 percent.

There have been deliberate attempts to provide cross-disciplinary learning opportunities for students. The grade 9 teams follow curricula that are designed to encourage cross-disciplinary learning between social studies and English departments and math and science departments. Most departments have special cross-disciplinary projects or connections. The music technology classes work to create a promotional commercial with marketing classes. The art classes incorporate historical background lessons to support the introduction of a new unit. Although the course of study guidebook contains cross-disciplinary-based courses such as American Studies and International Studies, these courses have not been offered in recent years.

Opportunities for students to be active and self-directed learners are inconsistent. Some departments, such as music and physical education, have designed courses that allow for student choice on projects. The English and social studies departments offer regular opportunities to peer- and self-assess using department rubrics on writing assignments. Although students have some opportunities to be self-directed, this instructional practice is not yet regularly implemented throughout the building and across all content areas.

Teachers focus students on key themes, concepts, and essential questions that encourage higher order thinking opportunities. For example, science teachers incorporate NGSS for all of their assignments. At times, essential questions are listed on the board, many lessons do not directly align with the questions posed. In 54 percent of the general and college prep classes observed, students were asked to recall and define, e.g, students answered reading comprehension questions or copied answers from a video into a graphic organizer as the most prevalent mode of instruction.

Students have multiple opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to authentic tasks outside of the classroom and within the school community. In World History, students participate in mock trials and Model UNs. The school offers multiple opportunities that give students access to authentic tasks. For example, events such as History Day and the Financial Reality Fair allow students to develop a specific set of skills for a specific career pathway.

Teachers routinely ask students to reflect on their work and to self-critique. According to the Endicott survey, 60 percent of students agree that teachers provide opportunities to assess their learning. The World History II classes, which participate in a Model UN debate, reflect on both the event as a whole and on each other's performance. Several art assignments use a rubric on which students self-assess, and teachers use the same document to show their agreement or disagreement with the students' decisions regarding their performances.

Over 70 percent of students report that they are encouraged to use technology on their assignments. Some departments report consistent access to technology by use of multiple Chromebook carts. Students find that they

use technology 2-3 times per month. There is limited use of technology in classes due to the building Wi-Fi infrastructure not being reliable. Many teachers have broken and unusable equipment in their classrooms which inhibits making technology integration building-wide. Many teachers lack training in the use of some of equipment in their classrooms.

When teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction; engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning; engaging students as active and self-directed learners; emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking; applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; engaging students in self-assessment and reflection; and integrating technology, instruction will provide students with more meaningful opportunities and experiences to help demonstrate mastery in of the learning expectations.

## **Sources of Evidence**

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents

# Standard 3 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

Many teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time, but this is not done in a consistent or purposeful way across the school for all students. However, the degree to which teachers consistently differentiate strategically, purposefully organize groups, and provide differentiated support and alternative strategies varies substantially from teacher to teacher and department to department.

For example, the use of various educational websites and student-led activities such as Socratic circles are used in English and social studies classes. Some teachers in the math department use a color-coded communication system for students to alert the teacher to their level of understanding as class progresses. The purpose of these assessments is improvement, but it is not always clearly communicated this way. Students desire more specific and consistent communication of expectations on all assignments.

Students sometimes receive specific and immediate teacher feedback. In some classrooms, teachers give students feedback regarding their work while circulating and during group activities, giving students a chance to reflect, ask questions, and then correct their work. However, other teachers review correct answers with the whole class, without providing specific student feedback regarding individual responses and how to improve. Some sample rubrics provide evidence of specific teacher feedback that elaborates on the rubric distinctions, while others rely on the rubric language to communicate with students.

There is no formal process in place for data collection or analysis; however, some teachers have analyzed common summative assessments to inform their decisions about curriculum and instruction. Some departments use SAT and NWEA-MAP data to recommend courses and levels to students as well as to plan on how to approach instruction, but this practice is not school-wide. Some teachers work with special education teachers and paraprofessionals to address the diverse learning abilities within their classrooms.

In most departments, students are encouraged to attend extra help sessions with the teachers during shared free periods during the school day or after school. The master schedule has been designed so that the grade 9 teams and students have common time during study halls. Students find the availability of teachers to be consistent and constant, including after school.

Teachers use purposeful group learning activities on a regular basis in core academic classes, elective classes and even outside of the classroom. According to the Endicott survey, 82 percent of students indicate that teachers use group activities in their classes.

While most teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time, when this is done consistently and when the teachers also strategically differentiate; purposefully organize group learning activities, and provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, teachers will be better prepared to meet the needs of each student and will provide regular and effective feedback.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers

# Standard 3 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

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

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are scheduled once per month on an early release day for all teachers. PLCs were originally designed to collaborate and discuss current research and best practices in a formal manner. More recently, however, PLC time has not been devoted to reviewing student achievement data to drive instruction but rather for other agenda items.

The 9th grade team model implemented this year has aided teachers in meeting with their content partners to compare student work and achievement data. Additionally, these teachers are able to take this time to review lesson plans and ideas within their content areas and give constructive feedback to their colleagues. This has not only benefited the teachers themselves, but also the students in their classes. Some teachers outside of the ninth grade teams use personal and prep time to accomplish the same tasks.

Feedback to teachers from stakeholders to drive instruction has been inconsistent. Summative assessments are reviewed throughout the building. However, at this time, these summative assignments are not identical throughout the content area, making data comparisons difficult. Data from summative assessments are not formally reviewed within PLCs to close the feedback loop and change instructional practices. The school does not make widespread use of feedback from parents and families to inform instructional practices.

When all teachers, individually and collaboratively, consistently improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; examining student work; using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; examining current research; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, instruction will be strengthened, further enhancing curricular and instructional rigor while providing more opportunities for differentiation and personalization of learning.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- community members



# Standard 3 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Teachers maintain expertise in the content of their subject area on an individual basis; however, their ability to maintain expertise in content-specific instructional practices is hindered by a lack of formalized and systematic opportunities to professionally reflect.

The opportunity to share their knowledge with colleagues in a formal manner is sporadically and informally implemented due to constraints placed upon the agenda for both department and PLC meetings. Department leaders seldom use the time for the purpose of focusing on content-specific knowledge and pedagogy. Formal and consistent collaboration and some summative assessments (midterms and finals) in some departments are common throughout the content area. Current monthly department time is not allocated to sharing information obtained through individual efforts, such as journals, conferences, and research. Collaboration is limited in some departments.

When the teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, they will be able to employ best practice for each student and enhance student performance and achievement.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers

# Standard 3 Commendations

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## Commendation

The opportunities for student self-assessment in writing assignments

## Commendation

The opportunities for students to deepen and expand their learning of the curriculum through opportunities provided by partners in the community

## Commendation

The current plan to enhance opportunities for cross-disciplinary student learning

## Commendation

The current efforts to expand student access to educational computing devices

## Commendation

The ninth grade teams' use of student data to provide students access to extra assistance during the school day

## Commendation

The new implementation of interventionist staff to support the learning of students in need of academic support

## Commendation

## Commendation

## Commendation

# Commendation

# Standard 3 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Ensure that PLC meetings, department meetings, faculty meetings, and other available time are focused on allowing teachers to collaborate on assessing student learning needs, collaborative lesson and unit design, assessment of the written curriculum, and collaborative professional development

## Recommendation

Support teachers' implementation of student computing devices in the classroom with training and equitable allocation

## Recommendation

Ensure teachers' instructional practices are examined and supported to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Build on the current examples provided by some teachers to ensure that all teachers' instructional strategies consistently support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction, engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, engaging students as active and self-directed learners, emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology

## Recommendation

Build on the current examples provided by some teachers to ensure that all teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student through the use of regular and effective formative assessment techniques

## Recommendation

Ensure that all teachers, individually and collaboratively, consistently improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; examining student work; using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; examining current research; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice

## Recommendation

Ensure that all teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise not only in their content area but also in content-specific instructional practices and provide necessary in-school and district-level structures, accountability, and support to accomplish this

# Standard 4 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The professional staff is limited in their employment of a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics.

The 21st century learning expectations have been created and some staff and departments implement these expectations in the form of adapted rubrics that were developed by teachers. Some of the teachers in some of the departments are using the school-wide rubrics as is, while some have modified them in their own way to fit their assessments. Administrators recommend that individual departments choose a specific rubric to focus on in their courses; the decisions for what rubrics would be used in which department were decided during department meeting time. One example of the usage of these rubrics is the art department's modification of the communication rubric to better fit activities, and this modified rubric is used throughout the department. Although it was communicated that each department should choose a rubric, the usage of these rubrics is practiced informally across the departments, and, currently, there is a lack of a communicated formal process both for the use of individual rubrics by the departments and how data for students based on all rubrics will be tracked and used. The learning expectations of Communication, Inquiry, Value Character, Information Literacy, and Collaboration (CIVIC) have been used on some students assessments but with no formal, ongoing process to ensure that each student has regular opportunities to be assessed using these expectations. Both formatively and summatively, the determination of the achievement of these practices is not yet taking place. Additionally, according to the Endicott survey, over half of the teachers either disagree or are undecided about their using analytic school-wide rubrics when assessing student work.

When the professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, the school will have a better understanding of students' achievement of the learning expectations, individually and collectively.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- central office personnel

# Standard 4 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

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

While the 21st century learning expectation rubrics have been developed and shared with the faculty, no formal process has been created for their use, along with the collection and sharing of data from these rubrics to either students or their families. However, this process occurs informally at times across departments. Teachers quantify the rubrics they use, modified or not, to provide numeric grades on assessments that have been measured with such rubrics, and this is reflected in student work. There is a lack of communication of the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community. Parents are aware that 21st century learning expectations exist but do not know what they are and how student progress in achieving them is tracked and communicated. Nevertheless, the professional staff feels that formal process needs to be developed, and this process is currently in the planning phase.

When the school's professional staff consistently communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community, the faculty will be able to communicate this progress to all stakeholders which in turn will support student academic achievement toward attainment of these learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- school board
- community members

# Standard 4 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

In some areas, professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes assessment data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement, but no formal process for doing so currently exists.

According to the Endicott survey, only 33.7 percent of teachers agree that they collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. This practice only takes place among some teachers of similar courses. The school uses the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA-MAP) as the growth model for students up to tenth grade, but there is a gap in its usage. No formal process is in place for the review of this data or changes to the curriculum as a result of the results. Furthermore, the use of standardized tests, such as the SAT, is inconsistent from teacher to teacher. Because of this, some students are benefiting more than others. Some teachers collaboratively review student outcomes on course-specific assessments and analyze this data to modify and adjust instruction, but this is not an established process school-wide.

When a formal process and system is implemented to ensure that the professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data, the school will be able to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview



# Standard 4 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, teachers often communicate related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed but communicate connections to the school's 21st century learning expectations on a much more limited basis.

According to the Endicott survey, nearly 60 percent of students feel that the teachers communicate the 21st century learning expectations, but only 45 percent of teachers agree. The 21st century learning expectations are visible in nearly every classroom in the form of a poster using the CIVIC acronym and students and the principal references them quite often in the morning announcements. Student work reflects the use of school-wide rubrics representing the 21st century learning expectations; however, this practice is not consistent, and teachers are still developing ways to use those rubrics, as is or modified, in their assessment practices. Certain 21st century learning expectations rubrics are used based on the department, and in some departments some teachers modify the rubric to better match assignments. Teachers communicate their expectations and what will be assessed prior to each unit of study, typically in the form of course, content-specific rubrics lacking direct links to the 21st century learning expectations.

When, prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed, students will be better prepared to achieve these goals.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, most teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding assignment-specific rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

It is common practice for rubrics to be used on most assessments across all disciplines. Student work often contains associated rubrics outlining how a grade was developed. Parents feel that their children have a clear understanding of their learner expectations. The rubrics generally outline areas of competency to evaluate student mastery of content and associated skills. This practice ensures consistency of criteria for success. These rubrics are often provided to students and reviewed prior to the beginning of work toward assignment completion, in order for students to self-assess as they work. In a science class, a rubric is provided with the lab sheet, and students use this rubric to assess themselves as they work through the activity. In an ESL class, students consistently reference their rubrics as they conduct research and type their essay. According to the Endicott survey, 72.3 percent of students understand in advance what work they have to accomplish to meet their teachers' expectations, and 67.9 percent understand the rubrics their teachers use. Although there may not be a common practice for the use of and type of rubrics used across the school, some departments, such as the social studies department, has started work toward this practice.

As a result, many teachers' use of specific, measurable criteria for success ensures that learner expectations are clear for high levels of achievement for many students at THS.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- parents
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

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

Some commonly used formative assessments include, among others, do-now work, thumbs up/thumbs down, exit ticket, pair/share, and peer review. These strategies are used by most teachers to gauge achievement. In one class observation, the class started with a do-now. After students had time to address the question, students turned to a partner and conducted a pair/share. While this was happening, the teacher circulated the class gaining an understanding of the students' level of comprehension. Teachers fully understand the importance of using multiple forms of formative assessment to check for understanding. They use formative assessments to guide instructional practices. Although it can vary from department to department, a variety of summative assessments are also used. Summative assessments can include group presentations, posters, written tests, symposiums, essays, and the creation of games and tests. For example, in a chemistry class, students are assessed on their ability to calculate and measure mass by way of a hands-on lab. In an ESL class, students show how they can use critical thinking and research skills by means of a research essay. In a World History honors class, students are assessed based on multiple indicators and skills. The use of these multiple forms of summative assessments allows for increased opportunity to show learning by various types of learners. The students like having multiple ways to show their learning, and they know that "some students are better test-takers than others and some students are just more creative." Although all teachers employ multiple forms of summative assessments throughout all courses, there are subject areas where this happens more than others. For example, science and English have been identified as subjects that have a wide range of types of assessments whereas, in some other departments, it is less so.

Because, in each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, students have a variety of modes and opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

## Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- students

# Standard 4 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

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

The school schedule allocates designated formal time for the discussion on assessment practices. This consists of monthly PLCs, during which the faculty members are provided with early release time once per month. This is in addition to monthly department meetings during which teachers have an opportunity to use some of the time to collaborate on educational practices. However, even though time is available, this time is not always effectively and efficiently used. There is no formal process for teacher collaboration, and often school and district leaders co-opt this time to focus on other initiatives. In addition to this planned time, collaboration among teachers occurs informally; however, the administrators do not take part in this practice.

When the teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, their instructional practices will be better guided by the data those assessments provide.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership

# Standard 4 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

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

It is standard practice for teachers to upload a grade for at least one assessment per week per class into the PowerSchool portal. This is a formal process driven by administrators. In most cases, teachers exceed this expectation regularly. Parents are happy with the amount of timely feedback and updates provided through PowerSchool along with other platforms including Google Classroom. Teachers encourage their students to check their PowerSchool accounts regularly. This allows students and parents to receive feedback in a timely, efficient manner, so students are able to make informed decisions about their learning. Assignments are often returned to students with comments on the quality of work and suggestions for improvement. Students find that almost all of their teachers return assessments quickly with suggestions on how to improve their work, and these provided suggestions are used by students as a starting point for revisions. Parents and students believe that teachers are fair and consistent in their grading practices.

In addition to providing timely feedback on student work, an assessment correction policy is in place and practiced throughout the school. Teachers and students agree on the importance of this practice when it is taken advantage of and how it can have a positive effect on academic growth. Although this assessment corrections policy and procedure is mandated by administrators and practiced in every department, variations to this practice exist. For example, the math department has a written policy where any student who scores below 85 percent can retake the assessment as long as they fulfill certain requirements. This process is clearly defined, shared amongst the department faculty, and communicated to the students. The science department has a similar procedure for students who fail an assessment, and other departments have an assessment correction policy in place of a retake. Teachers are concerned that the students who really need to take advantage of this do not and believe that students need to be encouraged to take advantage of the corrective feedback and retake policy to allow for the equitable improvement of student learning.

Because teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback using assignment-specific tools, students are given opportunities to reflect upon, revise, and improve their work which fosters improved student achievement.

## Sources of Evidence

- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents

# Standard 4 Indicator 9

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## Conclusions

Throughout the school, teachers regularly use formative assessments in their instruction and occasionally this is used to inform and adapt whole-class instruction for the purpose of improving student learning and the curriculum as a whole.

Teachers at THS are using formative assessments on a consistent basis in their classes. This use allows teachers to have an improved ability to address student inequities. Many teachers use multiple formative assessments during a class period. Warm-ups, exit tickets, pair/shares, peer reviews and various forms of group work are commonly used to gauge comprehension of daily lessons; this feedback is used to guide or to modify a lesson. The use of these forms of formative assessments are visible in classrooms throughout the school and inform the remainder of the lessons. However, teachers seldom use the results from these formative assessments to revise their curriculum, and any reflection and revision is intended more for the whole class rather than for individual learners. At this time, these formative assessments are not common assessments, but a plan is in place to develop common formative assessments (CFAs) for individual courses. This will allow for a sharing of data, which could be used to improve curriculum.

While the teachers regularly use formative assessment, when they also use it to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning, they will be in better positions to assist students in achieving the 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel

# Standard 4 Indicator 10

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## Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, 70 percent of both students and parents find that teachers use a variety of assessment methods; however, only 44 percent of teachers find that teachers and administrators examine assessments, student work, and standardized assessments. The professional staff has a plan for collaboration to revise and improve curriculum and instructional practices, but it is still in development. Some teachers use their evaluations as a catalyst to focus individually on improving instructional practices. No time has been purposefully devoted to reviewing individual and school-wide progress in achieving the 21st century learning expectations. No data from sending schools or outside institutions is typically shared with the teachers to allow for vertical alignment and articulation. The teacher evaluation process has a component of soliciting feedback from current students, and this practice regularly takes place. However, there is no formal plan, other than the teacher evaluation, to use this data to revise curriculum and to improve instructional practice. Other than individual teacher tracking and communication with former students, no plan is in place to solicit information from alumni.

While teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including student work; common course and common grade-level assessments; and standardized assessments, when they also examine individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations; data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions; and survey data from current students and alumni, they will be able to revise curriculum more effectively and to develop their classroom practice.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 11

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## Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are currently not being reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

PLC time is allocated for initiatives other than the review and revision of grading and reporting practices. According to the Endicott survey, just only 40 percent of teachers feel that reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, while 75 percent of parents feel that teachers grading practices are aligned. Administrators expect that teachers will upload at least one assessment per week into PowerSchool and will communicate with teachers who are not meeting this expectation. The professional staff has been discussing other grading practices such as being consistent across all subject areas, along with PLCs being better structured. Administrators intend to develop a plan to do this more regularly and to use this practice to make changes as necessary.

When grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, parents, students, and the community can be assured that they are receiving valid and reliable information regarding student achievement.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey



# Standard 4 Commendations

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## Commendation

The use of a wide range of formative assessment strategies by some individual teachers

## Commendation

The provision of specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work

## Commendation

The professional staff's regular communication of students' course-specific learning expectations

## Commendation

The teachers' communicating to students the unit-specific learner outcomes to be assessed prior to each unit of study

## Commendation

The development of effective rubrics to measure the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Commendation

The development of effective rubrics to measure the school's 21st century learning expectations by the teaching faculty

## Commendation

## Commendation

## Commendation

# Commendation

# Standard 4 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal program to ensure that the professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify inequalities in student achievement and to strategize for their improvement

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics

## Recommendation

Ensure that teachers communicate to students and clearly outline the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations to be assessed prior to each unit of study

## Recommendation

Establish a formal process for teachers to frequently collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments when possible

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community

## Recommendation

Implement a formal plan that ensures that all teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments

## Recommendation

## Recommendation

**Recommendation**

**Recommendation**

# Standard 5 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

Through conscious and continuous efforts, the school community has built a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all through a systematic process.

At Torrington High School, there is a palpable sense of community and caring, and this can be seen through a wide variety of examples across the school's programs. Students and families are provided with the student handbook, which outlines the policies and procedures that reflect the high expectations for all students. Students complete a verification form, signing off that they have reviewed the policies set within the handbook. Student ambassadors are volunteers who work with school counseling staff to ensure that newly enrolled students feel welcomed and a part of the school community. Students and staff members collaborated to implement a "care closet" by which any student in need can obtain personal hygiene items if they are not able to afford these on their own. THS, through various activities, continues to create opportunities to help create a positive school climate for its diverse population. The student council, which is made up of 34 students, takes active role in facilitating student activities and fundraisers. Events that students in which participate include spirit week, Raider Rally, pep rallies, and T-Fest. Additionally, students participate in multiple fundraisers, including their Empty Bowls fundraisers, to support their school and local community. Students have an opportunity to join the thirty various clubs that are offered.

Because the school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all, stakeholders are able to ensure an environment where all students can achieve success.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- school website

# Standard 5 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school is developing its ability to provide equitable and inclusive access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Efforts at Torrington High School have been made to heterogeneously group students. General-level classes were phased out during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years in science and social studies. However, for the 2018-2019 school year, the general level for all grade-level English classes was reinstated. Nevertheless, as students are recommended for a level based on their grade performance in the previous leveled class, students are allowed to override a teacher recommendation with parental consent. Within the program of studies, students and families are aware of levels for each course, but for those classes that do not offer a general level, it does not state the school's goal to heterogeneously group students. There is some disparity in course enrollment data. For those enrolled in a college-preparatory US History course, students of color make up 23 percent of the population in the higher-level sections (honors and AP), while white students represent 77 percent. Those students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals make up 35 percent of honors and AP students. These ratios are somewhat out of alignment with the school's at-large population in which 32.5 percent are students of color and 52 percent receive free or reduced-price meals.

As the demographics of Torrington High School change and those students who qualify for special education increase, the school is planning to support those students who qualify for special education services opportunities to participate within the regular education curriculum. Currently, students are given the opportunity to take co-taught classes in the core areas of English, math, science, and social studies; however, neither the model of co-teaching that the school is using nor roles assumed by the co-teacher are formally defined. Additionally, those teachers do not have a common planning time to review curriculum and modifications. Torrington High School currently has 21 paraeducators to support the needs of their students in various classroom settings.

Across the classes, from academics, physical education, the arts, and career and technical education, students with special needs are welcomed and warmly integrated into the classroom culture. These students are treated as valued equals by their non-disabled peers leading to a very positive learning environment for all.

With changes in the budget over the years, some elective courses have been cut. In order to continue supporting those students who have interests outside the program of studies, students are able to apply for an independent study for which students complete an application and work in conjunction with a supervising teacher.

When Torrington High School completes its ongoing efforts to be equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations, it will be able to ensure that its core values and 21st century learning expectations can be realized equitably for all students.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers

# Standard 5 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

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

Torrington High School has an advisory program which assigns each student with an adviser. Built into the weekly schedule is a THS advisory period every Thursday for 38 minutes. During this period, all students meet with their advisor. Students can use this period as an opportunity to discuss concerns about academic, post-secondary and career planning, and social-emotional issues. There are days when students have the option to attend club meetings or have an assigned activity to complete. The advisory program has been designed to have each student remain with their same adviser throughout their high school career, but, due to staff turnover, there are students who have been reassigned to new advisers yearly.

Because there is a formal, on-going program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, students can feel comfortable confiding in an adult because of the effective advisory program at Torrington High School.

## Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- students
- Endicott survey
- school website

# Standard 5 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff, are sometimes engaged in limited professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; use limited resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; rarely have dedicated formal time to implement professional development; and make efforts to apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in some areas in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Torrington High School has engaged in limited professional discourse beyond what is required through the teacher evaluation process. Through this model, teachers use data and best practices to reflect on success of their students within their classroom. Freshman teachers also have an opportunity through the team model to meet to reflect and analyze the needs of students. According to the Endicott survey, only 54 percent of teachers feel that this is supporting their instruction. Untapped potential time in the schedule for such discourse to occur is department meetings, but department leaders are not consistently dedicating monthly department meetings to this purpose.

For this school year, the faculty has participated in professional development on restorative practices, which was funded through an SBDI grant. The professional staff also participated in trainings related to the SAT assessment. Additionally, central office administration encourages faculty to work on Common Core, test scores, teacher evaluation, and bullying prevention.

In order to support instruction, faculty members rarely have any dedicated time to implement professional development. Teachers have worked in PLCs; however, this time is not allocated to support collaboration with colleagues on curriculum or best practices. Collaboration frequently occurs outside of the school day or by teachers' finding common time during their preparation periods.

Torrington High School faculty members are able to participate in self-choice professional development. With the support of the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) committee, sessions are presented highlighting the skills of current school and Connecticut Education Association staff. Teachers are able to choose from a variety of workshops. Some options include the use of Google Classroom, effective use of technology, school climate, CPI training and a Building Positive Relationships with At-Risk Students workshops. Teachers plan to use this information from these workshops to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

When, in order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; dedicate formal time to implement professional development; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment, teachers will be able to engage in professional discourse with their colleagues and administration.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee



# Standard 5 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Across the school, school leaders use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.

All teachers at Torrington High School participate in their teacher evaluation process. The TEVAL document was updated in May 2018. Staff must participate in a goal-setting, mid-year, and end-of-year conferences. The Educator Evaluation and Development Plan is shared with teachers annually. Within this document, the expectations for certified staff and the administrators' support of the process are outlined. The supervision process reflects thoughtful design to improve instruction. The manual indicates that teachers will have professional trainings that are flexible throughout the year. However, faculty members have had inconsistent opportunities to participate in the six training components and have had limited professional development in this area. Those that evaluate members of the professional staff participate in SEED training and complete required modules prior to the school year. The plan is for these modules to have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Because school leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning, teachers are able to sharpen their instructional practices and ensure improved instruction for all learners.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

# Standard 5 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

The organization of instructional time somewhat supports research-based instruction and is making inroads in supporting professional collaboration among teachers and the learning needs of all students.

For the 2018-2019 school year, the school reverted back to a seven-period schedule, with a built-in advisory every Thursday. Additionally, this year, the school has also altered the daily time schedule. The change to a seven-period schedule was neither driven by the school's core values and beliefs about learning nor does it support collaboration. The school calendar is organized to provide one early-release day per month to provide teachers with opportunities for professional development and collaboration. Teachers do not know the long-term goals and purposes of this time, instead finding that it had been dedicated to a variety of other priorities. In general, the agendas for these days has been developed by the school district. While the district has worked hard to justify and provide this contractual time, teachers do not feel that the time has been used to provide productive professional learning. The school is in early implementation of freshman teaming. Freshmen have been scheduled into coordinated study halls that allow their teachers to meet in teams on alternating days. While these periods of collaboration are occasionally interrupted by the need for teachers to attend PPTs or to provide coverage, the professional staff sees this as a promising practice that is improving teacher-to-teacher communication. Most special education and regular education teachers who co-teach do not have common planning time during the school day to maximize supports and instruction.

When Torrington High School's organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students, the professional learning needs of teachers will be better addressed and students will benefit from instruction that is better coordinated and articulated.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 5 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

The vast majority of student loads and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. While class size varies due to factors such as individual student need, subject taught, and student demand, the average class size is 16.6 students. The majority of student loads for teachers are below the contractual maximum.

Because student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students, teachers and students have opportunities for individual and small-group interactions that support the school's core values and beliefs.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 5 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

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

The principal meets on a monthly basis with department heads. During this time, various topics are discussed. These include curriculum development, use of school-wide rubrics, and the development of instructional strategies. The principal, in conjunction with department heads and teachers, collaborates to create new course proposals to support the diverse needs of the student population. The principal holds class meetings at the beginning of the school year during advisory to discuss items such as policy changes, discipline, student activities, and student responsibilities that are in alignment with the foundational core values. In addition to evaluating staff, the principal assists in managerial duties about the building. Faculty meetings are held monthly and review timely matters, procedural issues, policy changes, and staying abreast of news around the school. The principal makes frequent announcements and recognitions of student performance and behavior that are linked and/or supportive of the school's core values and 21st century learning expectations. Students and teachers find that this practice has greatly increased overall awareness and understanding of these guiding documents.

Because the principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, the school has the capacity to realize all of its goals for student learning, achievement, and well-being.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- school leadership

# Standard 5 Indicator 9

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## Conclusions

There are some opportunities for teachers, students, and parents to be involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

Some committees include community members, parents, students, staff members, a BOE representative, and administrators. This allows all stakeholders to work together to address issues, consider programmatic changes, and develop a school improvement plan to increase student achievement. Students have an opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process regarding proms, fundraisers, and other class-related activities. The school governance council meets to advise on school needs and concerns. During September 2018, the district had created a secondary ad hoc committee to focus on issues which include the decrease in student enrollment and structural issues of the buildings. In previous years, a teacher leadership council and teacher forum was established discuss school issues with administrator, but is currently disbanded. A committee on school safety, culture, and climate discuss topics concerning student and faculty safety. According to the Endicott survey, 46.1 percent of students, 59.5 percent of teachers have input in the decision-making process that promotes responsibility and ownership.

When teachers, students, and parents have more opportunities to be involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making, the school will create a culture of trust and will promote responsibility and ownership of school programs and learning.

## Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- school website

# Standard 5 Indicator 10

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## Conclusions

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

As administrators have changed at the high school level for the past few years, committees have varied slightly. For the 2018-2019 school year, a department head position was created to support teaching and learning. Department heads support faculty teachers within their content areas, in addition to supervising monthly department meetings and monthly district professional development days. Teachers find that they do not have time available for collaboration within the schedule that is provided. Department meetings, faculty meetings, early-release days, and, for teachers of freshmen, freshman team time are available but the school and district leaders have not yet guided and organized the use of this time. The district professional development and evaluation committee, which includes THS staff, works with administrators to offer teacher development that affords them choice in an area that would support teaching and learning based on input. Teachers have made recommendations to continue work within their content area PLC, along with requests for common planning time for those teachers who co-teach with a special education teacher to support student learning. Teachers within Torrington High School are working to support students in multiple ways, regardless of any perceived instability within the district.

When teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning, the talents of the teaching staff will be more fully brought to bear to the benefit of all students.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 5 Indicator 11

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## Conclusions

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

The board of education has a scheduled meeting on the last Wednesday of every month; committees such as policy, school improvement and community relations, personnel, and budget also meet throughout the month. The school board and superintendent collaboratively work to determine policy and procedures. Meeting minutes and agendas are made available on the Torrington Public Schools' websites. However, the high turnover of the superintendent and principal positions during the past six years has negatively impacted the execution and implementation of a collaborative, reflective, and cohesive approach to leadership and governance of the school district. The frequent changes in leadership have hindered the development of a consistent long-term vision for advancement of school initiatives. Collaboration between the school and district leadership has resulted in the creation of college and career pathways to attract students to THS and shows promise for helping to organize the overall program of studies into a more understandable four-year sequence for students and parents. Also, the implementation of the current freshman teams was developed by the school leaders and staff. The principal was not included in the collaboration but given directives on how this plan will be implemented.

When the school board, superintendent, and principal are consistently collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, the school community can work in concert to support student achievement of the school's learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- central office personnel
- school leadership

# Standard 5 Indicator 12

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## Conclusions

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with decision-making authority to lead the school in some areas.

The building principal evaluates staff and conducts managerial aspects within the school. However, the building principal does not always have input in decisions for Torrington High School. In some instances, district-level administrators have made decisions on school-level professional learning and teacher assignments rather than by the appropriate building-level administrators.

When the board of education and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school, the principal can fully promote learning, cultivate shared leadership, and engage all members of the school community in efforts to improve teaching and learning within the building.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- school leadership



# Standard 5 Commendations

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## Commendation

The welcoming, warm, and inclusive school culture and environment among students and adults

## Commendation

The weekly advisory program that ensures each student is assigned to an adult who can assist them in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Commendation

The school governance council's collaboration of community members, staff members, administrators, students, and parents that addresses issues, programmatic changes, and developing student achievement

## Commendation

The school governance council that allows various members to become involved in a meaningful roles in decision-making

## Commendation

The degree to which students with special needs are thoroughly and genuinely integrated into the school's climate and culture

# Standard 5 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Develop and implement a process to ensure that students are equitably placed in courses that are rigorous and relevant; including college-credit courses

## Recommendation

Ensure that professional learning activities for teachers are driven by teacher needs, respectful of teacher preferences, and focused on serving the learning needs of the school's diverse student population

## Recommendation

Create a consistent long-term vision for the advancement of school initiatives at the district and building level

## Recommendation

Appropriately empower and hold accountable school and department leaders to ensure that the available time for teacher collaboration and professional learning is used effectively in support of the school's core values and the CIVIC learning expectations

## Recommendation

Engage in training on appropriate roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for the board of education, school building leaders, and department leaders to clarify each group's contribution to the success of school and district initiatives and ensure that each person or group has appropriate levels of autonomy

# Standard 6 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The school has a somewhat effective timely, coordinated and directive intervention program for most students, including at-risk and identified students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

THS provides a menu of different support strategies for students that include a freshman team, a school-wide advisory program, an attendance review board, and recently added Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) teachers to support grade 9 students in math and reading. While the math teacher uses scores to identify students in need of support, the freshman team identifies grade 9 students who need support and they are taken out of electives to attend the class with the reading interventionist. However, the school does not have a formalized and systematic process for identifying and working with all students who need support, and, according to the Endicott survey, only 30.2 percent of students feel the school meets their needs.

For students who are identified as English learners, the special education and ESL teams of teachers and staff meet regularly and collaborate to assure that students are getting the support and interventions they need from those specific teachers as well as support in their mainstream classes. There are 64 English learners, 21 of them recently arrived. Three teachers, two full-time tutors who attend classes with students, and two translators support the program and communicate with families. One-third of the EL students have IEPs; most were identified out of the district before enrolling in Torrington High School. While the ESL program at the high school is well-staffed, students with high needs and limited schooling are enrolling at a higher rate.

The district and high school have various grant and community programs to support students, such as Even Start for pregnant and parenting teens, the care closet for students in need, an alternative education program at EDAdvance, and programs with local mental health organizations, such as the Insight Group Making Better Decisions with McCall Center. The four school counselors and two social workers deal with the academic, and social-emotional needs of 836 students, as well as the plethora of programs to support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations; however, they do so without the coordination of a director of school counseling. Special education students participate in different levels of the Pre-Vocational and Vocational Exploration program (PAVE), which gives them the opportunity to work in the school and the community.

When Torrington High School has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations, it will be able to fully ensure equitable, timely, and directed intervention services to help students meet the CIVIC expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 6 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

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

THS maintains a website that support services staff members uses to communicate services and programs. The website integrates a built-in translator, so that families of EL students may also access the information. The guidance secretary is responsible for maintaining and updating the website. While not all information is fully updated on the website, the ELL webpage and the guidance homepage are updated regularly, featuring information about school policies, events, college preparation, and links to using PowerSchool and Naviance.

THS uses regular email, email blasts, and the Remind App to distribute information to all families with access as needed. For specific issues, the staff uses various methods of communication from phone calls and emails to home visits, and, as necessary, the bi-lingual translator is used to reach out to Spanish speaking families. The school also hosts a variety of family nights such as the Welcome Back Night and 9th grade orientation to share information about courses, activities, and resources available to students and their families.

Library/media services uses its website to share links to the library/media center catalog, Destiny, the state digital library, researchIT CT, the school's online subscription databases, tools and tips for MLA style for research and writing, and library programs and promotions, such as summer reading lists.

The school makes extensive efforts to communicate with all students and families; according to the Endicott survey, 71 percent of parents agree that the school provides information about services to them.

Because Torrington High School provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services through a variety of platforms, e.g., web, email, phone, home, and on-site events, it effectively supports student's achievement of 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- community members
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

# Standard 6 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

Torrington High School support services staff in some areas use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

PowerSchool is available for support faculty and staff to input registration and other information; parents can receive information about grades using the program as well. Naviance software is also in place to facilitate the college-application process but staff report a need for training in order to better understand this tool. Special education support staff members regularly use PowerSchool and IEP Direct. School counselors use 504 Direct, and they are using Google Docs and the Remind App to communicate with students. The school website can be translated for parent access to different languages, but some of the links are outdated. School counselors publish a monthly newsletter, the Guidance Gazette, which is available online. The counselors are just beginning to use Naviance with students to prepare them to find information about colleges and to use the site to complete college applications and send off recommendations. The Odysseyware online learning platform is used for credit recovery. English as a second language (ESL) support staff members use technology in their classrooms and in the language lab, specifically Rosetta Stone. The support staff has access to classrooms, including the college and career center which has a SMARTBoard, desktop computers, and access to Chromebook carts or the computers in the library/media center where there are 25 desktop and 20 laptop computers.

When all support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student, the school will be able to more effectively improve services for each student.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- school support staff
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 6 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified and licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written developmental program, deliver outreach and referral to community and area mental health and social services providers as needed to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations; while personal, academic, career, and college counseling are provided, it is done through a mix of individual and group setting sessions.

Currently, THS employs four full-time school counselors, two full-time social workers, one full-time psychologist and one full-time secretary. While student enrollment has steadily decreased, school counseling staffing has been commensurately reduced; including the loss of a department coordinator, one .5 FTE counselor, a career specialist, and two secretaries. The counseling services secretary is responsible for all clerical support for counselors and serves as event coordinator, registrar, and maintainer of school-wide student records and entire school's website. The counseling curriculum was written in 2011 and was awarded the Connecticut School Counselor Association's Curriculum Award that year. Counselors deliver the grade 9-12 guidance curriculum according to the counseling services calendar that outlines specific times for counselors to meet with groups and individuals based on the cyclical development needs of students. Counselors shared that they spend the majority of their time with the same small numbers of students providing personal/social crisis management. Over the last ten years there has been a considerable increase of high needs students. While counselors do not engage in long-term clinical counseling, they do work collaboratively with school's health services, social workers, and school psychologists to meet the needs of students and families that are beyond the scope of their expertise. This includes making recommendations to students and families to outside resources, such as Torrington Youth Service Bureau, Center for Youth and Families, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, The McCall Foundation, etc. to provide additional support. At this time, the counselors do not regularly use relevant assessment data or feedback from the community in systematic ways to continually improve the program.

While school counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written, developmental program as well as collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers, when they also meet regularly and individually with all students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, the school will be better able to ensure that each student can achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

# Standard 6 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

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

Approximately 5,400 student visits are recorded each year, based on a daily sign-in list. Their space is sufficient with an office area, three beds, and private space. The two nurses who collaborate with THS social workers and school counselors, use a "case-by-case" referral process that varies with the needs of the students, from mental health to care for physical injury, connecting them and their families with extensive local mental health services, walk-in clinics or their primary care specialist. Some of those services are Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, The McCall Foundation, and the Susan B. Anthony project. Health services connect new families to community health organizations with an updated list of providers when they register. The health services professionals use data collected on the State Health survey and school-wide surveys to improve services on a yearly basis. The licensed personnel use a variety of internal and external data sources to refine their services. Ongoing health assessments are done in a systematic and planned way.

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

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 6 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

Library/media services are somewhat integrated into some areas of the curriculum and instructional practices; provide a variety of materials, technologies and other information services to support the school's curriculum, and keep the LMC open before, during and after school; library/media services are responsive to the majority of students' interests and needs, and some assessment is conducted by the library/media specialist to gather relevant data from the school community in order to improve services. (Consider: "Library/media services are somewhat integrated into some areas of the curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum; provide some updated materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum; ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school; and are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning; however, the library/media center staff conducts only some ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.")

THS employs one full-time library/media specialist and one full-time support staff paraprofessional, for the library/media center. The library/media paraprofessional is responsible for the daily operation of the library/media center, including material circulation, collection, shelf organization, and supervision of study hall students. The library/media specialist's role is as teacher, reference librarian, collection development specialist, and library/media program director. Within the teacher role, the library/media specialist collaborates with content teachers, primarily in the English and social studies departments, to integrate information literacy skills that align to the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Standards as well as to the school's 21st century learning expectations. Writing and citation skills instruction follow the guidelines provided by the Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Manual. All grade 9 English classes participate in a library/media center orientation lesson that includes a tour of the library/media center and a review of library/media center procedures and materials. In addition to co-teaching and supporting research assignments, the library/media specialist coordinates a number of school-wide reading programs and incentives.

The library/media center collection provides a variety of online resources and ebooks, e.g., Scholastic GO!, CultureGrams, Classroom Video on Demand, Bloom's Literature, Today's Science, and Issues and Controversies in American History, to support 24/7 access for students' research needs. All subscription database links are accessible through the library/media center's website. The library/media center's print collection is accessible through the district online catalog, Destiny, and consists of 22,200 books (4,200 fiction and 18,000 nonfiction) and 238 audiobooks, and 710 videos. The collection is somewhat dated with an average copyright date of 1990 and budget line item reductions to zero for the library/media center print materials prevents the library/media specialist from adequately addressing this issue. Over the past two years, the library/media center has had no budget. The library/media specialist has run fundraisers and written grants to provide students with access to popular young adult literature and special programming. However, these steps do not enable the library/media specialist the ability to address maintaining the accuracy, currency, and depth and scope of the print and digital collection.

The library/media center has 25 desktop computers, a cart of 20 laptops, and a variety of somewhat dated mobile technologies, e.g., Nooks, tablets, and reclaimed Chromebooks, to assure that all students and staff have access to technology, as necessary. The library/media specialist sometimes works with the district technology team to coordinate school technology purchases and distribution. Additionally, the library/media specialist collaborates on curriculum development in a limited capacity. Sometimes students come to the library/media center with research for topics and assignments of which the library/media specialist is unaware.

Students and staff have access to the library/media center and its materials before school, during school, and after school and later, on days that a late bus is provided. An average of 1,142 students per year have taken advantage of the library/media center's extended hours; 14,411 students per year use the library/media center independently during the school day; and an average of 12,517 students use the library/media center with classes. According to the Endicott survey, 59 percent of the teachers indicate that students use the library/media



center for assignments; 71 percent of students find that the library/media center has resources they need, and 74 percent report that the library/media center staff is willing to help them find information. Since August 2016, 1,439 non-fiction, 922 fiction, 300 graphic novels, and 13 Spanish books have been checked out of the library/media center.

While library/media services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum; provide some updated materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum; ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school; and are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning, when the library/media center services are integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices, conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, and are more consistently funded to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations, students' interests, needs, and independent learning can be more completely supported.

## **Sources of Evidence**

- self-study
- teacher interview
- school board
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 6 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

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

Despite significant increases in special education (13 percent to 22 percent) and EL student populations (6 percent to 9 percent) over the last ten years, front-line support is adequate at Torrington High School. There are 3 ESL teachers, 2 tutors and 2 Spanish translators for 64 students, one-third of whom are identified as special education students. There are 10 special education teachers and 22 instructional aides to support 168 students. School counselors oversee students with 504 Plans and attend PPTs for students on their caseload, at which they collaborate with the special education case managers. While support staff often informally meet with colleagues, according to the Endicott survey, only 37.6 percent of teachers believe that support service personnel collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff to achieve the school's learning expectations. Students find that school counselors are accessible and it is rare that they have to wait until the next day to see them. Students see their counselors from one to three times per year - or more as needed. Counselors often refer students to other services for mental health, drug, or behavioral support as needed. Language Assessment Scales (LAS) Links placement tests are used to place students in the proper level of ESL classes and to determine what other supports an English learning student might need. Annual testing and classroom performance informs program and class placement as well. Students are mainstreamed into elective classes or co-taught depending on IEPs. A music teacher works with special education students to learn how to create music on a computer, together with the speech and language specialist. There are a Unified physical education class and Unified sports and Unified drama after-school programs. Students who are identified also work in the school and the community in the Pre-vocational and Vocational Exploration program.

Because support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations; provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students; and perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services, all students are supported in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 6 Commendations

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## Commendation

The use of technology tools and face-to-face communication methods to share important information and updates with parents

## Commendation

The school health center's support of students and collaboration with school counselors, social workers, and community health organizations

## Commendation

The well-staffed ESL department that is responsive to English learner student needs

## Commendation

The school's collaboration with multiple community mental health organizations and partnerships

## Commendation

The collaboration among school counselors, social workers, special education and ESL teachers to support students' academic and social-emotional needs

## Commendation

The collaboration among classroom teachers, ESL teachers, and Bilingual and ESL tutors that ensures that English learners receive the support they need in content area classes

# Standard 6 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Ensure that school counseling services faculty regularly meet individually with all students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling

## Recommendation

Train the school counseling department faculty and staff on, and hold them accountable for their effective use of, the technology available to them

## Recommendation

Ensure timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies school-wide, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Fully integrate library/media services into curriculum revision and instructional practices and ensure that the library/media center staff conducts ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

# Standard 7 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body has lacked dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services; sufficient professional and support staff; ongoing professional development and curriculum revision; a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies; nevertheless, the school has been able to make improvements in technology and on the athletic fields.

The school offers a range of programs and services for students, including 74 elective courses, 9 Advanced Placement courses, 10 University of Connecticut Early College Experience (UCONN ECE) courses, a full Air Force Junior Officer Reserve Training Corps (AFJROTC), a yearbook club with an advisor, a student council with two advisors, a theatre program with a director, band and choral programs with directors, and 16 sports teams with coaches. However, programs have been eliminated due to a decline in the school budget over the last few years. Some reductions in the budget have been commensurate with the school's declining enrollment. Since the budget cuts in 2015, there has been a decrease in staffing, including the reductions of career technical education, school counseling, special education, English, science, math, and social studies. The school is currently undergoing an audit process to evaluate the needs of special education and to address disparities. Throughout the building, there have also been cuts in secretarial, custodial, and security positions, affecting the levels of management, cleanliness of the building, and assurance of the safety of the students, respectively, all of which is impacting teaching and learning on a daily basis. This has led the administrators to produce in-house professional development through peer presentations and a focus on professional learning communities (PLCs). Funds for technology throughout the district have also declined since 2015 by 30 percent in 2018. This drop left only four technical positions throughout the district to support the seven district buildings. Nevertheless, even with this reduced staffing, the daily basic repairs submitted through help tickets and any Wi-Fi issues are usually resolved within two hours of submission. The high school has been able to deploy seven Chromebook and Elite book carts throughout the building. There are plans to deploy eight more carts in the future. Materials and supplies are another component of the budget where there has been a 34 percent decrease since 2015. Each department in the building has seen significant cuts. The most detrimental cuts have been in the library/media center which lost \$14,000, special education having been reduced \$1,100, and teacher supplies being depleted by 82 percent. With these cuts in the budget, teachers have begun to purchase many supplies with their own money, however, these budget cuts have made it difficult for Torrington High School to prepare efficiently from year to year to increase student learning.

When the community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services; sufficient professional and support staff; ongoing professional development and curriculum revision; a full range of technology support; sufficient equipment; and sufficient instructional materials and supplies, the school will be able to more effectively plan for the current and future needs of students and teachers.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students

- parents
- school board
- community members
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school has no formal written course of action to develop, plan, and fund programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant; to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment; to keep the school clean on a daily basis.

The facility director uses historical data and anticipated needs to develop an annual plan for submission to the superintendent and maintains a procedure book in his office that provides an informal outline of the procedures and schedule for annual maintenance and repairs. However, cuts in district funding have limited the ability to provide ongoing maintenance in recent years. All maintenance and repair requests are submitted by staff using an online form which is sent to the appropriate custodian by the facilities office. Funding for regular maintenance, repair, and replacement of equipment has been limited. There is no formal schedule for repair and replacement of equipment. In most cases, equipment is replaced or repaired when it breaks.

Cuts in custodial staffing have caused delays in repairs and larger maintenance projects. The custodial staff consists of two day-shift and three night-shift custodians who are responsible for the daily upkeep and cleaning of the building. Difficulty in finding acceptable substitutes for absent custodians and delays in replacing retired personnel further stretches the limits of the custodial staff. Repairs to building systems are completed by outside contractors hired on an as-needed basis. Outside grounds maintenance and snowplowing are also handled by an outside contractor.

While the custodial staff works hard on a daily basis to keep the building clean, they are not always able to get to all parts of the building every day. The building is swept, bathrooms are cleaned, and trash is removed each day; however, limited staffing and lack of supplies have impeded the ability to perform more large scale tasks and clean individual classrooms on a regular basis. According to the Endicott survey, 49 percent of students and 82 percent of teachers do not believe the building is clean and well maintained.

When the school develops, plans, and funds programs: to develop, plan, and fund programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant; to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment; to keep the school clean on a daily basis, it it will be able to ensure the proper maintenance, safety, repair, and cleanliness of the physical plant.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- school support staff

# Standard 7 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The community inconsistently funds and the school has frequently delayed implementation of long-range plans that address programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements.

Changes in administration and multiple years of zero-increase budgets have delayed long-range planning in the past but the newly created ad hoc secondary committee is prepared to move forward with a plan that will include a renovation plan for the facility as well as address future enrollment and program changes.

Budget decreases have limited the ability to remain up to date in technology; however, the board of education and building administrators are investigating and reviewing the effectiveness of technology services. While sufficient computers are currently available for student use, lack of a formal technology plan limits the ability of the school to advance in technology innovation.

Torrington High School has had declining enrollment for the past decade and has suffered staffing and programming cuts over that period. No formal studies have been conducted to project long-term enrollment and staffing needs and delays in adopting the annual city budget frequently result in staffing decisions being put off until June or later each year.

A 12 million dollar capital improvement plan, largely funded by the state, addressed issues of ADA compliance and was completed in the spring of 2019. A state grant provided funding for the improvements to the athletic fields and track, but community funding for capital improvements has been very limited. The need for significant capital improvements in the facility, including HVAC, windows, and roof leak repairs, as well as technology infrastructure improvements, has been recognized but no funding has been provided. Stakeholders are concerned that the school building may fall into further disrepair and negatively impact the school's ability to deliver its curriculum.

When the community consistently funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements, the school will be able to increase the efficacy of 21st century learning outcomes for students.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee



# Standard 7 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

Due to incomplete communication throughout the budget-setting process, faculty and school administrators feel that they are only minimally involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

While teachers and department coordinators are asked to submit budget requests early in the annual budget process, and building administrators submit their budgets to the central office each year, the professional staff feels increasingly removed from the budget process as it moves through its later stages with the board of education, town council, and board of finance. Once the budget is presented to the board of education, there is little opportunity for input from building administrators and staff. After the budget has been adopted, the principal is told how much has been allocated to the school and is responsible for its implementation. Because the town has adopted a zero-increase budget for a number of years, many teachers are reluctant to make budget requests that they feel will not be funded. The school has relied heavily on grants to fund programs outside of the budget process.

When faculty and building administrators are more thoroughly informed about the development and implementation of the budget, stakeholders will have a more pervasive understanding of the school, staff, and student needs and be able to support them in an informed manner.

## Sources of Evidence

- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

The school site and plant offer limited support for the delivery of high quality school programs and services.

While the facility provides more than adequate space for the educational needs of the student population, the age of the building and the lack of regular ongoing maintenance and upgrades have limited the ability of the school to provide up-to-date 21st century learning experiences for all students. Nevertheless, A recent project has brought the entire school in full compliance with ADA requirements including the installation of a new elevator that came online in the spring of 2019. As part of the project, science labs were recently updated as sinks, doors, and access in science labs were recently upgraded to meet ADA compliance regulations. The science labs are adequate in number to meet the needs of the students and meet all safety requirements. Despite their age, the science labs are sufficiently equipped to be able to deliver a 21st century learning experience.

The administration, guidance, and health services suites are adequate to meet the needs of the current student population. The library/media center is a large, centrally located space that is able to accommodate students and staff. It is equipped with computer access, instructional materials, and audiovisual equipment that are sufficient to provide a 21st century learning experience. The cafeteria is large enough to accommodate the student population.

While the school has a new multi-purpose turf field and track and recently upgraded the softball field, safety and drainage issues continue to plague the sub-varsity baseball field and outdoor grassy practice areas. The school has a large gymnasium, but the original gym floor, installed in 1962, is still in place and suffers from frequent warping and moisture-related issues. Moreover, an inspection has revealed that there is asbestos under the gym floor; consequently, the high cost and time-consuming process of replacing it stymies any such plans. The fitness center provides exercise equipment for student and team use but the amount of equipment, especially cardio equipment, is not sufficient to meet the school's needs.

The amount of technology available in the classrooms varies greatly from one part of the building to another. About 75 percent of the classrooms are equipped with some form of technology, such as interactive whiteboards. Other classrooms are equipped with TVs and projectors.

However, the building suffers from the symptoms of its age. Heating and air conditioning equipment is outdated. Heat pumps suffer from frequent breakdowns and heating is inconsistent throughout the building. Electrical systems are in need of upgrade. Plumbing and wiring are reaching the end of their projected life. Many classrooms have nonfunctioning clocks. Wireless access is generally good, but there are Wi-Fi dead zones in the building, and the Wi-Fi is not adequate to handle the entire school population at the same time. Windows and outside doors are in need of replacement. There is a plan to replace exterior doors during the summer of 2019. Insulation is inadequate in much of the building. Parts of the building have begun to develop leaks in the roof and there are wet ceiling tiles in some classrooms after heavy rains. Repairs to one area of the roof are planned for summer 2019. The last renovation of the building was completed 20 years ago. The district recently began a process to engage in a renovate-as-new project for the high school, and requests for quotations from architects were made in May 2019.

When the school site and plant are brought up to modern standards in all areas, they will be able to support the delivery of high quality school programs and services for all students.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study

- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

The school consistently maintains documentation confirming the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws adhering to local fire, health, and safety regulations.

The documents concerning the physical plant and facilities' meeting all applicable federal and state laws adhering to local fire, health, and safety regulations are updated annually and biannually and can be located in the central office. However, the building lacks consistencies with air temperature due to the numerous thermostats not working and unreliable air conditioning units located in the auditorium, library/media center, guidance suite, computer rooms, main office, principal's office, and nurse's office. In other areas, the temperature will range from varying degrees of warm to cold depending upon the location of the room. With the variation of temperatures in the buildings, all lower-level classrooms are not permitted to open their windows due to safety precautions, which also does not allow ventilation and regulation of temperature. While the top floor windows do open, teachers must monitor students due to the lack of screens. These temperature and ventilation issues detract from the students' learning environment. The building is handicap accessible through its doorways, complying with 12-inch and 18-inch clearances in accordance with ADA requirements. Furniture within classrooms and cafeteria, accessories in the restrooms, installation of signage for visually impaired, assisted listening devices for the hearing impaired, the modification of casework in classrooms and offices, and the newly completed elevator are also ADA compliant.

The school has a safety plan in place for addressing conditions, situations, and equipment. Safety concerns can be reported by staff members, who contact administrators, who, in turn, evaluate the scenarios and reports them to the custodial staff or the director of facilities. There is also a committee composed of administrators, custodial staff members, teachers, students, and the nurse who meet quarterly to discuss building issues and safety concerns. The business manager, director of facilities, administrators, and custodians also meet monthly to discuss concerns, tour the building, and address any other issues which are handled in a timely fashion, based on severity and dependent upon the availability of outside contractors.

Because the school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations, parents and the community can be assured that the school is safe as defined by federal and state laws.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

The vast majority of professional staff frequently engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and consistently seek out those families who are less connected with the school.

There are many outreach efforts teachers and administrators make to engage parents and families as partners in the scholastic lives of their sons and daughters. These efforts are seen through the use of technology by means of PowerSchool, Google Translate, Google Classroom, Naviance, email and school website, which features department links, staff contacts, instructions for PowerSchool, and a calendar of events. These tools are also made available to ESL families.

A multitude of events is offered to parents, students, and teachers where all three can meet, discuss, celebrate, and work together to achieve success in students' experiences at Torrington High School. These events include freshman orientation, Back to School Night, parent meetings addressing expectations and policies, parent-teacher conferences, family-student luncheons for EL, college fairs, Diversity Day celebration, Senior College Night, concerts, play productions, Scholarship Night, awards nights, banquets, T-Fest, and AFJROTC ceremonies.

When focusing specifically on those families less connected with the school, teachers and school counselors conduct home visits, make phone calls to families and mail letters to individual houses. The district also supplies a translator or parent liaison for PPTs, 504s, and conferences. There are two translator staff members at the school and six across the district. To address individual student needs, teachers and students engage in conferences held a total of six days throughout the year, three in the fall and three in the spring, consisting of ten-minute conferences. Parents find that teachers are not only readily available to discuss their children's progress at any time but also respond back to emails within 24-hours.

Because the professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school, all students are fully supported in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents

# Standard 7 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

The school extensively develops productive parent, community, business and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

THS partners with the Chamber of Commerce in order to provide internships and job opportunities, such as job shadowing. The Financial Reality Fair sponsored by the Connecticut Credit Unions uses community volunteers to provide students with a two-and-a-half-hour financial future experience. Also, the Torrington Municipal and Teachers Federal Credit Union offers banking internships, affording students real-world applications within the building. Numerous clubs, such as the Rotary and Lion's Club, collaborate with the school's Interact and Leo Clubs. The Sullivan Senior Center and the local chapter of Friends In Service to Humanity (FISH) work alongside THS students, providing community service opportunities and recreational activities. The Empty Bowl initiative, which has 150-200 community participants and is embedded within the ceramics club, raises money for local food kitchens yearly. The Five Points Gallery and The Warner Theatre provide opportunities for student volunteers who are interested in the arts. Students with special needs are provided work experiences at local business through the Pre-vocational and Vocational Exploration program. The THS Preschool Lab, housed within the school building, allows students hands-on experiences for those enrolled in the Child Development course.

There are a number of committees in which parents are involved, including the athletic advisory committee, varsity alumni club, and the booster club. Parents are also involved in and provide resources through the PTO which hosts the Torrington District Contest of the Connecticut History Day program, organizes Project Graduation for seniors, and provides chaperones.

The guidance department partners with numerous college representatives who attend the yearly college fair, and specifically works with UCONN and the Northwest Connecticut Community College to offer internships, early college programs, and community service to all students. These higher education institutions also run ten UCONN Early College Experience (ECE) courses within the building and permit unlimited course work on the college main campus of Northwest Connecticut Community College to THS juniors and seniors, respectively.

Because the school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning, the students have opportunities for authentic learning through multiple connections to the world outside of their classrooms.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members

# Standard 7 Commendations

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## Commendation

The many business and industry partnerships that support the CIVIC learning expectations and build relevance of learning beyond the classroom

## Commendation

The creation of the ad hoc secondary committee to begin to develop a long-range plan to address the future needs of the school

## Commendation

The dedication of the custodial staff who work under difficult circumstances to keep the school building safe and clean

## Commendation

The numerous school programs and services offered to students, despite limited resources

## Commendation

The renovations that make the building ADA compliant

## Commendation

The construction of a modern multi-purpose athletic facility

## Commendation

The multiple ways in which the school engages parents and families as partners in the students' education

## Commendation

The positive relationships with local colleges and universities which provide opportunities for local students to obtain college credit

# Standard 7 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Ensure that there is a dependable source of funding and that a long-range plan is implemented that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements

## Recommendation

Ensure an adequate and dependable level of custodial staffing to properly maintain, repair, and clean the physical plant

## Recommendation

Provide predictable school and district funding that allows the school to construct and implement long-term improvement plans for curriculum, instruction, and assessment

## Recommendation

Ensure that faculty and building administrators are appropriately involved in and informed of the development and implementation of the budget

## Recommendation

Ensure that the school site and plant fully support the delivery of high quality school programs and services

## Recommendation



# **FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES**

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This comprehensive evaluation report reflects the findings of the school's self-study and those of the visiting team. 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 this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting team 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 Team Report.

A school's initial/continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting team and others identified by the Commission as it monitors the school's progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle. To monitor the school's progress in the Follow-Up Program, the Commission requires that the principal 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 team recommendations by the time the Five-Year Progress Report is submitted. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards are not being met in a satisfactory manner or if additional information is needed on matters relating to evaluation report recommendations or substantive changes in the school.

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

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

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed an exemplary self-study that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the self-study and preparation for the visit ensured a successful accreditation visit.

# **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

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## **NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Secondary Schools**

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

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

# Roster of Team Members

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## Chair(s)

**Chair: Tony Gasper** - Wolcott Public Schools

**Assistant Chair: Lisa Sepe** - Hartford Public Schools

## Team Members

**Amy Bishop** - Francis T. Maloney High School

**Joseph Cozza** - Stamford High School

**Denise Earles** - Daniel Hand High School

**Jo Gallagher** - Wilton High School

**David Greenleaf** - Bristol Central High School

**Mrs. Amy Holt** - Lyman Hall High School

**Lauren Iverson** - Masuk High School

**Dameon Kellogg** - Amity Regional Senior High School

**Karen Lapuk** - Connecticut River Academy

**Mathew Milch** - Simsbury High School

**Una Park** - Crosby High School

**Angela Russo** - Guilford High School

**Sebastiana Szilagyi** - Wethersfield High School

**Stephanie Tom** - Brien McMahon High School