

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

Commission on Public Schools



Committee on Public Secondary Schools

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

Oakdale, CT

October 21, 2018 - October 24, 2018

Mrs. Mary Pierangeli, Chair
Carol Luckenbach, Assistant Chair
Heather Sangermano, Principal

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

School and Community Summary

Montville High School is located in southeastern Connecticut in the town of Montville which is comprised of the communities of Oakdale, Uncasville, and Montville. Located on the west side of the Thames River in Connecticut, Montville is one of 21 towns in New London County, approximately halfway between the cities of Norwich and New London.

The 2017 census reported a population of 19,149. The 2016 census reported a population of 19,231. This total shows a decrease in population of 82 residents. Over a twelve-year period, from 2000 through 2012, the population grew at an annual rate of 0.06 percent, starting at 18,546 in the year 2000 and reaching 19,587 in 2012. Since 2012, the population has been in a steady decline.

The median family income in the town of Montville is \$76,897. The unemployment rate is 5.6 percent. The major employers in Montville include the Mohegan Sun Resort and Casino, the Mohegan Tribe, the Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Facility, Orchard Grove Specialty Care, Montville Public Schools, the State of Connecticut Corrections Department, and Rand-Whitney Containerboard.

The 2017 enrollment in the Montville School District was 2,210 students. These students attend three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative high school. These numbers do not reflect students who attend St. Bernard Middle/High School in town. Currently, 197 Montville students attend high schools other than Montville High School. Other opportunities outside of MHS include vocational and technical education programs at Ledyard High School Vo-Ag, New London Science/Technology, Groton Marine Science Magnet Schools, and Grasso and Norwich Technical High Schools.

Montville High School's current enrollment is 636, with approximately 26 percent of the Overall district enrollment is in decline. At Montville High School, 35.4 percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch and 1.7 percent of students receive ELL services; 11.3 percent of the school population are identified as special education students. The racial composition of the school includes 10.2 percent Hispanic students, 10.7 percent Asian students, and 2.6 percent black or African-American students, and 76.5 percent white students. The percentage of students for whom English is not their primary language is 3.8 percent.

Montville's per-pupil expenditure during the 2016-2017 school year was \$15,501. In 2015-2016, the per-pupil expenditure was \$15,473 which is below the current state average of \$16,592. Proposed increases in the education budget have been cut for the past several years as has the ECS funding received from the state.

As of October 1, 2017, Montville High School and the Palmer Building employ 62.1 full-time certified teachers. Last year, the average number of days absent due to sick or personal time was 8.7. The average student-to-teacher ratio is 20:1.

The school has an A/B block schedule during which each block meets for 83 minutes every other day. Students have 328 minutes of daily instruction time during the 182 student days of school. Courses in English, mathematics, science, and social studies use homogeneous groupings. In all core area departments, students may select advanced level classes including honors, Advanced Placement, or University of Connecticut-Early College Experience classes or heterogeneously grouped electives during junior and senior years. Non-core area classes are heterogeneously grouped. Co-taught classes consisting of special education and regular education students are offered for freshman, sophomore, and some junior students in the core areas. MHS offers 15 AP sections and 13 ECE sections across the disciplines. The average class size in those AP/ECE sections is 15 students.

Currently, there are 23 varsity sports offered at Montville High School. In 2017-2018, there were 385 students involved in at least one sport. That number represented 62.7 percent of the student body. Of those students, there were 190 males and 195 females.

Montville High School students are also actively involved in our music program. This year, there are over 160 students, 25 percent of students, involved in one or more of the band or chorus course offerings or extracurricular electives.

There are two evening award ceremonies that take place in the spring, one for underclassmen and one for seniors. Underclassmen are nominated to receive achievement and dedication awards by the faculty. Annually, juniors and seniors are elected to the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society and receive a variety of local and national awards such as college book awards and the Bausch and Lomb award. There are three athletic banquets each year and one music/drama banquet. Montville Marvels are recognized bimonthly by the board of education for non-academic accomplishments. Honor roll breakfasts, luncheons, or ice cream socials are held quarterly. At the state level, students are recognized for their abilities as scholar-athletes, artist, or leaders.

Currently, students must accumulate a total of 24 credits for graduation. In addition, all students must demonstrate achievement of basic skills in English, mathematics, science, and social studies through completion of the SAT and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessment.

Of the 172 students who graduated in 2018, 53 percent chose a four-year college, 21 percent chose a two-year college, and 1 percent chose a vocational/technical school for a total of 75 percent enrolling in post-secondary education. Additionally, 20 percent chose immediate employment, 4 percent chose to enter the military, and 1 percent made other choices. There are five post-secondary opportunities available in the local area. Three Rivers Community College is located in Norwich, Connecticut College, Mitchell College, and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy are all located in New London, and the Avery Point branch of the University of Connecticut is located in Groton.

Educational programs and service, aside from non-public secondary schools, available to MHS students include the ECE program with the University of Connecticut, the Tech-Prep program through Three Rivers Community College, Eastern Connecticut State University credit available through a Public Speaking course, and the New London Scholars program through Connecticut College.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Core Values and Beliefs

The Montville High School problem solving community values EFFORT, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY. All staff engages and challenges students intellectually and socially within a safe learning environment in order to develop skills appropriate for postsecondary education and/or a career in the 21st Century.

Further, we believe:

- All students are individuals with unique learning styles, needs, and life experiences; these differences influence their learning
- Adaptability is an essential component of success
- The staff of Montville High School is our most valuable resource
- Teachers are highly trained professionals who engage in efforts to improve professional practice through continuous learning and inquiry
- Collaboration leads to improved performance, stronger programs, and increased success
- Strong leadership focuses on a shared vision
- Decision making is evidence-based and informed by research
- Pride and integrity are defining characteristics of our community
- A healthy school climate is based on unity and positive relationships

21st Century Learning Expectations

Academic

Students will use 21st Century problem solving skills in diverse, collaborative, and authentic learning experiences.

1. Students write and speak effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes
2. Students access, interpret, evaluate, synthesize, and apply multiple forms of information
3. Students read, interpret, evaluate, create, and think critically
4. Students engage in their academic development and growth

Social

1. Students engage in appropriate personal interactions that foster a united, empathetic, and self-reflective community
2. Students build confidence through self-advocacy and take responsibility for their decisions and actions
3. Students promote a safe school environment
4. Students collaborate in the classroom

Civic

1. Students are responsible, positive, and contributing citizens of the school, local, global, and digital communities
2. Students demonstrate pride in the Montville community

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community engaged 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.

A core values development committee (CVDC) was formed in the spring of 2012 comprised of teachers, building and district administrators, students, and parents. This group examined the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) "Guidebook: Developing Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations;" reviewed core value statements developed by other schools; and solicited feedback from various stakeholders. Protocol activities for faculty and community members were developed in order to generate lists of words that characterized significant traits for learning at Montville High School. In addition, online surveys were conducted for further input from staff, students, parents, and community members. The CVDC reviewed and evaluated the information provided by these efforts and developed a statement of core values, beliefs about learning, and learning expectations. This document was approved by the faculty in May 2012. Over the next five years, the school put into practice Robert Marzano's Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction. During the 2013-2014 school year, school-wide rubrics were replaced by proficiency-based learning scales grounded in Dr. Marzano's framework. The learning scales evaluate academic progress and assist with alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As a result of this change in assessment strategy, the CVDC reconvened in May 2017 with new representatives to consider revision of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The process used in 2012 was repeated and included feedback from teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members. The school improvement team, the school governance committee, and the NEASC Steering Committee worked with the CVDC to review the feedback provided by stakeholders and to revise the core values and beliefs to further align with the 21st century learning expectations. Faculty voted to adopt the revisions in May 2017.

Montville High School's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations are displayed throughout the building, on posters in classrooms, in the course catalog, and on the school's website. The Endicott survey, taken prior to the revision of the document, indicates that 87.1 percent of students and 87.4 percent of parents are familiar with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Familiarity with the 21st century learning expectations by parents drops to 72.1 percent. Teachers were able to state the beliefs about learning in general terms, but not all students and parents were able to do so in the same fashion. Although the core values and beliefs about learning are in place, they are not yet fully integrated into classroom teachers' practices.

Because the school engaged 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, the school will be able to fully integrate these values and beliefs into the culture of the school.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Montville High School has developed challenging 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies; however, the specific and measurable criteria for success articulated in the school's learning scales do not directly correlate with these 21st century learning expectations.

The ten challenging 21st century learning expectations are aligned with the core values and beliefs about learning and include academic, civic, or social expectations. The first four are academic and focus on writing and speaking for a variety of audiences and purposes; accessing, interpreting, evaluating, synthesizing, and applying multiple forms of information; reading, interpreting, evaluating, creating, and thinking critically; and engaging in academic development and growth. The four social expectations concentrate on engaging in appropriate personal interactions that foster a united, empathetic, and self-reflective community; building confidence through self-advocacy and taking responsibility for decisions and actions; promoting a safe school environment; and collaborating in the classroom. The two civic expectations center on developing responsible, positive, and contributing citizens of the school, local, global, and digital communities, as well as demonstrating pride in the Montville community. These learning expectations are intended to prepare students for success beyond high school.

During the 2013-2014 school year, the school began making the shift from the previous school-wide analytic rubrics to a set of learning scales developed using Marzano's Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction. Since that time, administration and faculty have been creating individual, unit based, and school-wide learning scales to assess and monitor student progress toward achieving the school's ten 21st century expectations for learning. Some teachers use school-wide learning scales that have been modified to meet subject and unit specific objectives. While some of the school's stated 21st century learning expectations are assessed using the learning scales, other areas are not being assessed. The school-wide learning scale focus is on assessing students in the areas of argumentative writing, argumentative analysis, presentation, and the six components of problem-solving: decision-making, overcoming obstacles, invention, system analysis, experimental inquiry, and investigation. The language in the learning scales does not correspond with the language of the learning expectations. Problem-solving is the umbrella under which the 21st century learning expectations are clustered, but it is being assessed as a discrete learning expectation. Although the stated writing expectation includes writing "for a variety of audiences and purposes," argumentative writing is the only type of writing assessed using a school-wide learning scale. Likewise, the expectation for speaking includes "for a variety of audiences and purposes," but presentation is the only speaking type being assessed. The learning scales seem to be more specific than the 21st century learning expectations. The second academic expectation addresses accessing, interpreting, evaluating, synthesizing, and applying multiple forms of information. The six learning scales that correspond to this expectation measure the six components of problem-solving. The third academic expectation addresses reading, interpreting, evaluating, creating, and thinking critically. The learning scale corresponding to this expectation addresses argument analysis. All school-wide learning expectations are to be used to measure student progress in the fourth academic expectation which addresses student engagement in their academic development and growth. There is one learning scale to measure the six civic and social expectations. Assessing and reporting on the civic and social expectations is just beginning to occur. As a result of these inconsistencies in language between the learning expectations and the learning scales, there is confusion about what the student must do to demonstrate successful achievement of each of the learning expectations.

Targeted levels of achievement have been established on each learning scale. However, some learning scales use a 1-4 rating and others use an E for exceeding the standard, M for meeting the standard, and W for working toward the standard. A fourth rating of Not Yet Meeting the standard is not defined for all learning scales, but is a comment that is available for reporting purposes. The targeted level of achievement is a 3 or M for meeting the standard.

While the school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which

address academic, social, and civic competencies, and there are specific and measurable criteria for success for some aspects of the learning expectations, when there is a clear correspondence between the learning expectations and the criteria for success which all faculty and students are able to understand, students will better be able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are reflected in varying degrees in the culture of the school, but inconsistently drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in classrooms, and do not yet regularly guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

The core values, beliefs about learning, and the 21st century learning expectations are clearly visible in the school and appear on the school's website and in the program of study. Morning announcements end with a statement containing the core values, effort, respect, and responsibility. A positive, respectful school climate is evident in classrooms and in the entire school community. Focused study halls have been implemented to assist students who have not demonstrated successful achievement of course requirements. Various clubs and organizations coordinate school and community events that reinforce school climate and provide assistance to those in need on both a local and an international level. Student athletes also give back to the community with service projects by each sports team through the Active Athletes program. Many faculty members advise student organizations without receiving a stipend. The curriculum of the advisory program, which meets twice per month, reflects and focuses on the core values giving students a vehicle to explore these values.

Nevertheless, many students are not familiar with the core values, beliefs, and especially the learning expectations. Many teachers are not clear which learning expectations they are responsible for teaching and identified that they were responsible for teaching problem-solving, the overall theme of their 21st century learning expectations, but did not specify any specific expectation. According to the Endicott survey, 69.4 percent of the staff feel that the school's core values are actively reflected in the school's culture, and 62.5 percent states that they consider the school's core values and beliefs about learning when making important teaching decisions. Although the core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations are in place, they are not currently fully integrated into classroom structures, instruction, or curriculum.

With the implementation of Dr. Marzano's framework, curriculum has been rewritten in many courses to include learning scales as a tool to measure student progress. Learning scales are implemented to some degree in all courses throughout the school. Students report that teachers are inconsistent in their use of learning scales, and that many teachers pass out the learning scale at the beginning of each unit, but few revisit it at the end of the unit. Although individual student progress on the learning expectations is reported on report cards, each teacher is able to report on only two academic expectations with some choice as to which expectation is reported. Many times teachers select the same expectations. As a result, students are not assured of receiving feedback on their achievement of each of the ten expectations over a period of time. School-wide progress on the student learning expectations is not yet compiled. Consequently, individual and school-wide progress on the achievement of each of the 21st century learning expectations is not available to make decisions on curriculum, instruction, and assessment; nor do these results guide the school's policies, procedures, and decisions.

Resources have been allocated for professional development in implementing learning scales and for the problem-solving initiative. Funding for summer curriculum work has also been available to align the curriculum with Marzano's framework for instruction and the common curriculum template. During the 2017-2018 school year, professional learning communities (PLCs) composed of teachers from a variety of subject areas based upon the free block of the teachers began to meet on a twice a month basis to foster cross-curricular discussions.

When the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are reflected extensively in the culture of the school, consistently drive the curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and purposefully guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations, then all students will practice and achieve the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

The document currently in place was initially adopted in 2012 and revised in 2017 to address the district-wide problem-solving initiative. Feedback from a variety of stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members was utilized. The 2017 revision increased stakeholder participation by including the NEASC Steering Committee, the core values development committee (CVDC), the school improvement team and the school governance committee. Revisions were research-based, utilizing Dr. Marzano's Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction. Data from regular meetings of PLCs, the building leadership team, and academic departments were also examined. In addition, the faculty examines data about student achievement on a variety of standardized tests, including Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR), the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Student data on student learning goals (SLGs) and the indicators of academic growth and development (IGAD) are also collected through the teacher evaluation process. The faculty has yet to fully integrate the learning scales developed to assess student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations in all classrooms or to aggregate school-wide results and report on them to the school community. Therefore, the school is not yet able to include this data in the revision process. No further formal meetings of the CVDC or formal plans to review data to ensure that the core values, beliefs about learning, and the 21st century learning expectations reflect student needs and community priorities have been scheduled at this time.

While the school reviews and revises the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations using a range of data including student achievement data, when there is a regular schedule for the review and revision and data on individual and school-wide achievement of the learning expectations is included, students will be further supported in the achievement of the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to develop and review the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Commendation

The visibility of the core values, beliefs about learning, and student learning expectations throughout the building, as well as on the school website and in the program of study

Commendation

The innovative development and initial work with learning scales to measure student achievement of the school's learning expectations

Commendation

The extracurricular program offerings that have a direct and active connection to the school's core values and beliefs

Commendation

The use of a range of data including student achievement data, to inform the revision of the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations.

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to purposefully integrate the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning into the culture of the school to ensure that students are able to readily identify and understand them

Recommendation

Clarify the relationship between problem-solving and the academic learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop and implement clear correspondence and consistent terminology between the learning expectations and the learning scales

Recommendation

Align the learning scales to the school's 21st century learning expectations in order to provide specific and measurable criteria for success for each learning expectation

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every content area and classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions and resource allocations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process and timeline for the regular review of core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based upon multiple data sources and current research

Recommendation

Use student and school-wide achievement data on the learning expectations to review and revise the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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

Curricular documents are written in OneNote, the district's multi-user platform. Despite the fact that teachers have had opportunities for paid summer curriculum work, only 40 percent of the school's curriculum has been written using the common template. For the completed curricular documents, the connections between the course content and the learning expectations are present. The curriculum for Montville High School is not widely available within the school and beyond. Teachers have access to their department's curriculum on OneNote, but do not have access to other department's curricula. This limits the ability for cross-curricular efforts by teachers to integrate the learning expectations into multiple curricular areas. Furthermore, the school's curriculum is not available to parents and the community. The Endicott survey reports that 78 percent of teachers and 86 percent of parents agree that the curriculum ensured that students are able to practice and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Montville High School's Program of Studies lists the 21st century learning expectations and identifies which courses have assumed responsibility for them. Students reported that teachers identify the unit-specific goals at the start of each unit and that some teachers identify the learning expectations. Other students did not express familiarity with the core values, beliefs, and especially the learning expectations. The program of studies indicates that multiple courses in multiple curricular areas offer learning experiences related to each of the school's learning expectations. For example, in an Early College Experience (ECE) American Experience (social studies/English) class, the instructor's lesson on the current state of the Lakota Tribe integrated all four of the academic learning expectations. In a culinary lesson, the focus was problem-solving, and the teacher provided learning scales related to the learning expectations. In creating a salad, the students utilized problem-solving and communication skills and then self-assessed.

While much of the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that students practice the school's 21st century learning expectations, when all of the school's learning expectations are clearly articulated throughout the curriculum all students will have opportunities to practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Some of the school's 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 defined by learning scales.

Montville High School has adopted a common template for curriculum that includes units of study with content and skills, essential questions, the school's 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment. While the Endicott survey states that 68 percent of staff believe there is a common, formal curriculum template that is used in all subject areas, more than half of the courses offered have not been updated to that template. Curriculum is entered into OneNote, a Microsoft program that allows multi-user collaboration and free form input. The multi-user collaboration is inconsistent among departments. OneNote is not available for inter-departmental access. As evidenced in the OneNote curriculum library, 40 percent or 65 courses have at least one unit written in the district's common curriculum format, and 42 percent or 68 courses do not use the common format. Of the 40 percent of courses that use the common template, many are not yet complete or fully developed. A decision has been made to exempt 18 percent or 29 courses from the common template: Advanced Placement curricula are audited by the College Board; the University of Connecticut Early College Experience courses follow the university's syllabus; and the science department is in the process of updating its curricula using the Next Generation Science Standards. Most of the 42 percent of courses not exempt from, but not yet using the common format, have some elements of curriculum posted in other formats.

The process of updating curriculum using the common format began in the summer of 2017. While some teachers feel that they consistently utilize OneNote and even use it for collaboration or to build a student page, some find it cumbersome for their content area. The common curriculum template includes instructional strategies emphasizing Marzano's Nine Essential Strategies. The common curriculum format makes a clear connection between content and learning expectations, and MHS's program of studies identifies the 21st century learning expectations for which each course has assumed responsibility.

When all teachers consistently use the curriculum template that has been developed by the district, students will be assured that the curriculum will support their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Some of the curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving; higher order thinking; cross-disciplinary learning; authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school; and, within some curricula, informed and ethical use of technology.

Of the curriculum using the common curriculum format, most units are designed by emphasizing depth of understanding through inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills. The evaluation of 22 pieces of student work across disciplines revealed that 50 percent incorporated inquiry and problem-solving, 32 percent incorporated higher order thinking questions, 22 percent incorporated cross-disciplinary learning, 32 percent included authentic tasks both in and out of school, and 9 percent incorporated informed and ethical use of technology. Most teachers were confident that their courses implemented inquiry and problem-solving, and many stated that they are responsible for teaching problem-solving.

The school's learning scales focus on aspects of problem-solving. Some classrooms have the learning scales visibly posted on walls or doors and some do not. Some posters were present but not clearly visible to students. Students have not committed the learning scales to memory, but understand that the learning scales are meant to reinforce the the school's problem-solving initiative. Many teachers' assignments emphasize higher order thinking and inquiry skills. An ECE American Experience teacher employed higher order thinking questions throughout the class, specifically during the closure that asked students if the Lakota Tribe was right not to accept a \$106,000,000 settlement from the United States Government. The lesson displayed a high level of planning for higher order thinking.

While there is some cross-disciplinary learning at Montville High School, it is not possible to document it on the common curriculum template. Some courses make explicit cross-disciplinary connections. For example, a level 1 chemistry course incorporated math skills that students had learned in earlier years. A senior mentioned that students use their primary source annotation skills from social studies in their English courses. The Endicott survey indicates that 61 percent of students agree that their teachers include topics from other subject areas in their classes, and 54 percent of staff agree that they emphasize cross-disciplinary learning. A class where a cross-disciplinary connection is explicit is the Disaster Engineering course that combines science with technology education. Some teachers report that they would not include cross-disciplinary opportunities in their curriculum unless they were writing curriculum for a formal cross-curricular course that they were given professional development time to develop. The library/media specialist supports and collaborates with ECE courses such as the American Experience course and is available to support cross-curricular experiences with all teachers in the building.

Several teachers stated that students have authentic learning experiences in and out of the classroom. One example is in U.S. History, where the teacher has students create a self-directed year-long community service project. A student stated that the AP United States Government and Politics class sparked an interest that led to interning in a political campaign. In the Endicott survey, 58 percent of students state that their teacher explains how to apply their learning to other courses and life outside of school.

The library/media specialist collaborates with freshman English and sophomore science classes to teach the informed and ethical use of technology, such as citing sources. Several courses utilize Turnitin.com, Google Drive, and Google Classroom so that teachers can manage students in using technology ethically. All high school teachers have access to Turnitin.com, which can support the informed and ethical use of technology, but not all teachers utilize it. Students feel that they are taught to use technology ethically and to cite their sources. This was reflected in the Endicott survey; 85 percent of students said they are knowledgeable about the ethical use of technology, and 85 percent of staff believe that the curriculum emphasizes the informed and ethical use of technology.

When all curriculum incorporates explicit components of 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, students will be able to have greater depth of understanding and will better be able to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Some courses demonstrate clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum; however, not all courses use the common written curriculum format.

According to the Endicott survey, 88.9 percent of staff feel that the written and taught curricula are aligned. By virtue of the design of Advanced Placement and Early College Experience courses with specified curricula from outside agencies, there is a high degree of alignment between the written and taught curriculum. Although teachers frequently collaborate informally to discuss the implementation of curriculum, many indicated the need for additional time to plan instruction based on the results of these discussions. Administrators and department heads superficially monitor the curriculum through the observation process of the teacher evaluation model. However, there is no formal process such as the submission of lesson plans or assessment results for common exams in place to formally measure the connection between the written and taught curriculum. Currently, common exams are not used in all common courses.

When the school has written curriculum for all courses and a process to monitor the alignment of the written and taught curriculum, students will have a more consistent opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Limited curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between Montville High School and the Montville Middle School; some departments within the school demonstrate vertical articulation.

Vertical articulation was most evident in the remedial reading program. The district has two reading consultants; one is specifically a high school reading consultant. Both collaborate to ensure articulation of the reading curriculum and student placement for identified students from 8th grade to 9th grade. In Montville Middle School, students receive a double block of reading if they are identified as struggling by classroom teachers or a reading consultant. The high school reading curriculum continues with strategies such as phonemic awareness and blend sounds along with comprehension strategies that demonstrate the vertically articulated reading expectations in K-12. STAR reading is used district-wide to provide teachers with information for teaching and learning decisions in the curriculum.

The middle school and high school administrators agreed that teachers may collaborate through email or professional development to vertically articulate curriculum, yet this occurs inconsistently. There is no K-12 curriculum review cycle that brings teachers together to develop, implement, and evaluate an articulated K-12 curriculum. District administrators noted that opportunities for vertical articulation can be provided if teachers wish to collaborate. Counselors work together to support students' access to the curriculum of the different levels at the high school. Teachers indicated that they do not have any communication or curriculum development time with the middle school. The high school curriculum is developed in isolation. The only exception to this occurs with high school staff who also work in the middle school; these teachers indicated that they make an effort to bring consistency to the curriculum transition from grade 8 to grade 9. The district-wide learning goals and learning scales are vertically articulated. Many teachers stated that their curriculum is related to the district's problem-solving umbrella learning theme. One student explained that the annotation posters in a ninth grade class were familiar from last year in middle school. The teacher explained that he builds off the poster to teach students more in-depth annotation skills that correspond to the high school level. The acting superintendent indicated that coordination and articulation of learning scales and the use of the K-12 template assure vertical articulation.

Within the school, many departments use department meeting time to discuss vertical articulation within their discipline. Science teachers are working as a professional learning community during the 2018-2019 school year to align their curriculum with the Next Generation Science Standards. Teachers in other departments indicated that they use some of their meeting time to discuss their course curricula. Currently, with the exception of science, professional learning communities are cross-disciplinary based on common planning periods; these focus primarily on instructional strategies rather than curriculum.

When the district implements a consistent curriculum review cycle, including time devoted to the development, review, and evaluation of the curriculum K-12, effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation will be possible between and among the academic departments in the high school and the middle school, and students will have a more coherent curricular experience.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel

- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Most of the 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.

Class sizes vary by department, but almost all classes have fewer than 20 students. Core subjects averaged 14-18 students per class. Teachers preferred the small class sizes because this optimizes the impact of the curriculum on student learning. Most teachers stated that their resources are adequate. Special education, English, and science teachers feel that whenever they ask for something, it is provided. The only exception to this is the lack of computers within the science and world language departments. Science has one cart of laptops, which is not fully functional because it is the oldest laptop cart in the school; as a result, the science department does not have the computers necessary to implement the NGSS content. The world language department has no laptop cart. The reading specialist stated that the school is willing to pay for online programs that she requests. One student commented that his classes never have issues accessing technology. Students said they feel prepared for college and careers because MHS has taught them how to use the technology available to them.

Budget reductions have impacted the library. The media specialist had to reduce online databases and magazine subscriptions based on budgetary restrictions. While that has decreased some non-print resources, the facility still has sufficient resources to fully implement the curriculum. The media specialist also is flexible in working with teachers to implement lessons teaching research skills in the library. Technology wiring was recently updated when the facility renovation occurred. The facility mostly supports the delivery of the curriculum including the 21st century learning goals. Resources for co-curricular programs are generally adequate, but many club advisors volunteer their time to provide a broader selection of co-curricular opportunities. New activities are often added based on student interest.

Because staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities and the resources of the library/media center are generally sufficient, students have the resources they need to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

To some degree, 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 within its financial means.

The acting superintendent leads curriculum coordination and articulation for the district and department chairs coordinate curriculum development, evaluation, and revision for their departments. Funding is available for summer curriculum work and teachers are encouraged to participate in this opportunity. To date, 53 percent of teachers have done so. For the most part, formal curriculum revision does not take place during the school year with the exception of some monthly department meeting time. Science teachers are working as a professional learning community during the 2018-2019 school year to align their curriculum with the Next Generation Science Standards. All other professional learning communities are cross-disciplinary based on common planning periods; these focus primarily on instructional strategies rather than curriculum. There are several full and half-day professional development days during the school year; however, this time is not formally devoted to curriculum revision. A formal k-12 curriculum review cycle

Despite limited financial resources for professional development, the acting superintendent approves requests that are reasonable and educationally beneficial. Additionally, district and school-wide professional development to support curriculum development has taken place to include Marzano's "Creating and Using Learning Targets and Performance Skills", co-teaching models, and passion goals. Professional development is often led by colleagues who have received training on various topics. Additionally, professional development time has been allotted for development of cross-disciplinary courses such as the Disaster and American Experience course, the chorus collaboration with a school in South Africa via Skype, and the recently purchased Lancair School and technology training videos. The Board of Education is supportive of curricular initiatives. New course proposals are presented to the School Board's Education and Evaluation Committee (E & E) at their monthly meetings for discussion and then to the full School Board for final approval.

The district has devoted significant funds to support curriculum development by recently updating all staff computers with Microsoft 10 and purchased Turnitin and OneNote software. Teachers may access OneNote for their department's curriculum in order to update it or revise it; however, they do not have the ability to access curriculum in other departments. Teachers may also access Google Classroom and Google Drive to support curriculum. Additionally, 46 students in the ECE American Experience course received a school provided laptop to access the curriculum. According to the Endicott Survey, 58 percent of teachers state that they have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work and 78 percent of the staff state that they are directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work.

While teachers use standardized testing and individual teacher assessment results, the faculty has yet to fully integrate the learning scales developed to assess student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations in all classrooms or to aggregate school-wide results and report on them to the school community. There are few common assessments among courses. As a result, a full range of assessment data is not yet used to collaboratively evaluate and revise curriculum.

While the district provides some personnel, time and financial resources for the ongoing collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, when additional time along with a formal curriculum review cycle and an effective data collection strategy to incorporate student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations are implemented, students will be better supported in achieving the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The common curriculum template that has begun to be used

Commendation

The problem-solving initiative that emphasizes inquiry and higher order thinking

Commendation

The provision of class sizes that support effective teaching and learning

Commendation

The support of the administration for the development of new extracurricular opportunities to provide students with a variety of learning opportunities

Commendation

The funding provided for curriculum work during the summer

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Complete curricular documents for all courses to include 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

Recommendation

Increase opportunities for teachers to plan for cross-disciplinary learning and provide access to curricula of other departments to support this effort

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the written curriculum is aligned with the taught curriculum with such efforts as the creation of course-based common formative and summative assessments

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure effective curricular coordination at MHS and vertical alignment with sending schools

Recommendation

Increase opportunities for collaboration on the development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal curriculum review cycle

Recommendation

Ensure the curriculum across all content areas consistently emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, and authentic application of knowledge and skills

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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

Although the school's core values and beliefs about learning are posted in every classroom and on a large display in the school's main hallway, teachers do not generally reference the school's learning expectations when discussing instructional strategies and only refer to the underlying problem-solving initiative and not the individual learning expectations. According to the Endicott survey, 69 percent of teachers stated that they continuously examine their instructional practice to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Students are involved regularly in inquiry-based learning experiences. Teachers provide students with specific feedback related to their learning and assessments through rubrics, comments on assessments, and sometimes direct conferencing.

Most teachers develop instructional goals and action plans to guide their classroom practice by using school-wide learning scales that are adapted for each subject. However, the alignment of these learning scales to the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations is often not clear. There is a commitment to the underlying principles in the core values, including a focus on students' development of problem-solving skills in diverse, collaborative and authentic learning experiences. The district-wide problem-solving initiative has been at the core of the school's professional development, curriculum development, and instruction.

Teachers engage occasionally in peer observation and individually reflect on their practices in relation to the school's 21st century learning expectations as well as the school's beliefs about learning. Within departments, teachers collaboratively reflect on instructional practices. For example the science department has been given permission to engage in a science only professional learning community in order to align its practice with the Next Generation Science Standards.

When all teachers examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectation, students will be better able to achieve those expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Montville High School's instructional practices sometimes support the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction at times; infrequently engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning; frequently engaging students as active and self-directed learners; frequently emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking; frequently applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; often engaging students in self-assessment and reflection; and sometimes integrating technology.

Teachers, at times, personalize their instruction by the use of some differentiation strategies, student choice, and individual conferencing. Of classes observed, 37.9 percent exhibited significant personalization or differentiation, while 27.6 percent showed no personalization or differentiation. In one physics class observed, students' end of unit performance-based assessment reflected students' interests but at the same time fulfilled the task requirement.

Montville students infrequently have the opportunity to participate in cross-disciplinary learning. A few elective classes are designed as cross-disciplinary, but in most classes references to connections with other disciplines are incidental. Because OneNote is not set up to allow cross-disciplinary curricular collaboration, teachers are limited in their opportunity to work across disciplines. However, most of the PLC groups for the past two years have been cross-disciplinary by common planning times, so teachers have had the opportunity to discuss instructional practices across disciplines. Only 21 percent of classes observed revealed any cross-disciplinary connections.

Teachers frequently engage students as active participants and self-directed learners. In the classes observed, students were engaged in their learning and willing participants in the tasks provided. Data gathered in classroom observations showed that 62.1 percent of students were engaged in inquiry, problem-solving, and/or higher level thinking. In one health class, students worked in groups to reinforce and strengthen concepts taught in order to prepare for an end-of-unit summative assessment.

Students are frequently asked to apply their knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. In culinary classes, students learn and apply safety and sanitation protocols in the kitchen. In personal finance and occupations classes students investigate vocations, apply for jobs, create individual resumes, and participate in the interview process. In 70 percent of classes observed there was at least some authentic application of knowledge.

Students are frequently asked to reflect on their learning and self-assess. Some self-assessment and/or reflection was seen in 65 percent of classes observed. Students stated that learning scales are often provided at the beginning of each unit and are referred to occasionally during the progression of learning as students self-assess their progress.

In some areas teachers integrate technology into their instructional practice. Technology applications and available hardware support the integration of technology through the use of Google Classroom, SMARTBoards, iPads, and various educational websites like factile.com and kahoot.it. There is concern that outdated computers will not allow the science department to implement the requirements of the Next Generation Science Standards and some departments, such as the world languages department, do not have mobile computer carts to facilitate the use of technology to enhance instruction.

When all teachers' instructional practices consistently include the use of 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; students will be supported in achieving the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Most Montville High School teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, strategically differentiating, sometimes organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.

Most teachers across content areas use formative assessments during instructional time. The Endicott survey shows that 52 of 53 staff members report using a variety of formative assessments for instructional practices. Classroom observations revealed that 72 percent of teachers used formative assessment at least somewhat during the class period. Representative formative assessments included the use of exit tickets to monitor progress, pretests, STAR assessments, various warm-up and review games such as Kahoot.it, and other educational websites. Teachers reported the use of differentiation in their classrooms. Classroom observations revealed 72 percent of teachers using at least some differentiation. Teachers also reported using individual conferences during work time to help create leveled assignments, and modified test and projects. Special education teachers in co-taught classes offered support for students who needed additional time to learn. Some examples observed include station teaching, parallel teaching, and modified assignments. Teachers sometimes used some form of purposeful grouping, such as teacher-assigned mixed-ability groups. In 66 percent of classes observed, teachers were employing purposeful grouping. Focused study halls have been implemented to assist students who have not demonstrated successful achievement of course requirements.

Because most teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student, students are better able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Most teachers at Montville High School, individually and collaboratively, work to improve their instructional practices by using a variety of formative and summative assessments, examining student work, using feedback from a variety of sources, examining current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

According to the Endicott survey, 84.7 percent of teachers agree that they use student achievement data to improve their instructional practices either individually or collaboratively, although there is no formal process to ensure that this occurs. Teachers anecdotally report student achievement data to show student growth throughout the year, using elements of both formative and summative assessments to provide feedback to administrators according to the district's teacher evaluation model. The model incorporates both formal and informal observations by the school's department chairs and administrators to provide feedback to teachers on their instruction. Also as part of the teacher evaluation model, teachers take part in peer observations and give and receive feedback.

Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet student needs. In all departments, teachers employ formative assessments and tailor instruction based upon these results to help individual students learn concepts and skills. Teachers purposefully organize group learning activities and provide alternative strategies within the classroom. For example, students in culinary classes were placed into teams to prepare a recipe, with each student assigned a task to complete while working toward a common goal. In a physics class students had to chart their findings on a ball drop activity and in small groups hold discussions to understand how their data could be more reliable and consistent. A school-wide initiative on problem-solving was implemented in the 2016-2017 school year. Teachers are implementing problem-solving activities and student-directed learning tasks. Some teachers use course-specific learning scales, based on school-wide learning scales, for students to assess their progress throughout a unit, lesson, or project. It is a common practice across the school for teachers to edit and adapt the school-wide learning scales to fit the particular needs of their classroom. This practice hampers the school's ability to use the results to aggregate data across groups of students in order to understand successes and needed changes in instruction and curriculum. Data is not yet available on individual and school-wide achievement of all of the school's 21st learning expectations and as a result, does not yet drive instructional practices.

According to the Endicott survey, 54.2 percent of teachers report formal opportunities to examine student work to improve instructional practices. Teachers meet both formally and informally within their own department and in interdisciplinary professional learning communities (PLCs) to analyze student work and provide feedback. PLCs meet bi-weekly throughout the school year. These meetings revolve around observations of other teachers, discussion of concrete examples of formative and summative assessments, and sharing of instructional ideas. Many of the teachers in the PLCs have experience with the same students and courses and can troubleshoot how to improve instruction. Department chairs meet bi-weekly and often discuss instructional practice among the leaders of the various departments.

Formal feedback from parents about instruction is limited. Teachers receive informal feedback from parents through email, phone conversations, during parent teacher conferences, back to school night, the school governance council, and other school events. Some teachers gather feedback from students in order to make adjustments in their instruction both informally and via a student survey. For example UCONN ECE course teachers have students complete a survey at the end of the course about both course content and instruction. However, only 49.7 percent of students feel that teachers ask for their feedback to improve instruction.

Montville High School has implemented Marzano's research-based Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction. This has been coordinated with the teacher evaluation system, teacher and school goals, curriculum, instruction, and assessment according to these best practices and has been aligned with the school's 21st century learning expectations. The entire teaching staff has engaged in research and professional development

in order to implement the Marzano framework. PLCs, common planning time, department time, monthly full faculty meetings, and informal one-on-one or small group discussions promote professional discourse around improvement of instructional practices.

Formalizing and standardizing the analysis of formative and summative assessments, the examination of student work, the use of feedback from parents and students, and the opportunities for professional discourse focused on instructional practice, will ensure that all Montville students are supported in the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Most teachers at Montville High School, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

According to the Endicott survey, 82.8 percent of students and 73.5 percent of parents agree that Montville High School's teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Most teachers (99 percent) hold a master's degree in their content area. Moreover, 86.1 percent of teachers state that they maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. During department and PLC meetings, teachers sometimes discuss content-area learning scales and share best practices. As part of the evaluation protocol, teachers visit a colleague's classroom at least two times per year to provide feedback, constructive criticism, and advice to improve instructional practices.

Some teachers participate in professional development outside of the school system and share the information with their colleagues. For example, several teachers from the district attended the University of Connecticut's Connecticut Writing Project Summer Institute. Also, teachers participate in regional professional development opportunities in an effort to continue to enhance instructional practices. Teachers report that they have attended classes and professional development offerings at Connecticut College and Wesleyan University as well as Advanced Placement and Early College Experience conferences. Teachers reported that the opportunity for professional development outside the building has been severely limited due to budget restrictions and that some have funded their own professional development.

Because most teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, students at Montville High School can be assured that teachers are using their content expertise to support their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The engagement of students as active, self-directed learners

Commendation

The school-wide emphasis on inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking

Commendation

The regular use of formative assessments to inform instructional practice

Commendation

The collaboration between content teachers and special education teachers to address individual student needs

Commendation

The implementation of Marzano's research-based instructional strategies that ensure consistency of instructional practice

Commendation

The willingness of teachers to engage in professional development opportunities within and outside of school even if they need to provide their own funding

Commendation

The development of focused study halls to assist students who struggle with coursework

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to ensure instructional practices are continuously examined by all teachers to align with the school's core values and 21st century learning expectation and that data gathered from learning scales is reviewed in order to improve instruction

Recommendation

Provide additional opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning

Recommendation

Provide updated technology to implement and enhance the instructional program in all academic areas

Recommendation

Implement additional research-based instructional strategies such as project-based learning to further engage students in higher order thinking and authentic application of knowledge

Recommendation

Formalize and standardize the analysis of formative and summative assessments, the examination of student work, and the opportunities for professional discourse focused on instructional practice

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to solicit and review feedback from students and parents throughout the academic year in order to improve instructional practices

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school is in the process of developing a formal process to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success; however, there is no process for assessing whole-school progress.

Effective with quarter four of the 2017-2018 school year, teachers were asked to provide a minimum of three comments on student report cards. With comment 1, all teachers were asked to report on student achievement of argumentative analysis. With comment 2, English, social studies and science teachers needed to report on argumentative writing and all other teachers on presentation or problem solving, dependent upon the area most relevant to their subject. Comment 3 was available for the content area and comment 4 was optional and was available for any other comment. In addition, teachers were asked to report on the civic and social expectations at the conclusion of the first semester and at the conclusion of the second semester (quarter 4). The two student report cards provided for quarter 4 of the 2017-2018 school year only included two comments for each subject area. In addition, only one report card had a comment on the civic and social expectation by the advisory teacher and one teacher did not report on the academic learning expectations.

With the implementation of Dr. Marzano's framework, curriculum has been rewritten in many courses to include learning scales as a tool to measure student progress; however, the language in the learning scales does not correspond with the language of the learning expectations. As a result, there is confusion about what the student must do to demonstrate successful achievement of each of the learning expectations and the connection of the report card comment to the school-wide learning expectation. For example, some teachers may report on "problem solving;" however, problem solving is not a school-wide learning expectation. It is the umbrella concept for all of the learning expectations.

Some content areas have made greater strides in the use of learning scales than others. English and social studies teachers have taken a lead in the use of school-wide learning scales for all major writing assessments, and teachers in other content areas are finding the learning scales to be useful for many assignments. While many of the staff and students reported using learning scales in their courses, many of these learning scales applied to course-specific, and in some cases, unit-specific learning goals and not the school-wide learning expectations. Teachers are currently required to utilize at least one of the three school-wide academic learning scales in their classes, as well as a unit-specific learning scale for each unit of study. Students report that teachers are inconsistent in their use of learning scales, and that many teachers pass out the learning scale at the beginning of each unit, but few revisit it at the end of the unit. Although individual student progress on the learning expectations is reported on report cards, each teacher is able to report on only two academic expectations with some choice as to which expectation is reported. As a result, students are not assured of receiving feedback on their achievement of each of the ten expectations over a period of time. The scores that are reported are not tracked to measure student progress or to identify areas of proficiency or areas for growth. School-wide progress on the student learning expectations is not yet compiled.

As teacher evaluations are now partly based on the use of learning scales as both formative and summative assessments, more teachers are using learning scales in their everyday teaching. Most teachers utilize argumentative writing in each course as an assessment. According to the Endicott survey, 78 percent of teachers state that they understand the formal process, based on the use of criteria for success, to assess school and individual student progress in achieving learning expectations. The survey also indicates that 70 percent of staff use the school-wide criteria for success (learning scales) when assessing student work.

When the school more cohesively aligns the school-wide learning scales to its 21st century academic learning expectations and develops a formal process for assessing and tracking individual and whole-school progress toward the 21st century learning expectations, students will be better able to achieve the school's stated learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school's professional staff does not clearly communicate individual student progress in achieving all of the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families, and the school's progress is not reported to the school community.

The school communicates student academic progress to families on quarterly report cards and progress reports and through Aspen, the online student information system. Due to the lack of alignment between the school's stated 21st century learning expectations and the skills assessed by the school-wide learning scales, students and families are not receiving explicit information on individual student progress toward achieving each of the stated 21st century learning expectations.

In addition, while the school issued report card does communicate individual class letter grades and required teacher comments tied to student performance in some areas of the school-wide learning scales, not all areas are commented upon. Because the school has not identified a process for collecting longitudinal data on individual student mastery of the school's 21st century expectations for learning, there is no way to know the degree to which an individual student is achieving those expectations, nor is there a way to aggregate data to determine how the school as a whole is performing in relation to the expectations.

When the school has developed a process for collecting and reporting on individual student progress in achieving all of the learning expectations, students will be better able to achieve those skills and the school will be able to track whole-school progress in achieving the learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- school board
- school leadership

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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

All standardized test data is analyzed yearly, and curricula and instruction are revised according to those results. For example, a structured and individualized reading program was reinstated in 2015 as a result of low reading achievement. The math and English departments have in the past analyzed PSAT and SAT data to inform their instruction; it is unclear whether this practice is still in place. During the 2017-2018 school year, Montville High School administered the PSAT to all 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students at no cost. The STAR Assessment is also given to 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students in reading and math. This data is then used to help students and parents make informed decisions about which courses would be most appropriate for the following year.

Beyond standardized test data, teachers, administrators and counselors conduct Collaborative Intervention Team (CIT) meetings for any students who may be struggling and in need of additional support. Teachers and counselors are often the initiators of these meetings based upon student performance in academic courses. Typically the students serviced by the CIT are regular education students who do not have additional supports built into their academic program through an IEP. Special education students are all assigned a case manager who regularly reviews student data (i.e., grades, standardized test scores, triennial testing). Based on that data, case managers and special education teachers create individualized student goals and research and implement individualized instructional strategies. Special Education teachers are required to submit monthly progress reports to the program leader. In addition, special education students complete the STAR Assessment more frequently than regular education students in order to more closely monitor their progress.

Beginning in 2017-2018, student mid-quarter and quarterly grades have been analyzed through the Aspen grade book. Students who failed a core area subject are placed in a focused study hall until they earn a grade of 70 percent or higher in any problem subject. Teachers sometimes review student work and discuss inequities among learning groups during formal professional learning communities (PLCs) and department meetings, as well as during informal departmental and interdisciplinary meetings. According to the Endicott survey, 47.2 percent of staff feel that professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

When data from multiple sources are regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed by all teachers, inequities in student achievement will be better addressed in order to ensure that all students can meet the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, most teachers communicate to students the unit-specific learning goals to be assessed; however the school's 21st century learning expectations are inconsistently communicated.

At the beginning of each unit, most teachers communicate the content-specific learning goals and scales to their students. According to the Endicott survey, 69 percent of staff, 66 percent of students, and 69 percent of parents agree that prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the learning goals and scales. However, teachers and students report rare communication of the school-wide learning scales that relate to the unit content. Since the learning scales have not been clearly aligned to the 21st century academic learning expectations, the communication of those expectations is not clear.

Consistently communicating unit-specific and school-wide 21st century learning expectations prior to each unit of study will provide clear guidance to students and consistency across the curriculum.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, teachers regularly provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, often a learning scale but sometimes a rubric, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

Use of content-specific/unit-based learning scales in addition to the skill-based, school-wide learning scales of argument analysis, argumentative writing, presentation, and problem-solving has been mostly school-wide. The Endicott survey indicates that 67 percent of students agree with the statements, My teachers use clear criteria, such as rubrics, to assess my work, and I understand the criteria or rubrics my teachers use. Sixty-seven percent of parents surveyed agree that they are familiar with and understand the school-wide criteria for success, such as analytic rubrics, teachers use to assess my son's/daughter's learning.

Because most teachers communicate criteria for success to their students, students have the opportunity to meet teachers' expectations on their assessments.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

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

These include, but are not limited to, learning scales, rubrics, essays, lab reports, test, quizzes, presentations, peer assessments, self-assessments, performance assessments, debates, online research/WebQuests, close readings, document-based questions, and cold calling. The Endicott survey found that 97 percent of teachers agree with the statement, Teachers use a variety and range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

Because teachers use a wide variety of assessment strategies, students have the opportunity to display their level of mastery in a format that is best suited to student needs.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

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

Although informal meetings occur regularly due to the professionalism of the staff, the only formal opportunity teachers are given to collaborate is during the twice monthly professional learning community time and during monthly department meetings. PLCs were formally implemented only recently and are not departmental. As result, they do not lend themselves to the creation, analysis, and revision of assessments. There is professional development time on several half-day during the school year, but this is generally not specifically allocated to collaboration on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In addition, teachers are paid for summer curriculum work, if requested. Informal meetings of staff have led to some cross-curricular collaboration to create unique formative and summative assessments. For example, world languages classes have created cultural lessons with art and culinary; English and social studies classes have collaborated with the music and art departments on pre-text activities and writing assignments. However, collaboration on the creation, analysis, and revision of assessments is inconsistent and informal. Few common assessments are given. According to the Endicott survey, 65.3 percent of teachers feel that they meet formally to discuss and improve both formative and summative assessment strategies.

When formal collaboration time dedicated to the creation, analysis, and revision of assessments is regularly provided, students will benefit from consistent curriculum delivery and assessment strategies that promote achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

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

Although there is no formal school-wide policy regarding revisions or retakes, most teachers provide corrective feedback on student work. In a classroom setting, this feedback may be verbal as well as written. Anecdotal evidence and classroom visits revealed that many teachers encourage students to revise and resubmit assignments. Some teachers use electronic feedback methods through websites such as turnitin.com to create a digital portfolio of student writing, allowing students to see or reference the corrective feedback as needed. However, feedback is provided through scales and checklists rather than through specific written comments. As a result, students do not always know what they need to do to improve.

Increased specificity of corrective feedback and a specific policy on retakes and resubmissions would provide students with the opportunity to increase their mastery of content-specific learning goals and the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers sometimes use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

Montville High School teachers implement a variety of formative assessments on a regular basis in their individual classrooms to improve student learning. Examples of these include, but are not limited to, exit tickets, daily reflections, homework assignments, quizzes, and quick check-ins such as thumbs up, thumbs down, Kahoot! "do-now" questions, reading checks, debates, Socratic seminars, fishbowl discussions, and think-pair-share activities. In 72 percent of classes observed, formative assessment was used at least somewhat during the class period. Teachers stated that they use the information gathered from these assessments to adapt their instructional strategies both mid-lesson and upon reflection after completion of a lesson or unit. There is informal teacher collaboration in this area; however, there are few formal opportunities, especially within departments, for this to occur.

When all teachers regularly use formative assessment to guide instruction and regular opportunities are provided for teachers to formally collaborate on the results of formative assessment, students will benefit from instruction adapted to their needs, resulting in improved student learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teachers
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, infrequently examine student work, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, and survey data from current students for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice; common course and grade level assessments are not extensively available, and individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations and survey data from alumni, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions are not available and are not included in this effort.

There are not protocols in place for examining evidence of student learning, and student work is not systematically analyzed to improve student learning beyond the individual teacher level. There are few common course and common grade-level assessments beyond the standardized PSAT, SAT and STAR assessments. Recent changes in teaching practices by many teachers have had a positive impact on student performance in specific areas measured by standardized assessments; for example, SAT evidence-based reading and writing scores are above the state average in the areas of "change in college readiness" and "change in mean score." The school does not currently track individual or school-wide progress toward achieving the 21st century learning expectations. The school does not use data from receiving schools, post-secondary institutions, or former students to make informed decisions about the need for revising curriculum and improving instructional practices.

When teachers and administrators, regularly, on an individual and collaborative basis, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, then Montville High School will be able to ensure curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices are designed to ensure that all students are meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- department leaders

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

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

The school recently made adjustments to the grading policy to create greater consistency among grading practices throughout the building. Teachers are now required to weigh their digital grade books in the same manner using category total points so that teachers weigh homework, tests, quizzes, etc. in the same manner. However, the professional staff does not meet regularly with a focus on revision and review of grading practices or the alignment of the learning expectations to learning scales and grading. Students and faculty report that there are inconsistencies in the use of learning scales and the reporting of student progress toward meeting the school's learning expectations. Departments do not meet regularly for the specific purpose of examining student work and developing consistent grading practices among department members. Common exams are not in use extensively to ensure that grading practices are consistent across the curriculum. According to the Endicott survey, only 43.1 percent of staff feel that school-wide grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised.

The Montville High School beliefs about learning include the belief that all students have unique learning styles and learning needs. Some teachers differentiate instruction and assessment to meet the needs of individual students. However, a policy on retests and resubmission of student work does not exist to reinforce this belief. Some teachers allow multiple retests and/or resubmissions of work and others do not allow any.

Report cards are issued quarterly and reporting on individual student progress on the achievement of the school-wide learning expectations is beginning to take place. Beginning with the fourth quarter of the 2017-2018 school year, all teachers are required to provide a minimum of three comments each quarter on student report cards. All teachers must comment in the area of argument analysis. English, science, and social studies teachers must also report on argumentative writing, while all other teachers must report in the areas of problem-solving or presentation. The third comment is to be related to the content area. A fourth comment is optional. Teachers are also expected to report on civic and social expectations at the conclusion of the first semester and at the conclusion of the second semester. Examination of quarter four report cards from June 2018 revealed that this is not yet consistently occurring. It appears that Aspen may limit the number of comments since only two comments were printed on the report cards that were reviewed. In addition, many times teachers select the same expectations and students are not assured of receiving feedback over time on their achievement of each of the ten expectations. Individual student achievement is not tracked and school-wide progress on the student learning expectations is not yet compiled. Data on individual and school-wide achievement of the learning expectations is not used to review and revise grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment with the core values and beliefs about learning.

When all teachers regularly review and revise grading and reporting practices to align with the school's core values, and beliefs about learning, students and parents will better understand the connection between the grades earned and the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The initial efforts to use learning scales to assess student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The school's preliminary efforts in communicating individual student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations to students and families by using comments on report cards

Commendation

The communication of unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study

Commendation

The use of a wide variety of assessment strategies

Commendation

The school's recent revision of its grading practice to standardize grading throughout the building

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to insure the consistent and regular use of the school-wide learning scales by all teachers to assess student achievement of the learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to ensure that all students receive feedback over a period of time on their achievement of each of the ten expectations and that this achievement is communicated to students and parents

Recommendation

Develop and implement a system for tracking individual and aggregate student progress toward achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations and for reporting the school-wide achievement to the school community

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process for the regular analysis of data from multiple assessment sources to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement

Recommendation

Communicate connections to the school-wide 21st century learning expectations to students prior to each unit of study

Recommendation

Increase formal opportunities for all teachers to collaborate regularly on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments

Recommendation

Develop and implement a school-wide policy on revision and re-submission of student work in order to improve student learning

Recommendation

Increase specificity of corrective feedback on student work to ensure that students understand what is needed to increase mastery of content-specific learning goals and the school's academic learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to examine a range of evidence of student learning to include student work; common assessments; standardized assessments; 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 and former students for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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

Students receive school handbooks in the fall which contain discipline and attendance policies along with Montville High School's core values that students and parents sign to acknowledge receipt and understanding of expectations. This procedure along with the combined efforts of administrators, teachers, counselors and the school resource officer has resulted in a decreased number of discipline referrals, from 1,706 referrals in 2011-2012 to 553 referrals in 2016-2017.

In addition to the formally collected data, faculty members report a decline in the number of students receiving in-school suspensions (ISS) this academic year. There has also been a focus on improving the ISS process through the implementation of restorative practices. In addition, discipline has become more consistent and aligned to the policies outlined in the student handbook. Students are held accountable for their actions and discipline is a personalized process, with students meeting with the school assistant principal. While the district middle and elementary schools use PBIS, such a system is not currently in place at the high school.

Montville High School has developed several formal and informal extracurricular programs that are focused on improving school climate and culture. Teachers routinely create activities based upon student request and interest such as the anime club. The student government and class council organize school-wide events to increase school spirit and ownership. These include the traditional spirit week, dances, and pep rallies. Other organizations such as drama, sport teams, a capella choir, Chieftan Newspaper, environmental club, math team, marching band, arts council, National Honor Society, rifle club, steel band, robotics club, GSA, YES club, yearbook, peer mediation, active athletes, international club, transparent nation, youth action council and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), all create positive climate and pride in the school and most incorporate community volunteerism. The majority of students are actively involved in sports and/or extracurricular programs, and the availability of a late bus three days a week ensures that students have transportation home from school should they choose to participate in after school activities. Support is provided for students with special needs who wish to participate in extracurricular programs; students participate in a unified bowling tournament and there is a unified basketball team which practices and competes during the winter athletic season, providing all students with an opportunity to participate in athletic endeavors.

Montville has implemented improved school safety procedures within the last six years. The building is equipped with a buzzer entrance system and cameras. Student parking has been rearranged for increased surveillance. A full-time school security officer helps protect and advise students and staff. Students have reported that the administration has instituted a prohibition on backpacks in the halls as a further safety measure. Parents report that students generally feel safe despite being keenly aware of current national issues related to school violence and feel comfortable in talking to teachers. However, the school currently lacks a security desk in the main lobby of the school, requiring the office staff to closely monitor visitors' transition from the front doors to the main office.

Students stated that they feel safe at school and do not witness regular instances of bullying or harassment; they feel comfortable approaching teachers and administration when any issues arise. Students, staff, and parents complete a school climate survey every other year. The information is used by counselors and the school climate committee to ensure the learning environment is safe and productive for all students.

The school safety officer (SSO) works in collaboration with the staff to ensure the safety and overall well-being of students, both in and out of school. The members of the school resources committee identify the SSO as a major strength of the school, as he is an individual who deeply cares for the students and is committed to student wellness. The nurse, counselors, and administrators are all able to make referrals for students to meet with the SSO.

The staff has recently received professional development on the laws related to transgender students along with classroom techniques to support students who are transitioning to a different gender. Teachers feel that differences in sexual orientation and gender identity are supported by the school community as a whole.

Teachers have reported that students are generally respectful of displayed student work and art. Students take pride in their school and treat the school facilities with respect. Student success is regularly celebrated with honor roll recognition, celebratory events and pep rallies, and the implementation of a shout out program in which teachers are invited to send postcards home to families celebrating a wide variety of student academic, civic, and social successes. The successes are then displayed in the school. Student success is also celebrated at monthly board of education meetings as Montville Marvels.

Because the principal works in concert with the community and teachers to consciously and continuously build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning, shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all, students are provided with an environment that is conducive to learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Although Montville High School strives to be equitable and inclusive in elective courses and in a wide variety of co-curricular activities, the school does not foster heterogeneity by reflecting the diversity of the student body in a majority of core classes, which would ensure access to challenging academic experiences for all students and support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

According to the program of studies, the majority of core courses are leveled with variations in instructional methods and assessments to meet the learning styles and needs of the students in the class. There are four levels of courses available to students: level 0 with Advanced Placement, UConn ECE, and ECSU dual enrollment courses; level 1 with a very high level of comprehension and knowledge demanding a strong competency in applying concepts and principals, interpreting data, and formulating generalizations; level 2 college preparatory courses requiring considerable skills and knowledge; and level 3 with skills and knowledge that stress the acquisition of skills necessary to become a positive, contributing member of the community. Placement in course levels is based on the recommendation of the prior year's subject teacher. Parents have the ability to override a teacher recommendation.

The majority of elective classes, including some electives in the core academic areas, are heterogeneously grouped. Also, Spanish 1 and Spanish 2 courses are not leveled and open to any and all students who want to take them, provided they have fulfilled any prerequisite requirements. Further, teachers interviewed reported that students are not in fixed academic tracks and that the students have the opportunity to move throughout all levels of classes based upon teacher recommendation or parental input

Students interviewed indicated that they believe their classes are challenging and provide them with a rigorous academic experience. Further, the Endicott survey indicates that 69.5 percent of students believe that they have a number of opportunities to take courses in which students of varying levels of ability are enrolled. The survey also reflects staff agreement (76.4 percent) with the statement: "The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students and ensuring that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body." Teachers reported that they individualize instruction and assessment as needed. However, during classroom observations, engaging academic challenge was not evident in all Level 2 and 3 courses. As a result, not all students are guaranteed the experience of academic challenge, engagement, and diversity. Expanding the implementation of differentiated learning strategies will continue to increase access to higher level content for all students.

When courses are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body and are more heterogeneous, Montville High School will create a more equitable and inclusive environment, which will promote academic challenge for all students as they strive to meet the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- students
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There is an effective formal advisory 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.

The advisory program at Montville High School promotes meaningful relationships between staff and students while meeting the developmental and educational needs of students. Montville High School's advisory program has been a part of the school culture since 2003. Advisory fosters connections to the 21st century learning expectations through social and academic development and the review of academic goals and progress. Every adult in the building, including administrators and student support staff, meets with a set group of students every other week for 30 minutes. Advisors are paired with the same students for four years in order to foster the development of personal connections. Common lesson plans for advisory are created but advisors have the flexibility to tailor the session as they see fit. Topics for advisory include course selection, gender roles, stress management, core values, and job interview skills. Grouped heterogeneously, advisory offers time for students to get to know peers who may not be in their academic classes, their social circles, or in their extracurricular activities.

In addition to the advisory program, Montville High School encourages all students to participate in student organizations and/or athletics. Participation enhances student self-knowledge and social development while providing students with the opportunity to bond with an adult as coach and advisor. Most of the clubs and the athletics offered at MHS are coached by teachers and staff allowing greater connection between the student and the teacher. When interviewed, most students stated that they feel they have an adult they can talk to in the building and feel comfortable approaching administration with any concerns they might have. Adults in the building stated that the administrators are very visible to the students and know them all by name, thus creating a sense of community.

The presence of a formal advisory program and the involvement of faculty and staff in numerous athletic and extracurricular activities as coaches and advisors ensures that all students at Montville High School have an adult in the school who knows them well and assists them in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- school website

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

The Endicott survey indicates that 47.2 percent of staff believe that professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills to improve instruction and assessment. Teacher interviews also reveal a desire and need for more time and funding for professional development, a desire that is also shared by the leadership team.

All teachers at Montville High School are assigned to professional learning communities (PLCs) designed to improve student learning through professional discourse, reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning. PLCs meet biweekly. While PLC time was used in the past for the analysis of student data such as Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) scores, data analysis has since moved to the department level. PLC groups receive discussion topics for their meetings, but there does not appear to be any consistency in the level of discourse that occurs in each group and confusion about the role of members and their tasks is sometimes present.

There is no formal or consistent agenda or protocol that all PLC groups must follow. Teachers are assigned to interdepartmental PLCs based upon their free period with the exception of the science teachers who have been placed in a department-specific group to discuss the implementation of the new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). In addition to PLCs, opportunities for professional discourse are available via monthly faculty and department meetings, as well as scheduled professional development time. Opportunities for collaboration with teachers at the middle and elementary schools in the district, however, are limited.

Montville High School has limited resources outside of the school for professional development. For the 2017-2018 school year the district had \$19,000 in federal entitlement grants set aside for professional development district-wide along with an additional \$8,000 set aside in the budget. The money is allocated to buildings/teachers based upon the need to support new initiatives. Last year the board of education cut professional development funding by 50 percent due to budget constraints. As a result, funding for professional development has been significantly reduced. While teachers of electives are able to take advantage of professional development through a consortium of neighboring school districts with LEARN Regional Education Service Center, most teachers do not receive financial support to attend out-of-district professional development. When teachers are granted funding for professional development, the expectation is that they will bring their learning back to the school to share with others via PLCs and/or department meetings.

Within the 186 days a teacher works each year, five days are dedicated to professional development - two at the beginning of the year, one in November, one in March, and one after the last day of school. There are an additional six half-days dedicated to professional development spread throughout the year. The principal and department heads are responsible for coordinating the school's and their respective department's professional development activities. There are very few formal professional development sessions scheduled for faculty, with the exception of recent presentations on vaping, transgender students, and the upcoming ALICE training. Teachers are given the freedom to work on their professional goals during the scheduled half-days. Teachers, department heads, and the high school administration meet after teachers set their learning goals for the year to discuss what support may be needed. There is a district-wide professional development committee that meets to review professional development needs for the district.

When appropriate funding and consistent formal protocols for professional development are provided, teachers will be better able to improve their professional practice to enhance student learning.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

The Montville Public School District's System for Educator Evaluation and Support is a State of Connecticut approved teacher evaluation plan based on the work of Marzano and developed collaboratively with a committee of administrators, teachers, union representatives, and district leadership. A teacher's summative evaluation score is based on student growth and development (45 percent), teacher performance and practice (40 percent), peer feedback (10 percent), and whole-school student learning (5 percent).

Evaluation is broken into a three-year cycle and the number of observations are based on tenure and teacher rating from the previous year. For example, tenured teachers rated accomplished or exemplary receive at least one formal observation and review of practice in year one followed by at least three informal observations and one review of practice in years two and three. Administrators conduct all formal observations while department heads conduct the majority of the informal observations. All administrators and department heads have been trained in observation protocols and evaluation calibration. Peer feedback is given at least twice a year using the iObservation platform. The peer feedback process is designed to help teachers reflect upon their teaching practices and student learning. Teachers are required to develop two student learning goals (SLGs), each with a minimum of one indicator of academic growth and development (IAGD). In addition, teachers must develop performance and practice goals and strategies to support the SLGs and to guide peer observations. Department heads attend goal setting meetings with administrators and teachers to ensure that teacher goals are developed collaboratively and to determine what professional supports are needed by the teachers. Teachers are expected to work towards their goals during district-provided professional development time.

Since school leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning, teachers are able to grow professionally and positively impact student growth.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time generally supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of students. The school day is organized around an alternating A/B block schedule in which students take eight 83-minute classes; four classes meet every other day. An advisory period is scheduled twice per month between the second and third block.

Students interviewed indicated an appreciation for the longer block periods, and there has been a recent district initiative to align the practice of block scheduling with the middle school. Students reflected that the longer periods allowed for more project-based work; however, classroom observations did not indicate a widespread use of common projects or extended learning activities. Maximizing instructional practices in the extended block would further support the learning needs of students.

The teacher load is built upon five instructional periods, one personal preparation period, one duty period, and one professional learning community (PLC) period over the two-day rotation. Montville High School uses the PLC model to facilitate interdisciplinary conversations and collaboration between and among teachers. Teachers reported using the PLC time for professional learning, classroom visits and observations, and discussions of learning scales; however, a consistent agenda, practice, or protocol is not yet established. Teachers recognize the need for calibration of learning scales; however, there is not yet a formal process in place to accomplish this.

While the organization of time supports instruction and professional collaboration, a more effective use of that time, would better meet the learning needs of all students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- teacher interview
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Student load and class size at Montville High School enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Montville High School strives for teacher loads and class sizes that allow for effective instruction and individualized learning.

During the prior 2017-2018 school year, the average total student load per teacher was 77 students. Core academic classes (English, math, science, social studies and world languages) are capped at a maximum of 25 students per section with an average class size of 16-18 students per section. Science classes are limited to 24 students due to laboratory safety guidelines. Physical education classes do not exceed 30 students per section, and a small number of elective classes have more than 24 students per section.

Enrollment in classes designed to provide students with additional supports such as learning lab and reading intervention is intentionally kept low so the teacher can work one on one with each student to address his or her individual needs. Montville High School has committed to offering a range of classes even if roster sizes are low. Examples from prior school years include Music Theory I (5), Music Theory II (3), AP Biology (5), and Computer Aided Drafting & Design II (4). The lower enrollment in certain courses such as the social studies AP and ECE classes, however, causes a scheduling imbalance leading to higher enrollment in mid-level social studies courses. The availability of materials, supplies, and space limits enrollment in certain electives such as music, family and consumer science, and art.

The Endicott survey indicates that 78.1 percent of students feel that their class sizes are reasonable. Students interviewed reflected similar thoughts that classes are appropriately sized to meet their needs. The survey further reflected 91.4 percent of parents felt their children have the opportunity to enroll in courses with students of varying levels of ability. The survey also reflects parents' agreement (77.1 percent) that their children's classes allow teachers to meet their individual learning needs. Parent interviews reflect a belief that class sizes support the development of relationships with teachers. While current budget constraints are recognized as a challenge, parents of recent graduates reflected that their children still have a strong rapport with teachers, enabling them to maintain contact with their former teachers for continued learning support.

Because the classes and teacher load at Montville High School are sized to meet student needs, students are able to participate in a learning environment that is supportive of their education.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

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

The principal is newly arrived at Montville High School and has led the school during a period of both school and district transition. In her new role, the principal provides leadership to both Montville High School and the district-based alternative program. The principal has emphasized the use of problem-solving as a key outcome and goal for Montville High School. According to teachers, the principal has empowered the school's department heads to provide critical information and to make key decisions. The school improvement team includes a teacher representative from each department, the school psychologist, a member of the school counseling department, as well as the principal and assistant principal. The school improvement team's official role has been to serve as the leadership and policy making team for the school, with its primary responsibilities related to maintaining the mission and vision of MHS and to giving the school community a voice in school governance. During this past year, the principal has utilized the department leaders as part of the goal-setting process for teacher evaluation, conducting these meetings in unison so that goals have greater alignment with school goals.

A collaborative intervention team (CIT) has also been established to meet the learning needs of struggling students at Montville High School. The CIT monitors student attendance and academic performance. Its philosophy and strategies are linked to the MHS academic expectation of teaching all students to use problem-solving strategies and to cultivate their particular talents. The CIT meeting occurs biweekly.

Teachers interviewed reported that the principal and superintendent are largely in agreement on school related matters. Further, teachers reported that the principal generally trusts department heads to navigate aspects critical to the school's learning environment. A recent decision to eliminate the SAT preparatory classes this year was made in conjunction with and by the department heads who sought feedback regarding the course's elimination and the corresponding effect on class size. The department heads report meeting twice per month on topics that range from logistical issues to items related to teaching and learning. The superintendent noted that analysis of PSAT and SAT data was completed by both the principal and the department heads with the principal rolling out the data and leading the discussion of school needs. In addition to the leadership change, the principal has noted that time has been dedicated to managing the challenges and budgetary impact of the transition to new state graduation requirements.

Teachers reflected positively on the transition of leadership at Montville High School. Teachers have suggested the need for time for the principal to develop a common vision of learning at Montville High School that not only includes but expands upon the use of learning scales and problem-solving.

Because the principal, working with the assistant principals and other leaders, has provided effective instructional leadership anchored in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, students are provided with an educational environment that is supportive of their learning needs.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

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

The Endicott survey indicates that 35.9 percent of students feel that they have input in important decisions made at their school, and 56.9 percent of MHS staff agree that teachers, students, and parents are meaningfully involved in decision-making to promote an atmosphere of responsibility and ownership. Parents are in agreement (63.4 percent) that they have opportunities to be involved in important decisions made at the school.

There are various formal committees in the school community that seek input from various stakeholders. The collaborative intervention team consists of school counselors, student support services professionals, administrators, teachers, parents and when appropriate students. The team looks at ways to improve individual student behavior, emotional health, and academic achievement. The school governance council gives parents, teachers and administrators an opportunity to meet once per month to discuss a variety of topics, including school morale and the curriculum. All parents are invited to participate on the council. In addition, the education and evaluation (E&E) subcommittee of the board of education works regularly with administrators, faculty, and students. The subcommittee is scheduled to meet monthly and regularly consists of three or four board of education members and the superintendent. Based on the topic of discussion, administrators, teachers, and students are invited to participate. For example, the high school principal, life management department head, and music teachers recently met with the committee to discuss the possibility of a new course, and students will be invited to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss changes to the school graduation requirements. In addition, two students sit on the board of education as non-voting members and provide the board with information about student concerns. These students are also invited to attend the annual Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) conference. Student input is valued and members of the student government feel that their opinions are considered in deliberations. Parents and students are also invited to serve on the community safety committee. Despite these student governance opportunities, many students feel that they have a limited opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Students involved in various clubs are active in promoting student responsibility with many student activities including community service projects.

Teachers serve as department heads at Montville High School and meet biweekly with each other and school administrators to discuss instruction and logistics of the school operation. The department heads collaborate with teachers in their department and administrators to establish professional learning goals and to determine departmental needs. Department heads are also invited to attend the goal-setting meetings for the teachers in their department. All teachers are formally asked for feedback about professional learning opportunities multiple times a year via a survey, including how the district may support them and their professional needs.

Parents are kept informed of school decision-making via written communications. Parents and students report that the current administrators are very accessible to both students and parents. There is not, however, a regular and formal method for collecting parent feedback.

By having formal committees in place, Montville High School has established various opportunities for teachers, students, and parents to provide input that informs school and district decision-making. When teachers, students, and parents are consistently involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making, the process will generate broad support from the community and foster greater responsibility and ownership across all stakeholders.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study

- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

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

Teachers are encouraged to participate in a variety of committees such as school improvement and NEASC. All teachers are assigned to interdisciplinary PLCs to facilitate discussion and collaboration between and among teachers. They are also encouraged to participate in the curriculum development process and funds are provided to pay teachers to write and revise curriculum during the summer months. Teachers also have the ability to participate in outside professional development and then to provide training to the faculty; one teacher noted that he has been approved to learn about and provide professional development on the ALICE school safety protocols. Due to budget constraints and district priorities, funding for teacher requested professional workshops and conferences is limited. When budget conditions allow, external professional development is supported and teachers share materials and ideas with colleagues, although a formalized structure to disseminate information was not noted. Examples include Josh Cushing's sustainability workshop where many teachers met to discuss the implementation of new and innovative ideas into the curriculum. A teacher also recently designed and built an Escape Room with her reading students. The teacher evaluation process has included the ability of teachers to create a "passion" goal whereby they are able to pursue an innovative practice that they believe will positively impact student learning.

New courses are often developed as a result of teacher initiative in order to broaden course offerings and to engage students in the study of a wider variety of topics. Examples of recent additions to the course catalogue include Montville Shark Tank, Public Speaking, 3-D Design, AP Computer Science, AP Government, Engineering Disasters (a science and technology course), and History through Film. Teachers often serve as advisors to clubs and activities to expand learning beyond the classroom and to generate student excitement and interest in subject matter. Some organizations in the school were initiated as a result of teacher interest and talent, and others have been created as a result of student requests.

Because teachers frequently exercise essential initiative and leadership, the school is able to improve and to increase students' engagement in learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

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

The school board chair noted that the role of the board is to serve as a policy making body that acquires the resources necessary for the district and that the superintendent is empowered to make decisions to achieve the goals of the district. The Montville board of education works closely with the superintendent on policy creation and changes. The superintendent provides the board with clear and concise plans for the district including reasonable budget requests and the implication of potential cuts in a time of budget constraint. Recent changes in school and district administration have led to the consolidation of positions and the need for individuals to serve in multiple roles.

The district superintendent and the Montville High School principal actively participate in school board meetings by reporting on developments within their jurisdiction, including policies that impact 21st century learning expectations. The superintendent and principal collaboratively review school learning needs including disaggregation of SAT and PSAT data. The superintendent and building administrators from all district schools meet regularly to discuss a variety of topics including budget, policies, teacher evaluation, initiatives, and issues that arise at the schools.

Although some teachers stated that there is strong superintendent input with regard to the direction of Montville High School, teachers generally reported alignment between the acting superintendent and newly-appointed principal and have reflected that they have a productive working relationship. The superintendent and principal also noted a positive and collegial working relationship, as well as alignment among all schools in the district.

Because they work in a manner that is collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, the school board, superintendent, and principal are able to meet the needs of the school's learners.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

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

The school board has consistently supported the MHS leadership model, which gives the principal decision-making authority, as well as the freedom to include other stakeholders in the process. Through this leadership model, the principal builds the school budget with input from faculty and learning area coordinators, the building and grounds managers, co-curricular director and other interested parties. When reductions in the school budget are required, the principal works with faculty leaders and the superintendent to determine which budget cuts will have the least impact on students. The principal and the school leadership team develop the focus areas for PLC discussions and professional development days for the high school faculty and staff, such as the focus on the development of learning scales. In addition, the principal has had the freedom to develop an initiative focused on the development of teacher "passion" goals, whereby teachers are able to pursue an innovative practice they believe will positively impact student learning.

Because the school board and superintendent regularly provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school, stakeholders can be confident that efforts to improve teaching and student learning are a priority.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The safe and positive school climate that instills a sense of pride and ownership in the school community

Commendation

The variety of extracurricular offerings that meet a wide range of student interests

Commendation

The wide variety of courses to meet student needs for college and career readiness with a robust offering of AP and ECE classes

Commendation

The formal advisory program that ensures that all students at Montville High School have an adult in the school who knows them well and assists them in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The provision of time for professional learning and discourse during interdepartmental PLCs and scheduled district-wide professional development days

Commendation

A schedule that strikes a positive balance between meeting the learning needs of students and providing time for teacher collaboration

Commendation

The effective student load and reasonable class sizes that support student learning

Commendation

The instructional leadership of the principal and other building administrators

Commendation

The initiative of teachers to develop and implement new courses, clubs, and activities to meet student academic

and social needs

Commendation

The collaboration among the principal, superintendent, and school board

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Increase equability, inclusiveness, and heterogeneity in all courses to ensure all students have similar opportunity for academic challenge that enables them to achieve the 21st century learning expectations.

Recommendation

Implement formal, consistent protocols for PLCs to improve the faculty's ability to engage in professional discourse, reflection, inquiry, the analysis of teaching and learning, and the achievement of the 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Formalize a process by which to collect, calibrate, and analyze data about student growth on the learning scales in order to drive the improvement of instructional practices

Recommendation

Provide additional meaningful and defined roles in decision-making for parents and students

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school has effective 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.

Montville High School has a pre-referral system that allows teachers, parents, and students to make referrals for any student considered at risk of not meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. The referral process was streamlined at the start of the current school year combining the mental health team and the collaborative intervention team (CIT) into one referral team that meets bi-weekly. The CIT is composed of administration, the school counselor, school psychologist, referring teacher, additional staff such as the school nurse, parent(s) and the student when appropriate. Teachers document interventions they have implemented and present ongoing concerns. During the CIT meeting, the team reviews the information presented, develops an action plan, and identifies timelines for monitoring student progress. The action plan is available through One Note to allow for ease of access to responsible staff. When a student is not making progress toward targeted goals, a referral to special education is promptly made.

The school psychologist, as well as a behavioral health clinician who works in the school-based health clinic (SBHC), provide school-based counseling services. Services are offered for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plans, as well as any general education student who requires this service as an intervention strategy or ongoing support. These professionals also meet with each student involved in in-school suspension to help ensure there is not a recurrence of the issue that resulted in the suspension.

Assistance is available for students who are in danger of not earning credit in required graduation courses. A two-tiered focused study hall program, offered each block, is available for students who are failing an English course or who have failing grades in two or more core subjects. Freshmen identified as at-risk by their eighth grade team may be recommended for support when starting at MHS. Students are assisted in taking responsibility and ownership for their academic progress. Students are required to turn in their work to their teachers and to track academic progress each week. Focused study teachers meet with the student weekly to review their progress toward meeting the designated class expectations. Credit recovery options are available during the summer, through traditional summer coursework as well as online through Edgenuity. Students must be pre-approved to take the online course option to ensure they will be able to handle the level of independence this work requires. Parents must also agree with this option. Financial aid is available for those students unable to pay the summer course fees. Additionally, there is a late bus available to allow students to remain after school for extra help.

Alternative education options are available for those students not meeting success in the traditional high school setting. The Palmer Building campus, a short drive from MHS, offers a project-based learning program, which provides internships and real-world learning opportunities for students in small group settings. It is available to students who would benefit from this approach, and there is a referral process in place to consider students who need this level of support. This program allows students to remain in-district while working toward graduation requirements and meeting the district's 21st century learning expectations.

The STAR assessments in reading and math are given three times a year to students in grades 9, 10, and 11 who are not involved in AP or ECE courses. This data is used to identify students who may benefit from additional focused instruction. A reading instructor is available to provide direct instruction in decoding and reading comprehension. Teachers additionally use this information to develop learning goals for themselves or their students. Additionally, math lab support is provided for students who need additional support to meet the learning standards in math courses such as Everyday Algebra and Algebra 1. This allows students to have math instruction every day, rather than every other day.

The Endicott survey indicates 66.9 percent of parents and 88.9 percent of staff believe the school is meeting the needs of all students. Teachers indicate communication with school counseling staff and support services is

ongoing, collaborative and effective.

Since Montville High School has targeted timely, coordinated, and direct intervention strategies, students are supported in the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

The school counseling department meets with students and families frequently throughout the year to cater to the academic and social needs of each grade level. Parents of students in grade eight are invited by the school counseling department to an eighth grade orientation night each February. Just prior to the start of school in August, the principal invites freshmen and their families to freshman orientation, which includes an assembly outlining expectations for freshman year, a tour of the building, an opportunity to meet with many freshman teachers, and concludes with a barbecue. The counseling department hosts a freshmen counselor meeting at the start of the school year to familiarize students with their school counselor, to introduce them to the career resource room, to clarify the MHS attendance policy, to explain the student success plan and how it will assist them throughout high school, and to give details on the high school transcript and its purpose. The school also sends home information regarding a back to school night in November where parents have the opportunity to follow their children's class schedule, meet with each teacher, and learn about course requirements and teacher expectations. Parents of juniors and seniors are invited to attend a financial aid night that discusses post-secondary planning. Additionally, they are invited to small group junior class meetings to review the college application process, as well as individual senior meetings to review post-high school plans and to generate an appropriate timeline to meet proposed deadlines. Parents of students who are identified through AP Potential are invited to attend AP/ECE Night to learn about these opportunities for students.

The school utilizes various electronic methods to convey important information to families. The school's website provides a multitude of information including numerous publications, which include, but are not limited to, the MHS program of studies, various newsletters, such as the College and Career newsletter and the Chieftain, the MHS school newspaper, as well as copies of the student handbook. The counseling page of the MHS website, includes parent resources on scholarships and post-secondary planning. The website also provides links to many resources such as free and reduced price lunch applications, United Community and Family Services (UCFS) enrollment forms, HUSKY insurance, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Parents and students are able to access grades, homework assignments, attendance, and discipline reports through the electronic school management system (ASPEN).

The special education department provides parents and guardians of students receiving services copies of Procedural Safeguards for IDEA and the special education student's Bill of Rights. Information is also provided about services available through UCFS and the State of Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (BRS), which provides post-graduate support to eligible students. School counselors at MHS serve as 504 case managers for their students and maintain frequent contact with the parents and guardians of their students.

Personal contact via phone calls and email take place between teachers and families regarding concerns and available services. According to the Endicott survey, 82.5 percent of parents agree that the school provides information about available student support services (i.e., guidance, library/media, health, and special education) to all families.

Since the school consistently and effectively provides information in a variety of ways to families, especially those most in need, about available support services, students are supported in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Support services staff at Montville High School frequently use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

MHS counselors, school psychologist, school nurse, media specialist, and members of the special education department use Aspen as a resource to access a multitude of information such as grading, attendance, discipline, IEPs, 504 plans, and health alerts. Students with an IEP or 504 plan have a specific icon next to their name in Aspen that, when clicked, will bring up an electronic version of the student's IEP or 504 plan. Students with significant health issues have a medical alert icon, and the staff receives proper training through the nurse's office to address these health concerns. Every staff member has a district-owned laptop and uses it as a tool to communicate with colleagues, parents, and students through email. With the use of Office 365, individual, school, and district calendars are available for staff members to schedule and send out internal invitations for PPTs, 504 meetings, and CITS, which helps to keep all staff members informed and involved. IEP and 504 Direct are electronic resources that are utilized by special education teachers and counselors to document information shared and generated at PPT and 504 meetings. These resources generate and house forms, reports, letters, and invitations which are all vital to the PPT and 504 processes.

The library/media specialist uses technology on a regular basis to deliver instruction and resources to staff and students. She keeps an updated library/media center webpage using open source software that provides access and instruction for all digital resources, including productivity software and online databases, so students have access to materials even outside of library hours. The website also contains links to online tools such as Noodletools, Turnitin, and online research databases. The library media specialist utilizes a SMARTBoard to deliver instruction in the classroom as well as 34 computers for class or independent student use. The online library catalog, Follett Destiny, allows students to request and suggest books for purchase.

The school's special needs classroom utilizes a variety of technologies on a daily basis to enhance student learning. In addition to using the SMARTBoard, all the students use iPads with a variety of learning functions that support early language learning. Non-verbal students use two specific language enhancing devices: Pro Lo Que and Accent 1000's Speech to Text. For students taking part in the Occupations Program, Connect-Ability, an online resource provided by the Department of Rehabilitation Services, is used within the classroom to prepare students to be successful in pre-vocational and vocational settings. There is an identified need from the paraprofessionals for additional desktop computers in classrooms for students to engage in project-based learning within the special needs' classroom setting.

The frequent use of technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services, facilitates student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

School counseling services have an appropriate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a well-articulated developmental guidance curriculum; meet with students regularly to provide academic, career, and college counseling; engage regularly with all students individually or in group meetings; deliver adequate collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and appropriately 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 counseling staff implements a comprehensive developmental guidance curriculum that is updated yearly using input from staff and students. Academic, career, and social-emotional development are equally addressed. Student success plans are developed for every student at the start of grade nine. Guaranteed experiences are identified at each grade level. Smart goals are developed in the academic and social realms. Progress toward meeting academic graduation requirements and standards is tracked yearly. The curriculum is delivered in the classroom, through the school counseling program, and through the advisory program. Essential questions for each lesson are identified. Students engage in regular self-reflection on progress toward their goals at multiple points in the curriculum. Students are given multiple opportunities to refine their goals and transition plans. Grade nine focuses on making a positive transition to high school while each successive grade focuses on developing, revising, and implementing a personalized post-secondary plan. Students are encouraged to stretch themselves, whether it is through consideration of AP level courses, investigating careers, or examining their own personal habits and attitudes.

The school counseling staff meets regularly with all students. Although the Endicott survey indicates only 24.5 percent of students agree with the statement, "I meet with my school counselor regularly," the counseling staff indicates this is likely due to the fact they meet with students not only individually but often in small groups, in health and civics courses, and in advisory. The survey also indicates that 78 percent of students report they are comfortable in accessing their counselor. School counselors have many opportunities to meet with students and their families. Parents are invited to the yearly student success plan meetings. They are also invited to evening presentations on SATs, financial aid, and post-secondary planning in general. Students may also attend these evening presentations. An orientation meeting is held for incoming eighth grade parents and students during the winter before beginning at MHS.

School counseling staff engages in outreach activities to community social services and mental health professionals. Family outreach is also done by the school resource officer and through the nursing office. An area resource directory was updated in 2015 and is available for parents. Partnerships with area community businesses have been developed that provide juniors and seniors opportunities to explore challenges such as dating and finance. There is a youth action committee that works in conjunction with Montville Youth Services to help students navigate the many challenges of a fast-paced, technology-focused world. The school psychologist provides counseling support for all identified special education and Section 504 students and attends the parents' meetings as scheduled. There currently is no social worker at the high school. As a result, school counselors, as well as the mental health professional in the school-based health center, assume responsibility for social services.

Counseling staff uses ongoing relevant data to improve services and ensure all students are able to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations. Every student has a Naviance account where activities are completed and data is maintained. Freshman students receive a thorough introduction to Naviance and complete a feedback survey. In reviewing this data, counselors determined this was a dry activity and redesigned this introduction in a game format that they believe will be more engaging, while still providing the required information. Every senior is required to have an exit interview with their counselor as part of their graduation requirements. Seniors complete a survey of approximately twenty questions that allow counselors to gather feedback regarding the accessibility of the counselor, issues of concern that came up, and other relevant feedback. Counselors receive this feedback data individually as well as a team, and work on any areas of

concern during department and/or PLC time. Examples of feedback from parents include activities such as an exit ticket both students and parents completed at the end of the junior small group assemblies. Any areas of concern are then individually and quickly addressed by each counselor. This feedback data is maintained and becomes the starting point for the senior student-parent meeting. During department and PLC time, counselors review the self-assessments completed by students from the guidance developmental curriculum activities in order to update the curriculum on at least a yearly basis. In addition, counselors use observational and anecdotal information from students, teachers, and families to improve their day to day practices. An example of a new initiative this year is the "Good News" postcard which is mailed home to celebrate specific student successes; another example is the delivery of the 'birthday balloon' as part of the school's ongoing efforts to maintain a positive learning environment. Data from the SAT, STAR, curriculum-based assessments, and teacher observations and recommendations are used to guide students in the development of their success plans and their four-year plan of studies.

Due to the implementation of a comprehensive developmental guidance curriculum, regularly scheduled and ongoing meetings with students individually and in groups, outreach to social and mental health community agencies, and the use of ongoing relevant data to improve services, school counseling services are able to ensure all students have the support necessary to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 5

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

The high school health services office is staffed by a full-time registered nurse (RN) and a part-time health aide. The district maintains a floating nurse who is an RN and serves as a substitute should the high school nurse not be available. This insures that the health services office is staffed at all times with an RN. The full-time nurse is a member of the school's collaborative intervention team and meets twice per month to work with other staff members in the creation of action plans to address at-risk students. She is also a member of the school crisis team, which develops protocols for handling immediate physical and mental health needs of students. The nurse also attends 504 and IEP meetings when medical input is needed. The part-time health aide supports the full-time nurse with completing paperwork and assisting with administrative day-to-day activities, such as maintaining student health records and tracking of immunizations and physical dates for compliance with state mandates and athletic eligibility.

In addition, a school-based health center (SBHC), operated by the United Community Family Services and independent of the school, is located within the school building. It supplements the care a student receives at their pediatrician's office and is staffed with an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) and a medical assistant. Students receive direct care that includes mandatory school and sports physicals, immunizations, sick care, advanced first aid, medication, lab work, referrals for outside medical care, counseling related to sexual health, and collaboration with the student's primary care provider. The school nurse is able to make referrals for immediate treatment, if necessary. Families are notified about the SBHC in a number of ways, such as a school-wide mailing from the nurse during the summer, at the back to school night presentation in the fall, on the school website, a phone call from the school nurse, by the school athletic director for athletes, or by student request. Enrollment forms are available via the school website, at the SBHC, in the school's main office, or from the school nurse. Any student with a signed consent form can be seen at the SBHC, and a student without a signed consent form can be seen with verbal confirmation from a parent or guardian. The SBHC is staffed Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. by an APRN who works under the supervision of a licensed physician. Students enrolled in the SBHC also have access to a licensed mental health clinician who is available Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The school health services staff conduct ongoing student health assessments. Students visit the health office on an as needed basis where health issues are assessed and triaged. Preventative care is performed by the school nurse and includes state-mandated screenings, collaboration with the community health clinic to offer dental care in school, and administration of flu vaccines to staff and to students who have a completed influenza immunization permission referral form. The health module in Aspen is used to log health visits, track immunizations and physicals, and flag significant health issues for staff. The nurse also maintains a monthly health report to collect data on the number of student screenings each month. A field trip permission form alerts teachers and the school nurse of any health-related needs of students who are attending field trips. The nurse and health aide also work in collaboration with the athletic director to track physical dates for eligibility, utilizing the parent permission and emergency medical form, as well as a permission to continue sport/physical update form. In addition, she inspects the AEDs in the building to ensure that they are functioning appropriately and maintains a log of these inspections. The health services staff provides families with information on student health concerns and available health interventions.

As a member of the school crisis team, the nurse provides staff training on EpiPen administration, treatment of anaphylaxis, and instruction on how to handle a health-related emergency at school. The nurse maintains a record of mandatory staff training on health-related issues. She also prepares and provides medical care plans

that detail how to handle various medical emergencies and provides the faculty with appropriate information on the health needs of students through alerts in Aspen, emails, phone calls, or in-person conversations. According to the Endicott survey results, 91.7 percent of staff agree that the school has sufficient certified/licensed health services personnel, and 79.2 percent of staff agree that health services personnel provide preventive health and direct intervention services.

The nurse works in conjunction with the food services director on food related issues such as allergies, diabetic needs, and students who appear hungry. Currently, 35.4 percent of students qualify for free and reduced meals. The nurse also manages an in-school clothing closet that provides clean and gently used clothes to students in need.

The school health services staff use some assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. In addition to staff feedback collected by the Endicott survey, the report indicates that 81.8 percent of parents agree that the school's health services program has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. In addition, 79.7 percent of parents agree that the health services personnel provide preventive health and direct intervention services.

Because the health services at Montville High school 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 informal assessment data, including some feedback from the school community, to improve services, student medical needs are consistently met which allows each student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Library/media services are successfully integrated into curriculum and instructional practices; 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; and 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.

The library/media specialist works closely with teachers to support the curriculum through collaboration, instruction, collection development, and providing suggestions for appropriate technologies and resources to support 21st century learning skills. She has access to the MHS curriculum through OneNote allowing her to select resources that are in line with classroom learning and to suggest collaborative opportunities to faculty. She supports teachers with classroom instruction in the library and delivers direct instruction to classes on information literacy skills, including developing annotated bibliographies, avoiding plagiarism, developing search strategies, and accessing databases and eBooks. In addition to librarian-supported web quests for many units, the freshman English curriculum specifies collaborative lessons with the library-media specialist on evaluating the reliability of sources. A freshman orientation provides students with an introduction to the library, as well as strategies for managing passwords for school accounts. In the Endicott survey, 83.3 percent of staff report that the library/information services personnel are actively engaged in the development and implementation of the school's curriculum, and 91.7 percent of staff report that library information services personnel provide a wide range of print and non-print materials, including technologies and other information services that fully support the curriculum.

According to data from the Annual Library Report for the 2017-2018 school year, the library was frequently used by scheduled classes, with a range of 115 times in September to 43 times in January. Data within this same report highlights that the library is utilized most frequently by the science department (35 percent), with English teachers (21 percent) and social studies teachers (20 percent) also taking a majority of their classes to the library. The library assistants ensure the library runs smoothly by supervising students in the library and providing an after-school program. This allows the library/media specialist to dedicate her time to meeting the curriculum needs of the faculty and students.

Technology skills and standards are integrated with research skills whenever possible. Instruction is given on using online resources, such as Noodletools, Turnitin, or one of the many programs within Office 365. As part of the library/media specialist's student learning goal, she is implementing Google Classroom into her instruction and introducing it to faculty as an instructional tool. The library media specialist utilizes a SMARTBoard and 34 library computers during lessons. She expressed concern that 34 computers is not an adequate number to support the needs of whole class and independent use of the computers simultaneously.

The library/media center is open, airy and inviting, with work tables, reading areas and computers. It is open weekdays during the school year from 7:20 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Monday-Thursday and until 3:00 p.m. on Fridays. As a result of adequate staffing, the library is able to remain open for extended hours allowing students to access support, technology, and collaborative opportunities. At one time, the library was also open two nights per week to provide additional access to resources. However, budget cuts resulted in the elimination of this service. Students frequently use library resources beyond the school day. Data from the Annual Library Report for the 2017-2018 school year indicated that approximately 1,600 students visited the library after school.

The library catalog is available online through the MHS website and provides an inventory of all of the library's available materials, including 20,000 print, audio, and eBooks; digital, DVD and VHS videos; and audiovisual equipment including video and digital still cameras, graphing calculators, and laptop computers. Students are able to make suggestions to the library staff for additions to the library resources. Books are purchased through

the Junior Library Guild as well as through personal selection based on reviews in the School Library Journal. In addition, the library assistants run an inter-library loan program with local public libraries, which expands the resources available to staff and students. The library assistants also assist with consistent weeding of library materials in order to keep the collection current and relevant to the curriculum and individual student interests. The library staff uses statistics provided by the Title Wise Collection Analysis Report to assess age and accuracy of the collection. Students provide feedback about the library program informally throughout the year and are formally surveyed at least once per year. According to the Endicott survey, 73.1 percent of students report that the library has the resources they need; 78.9 percent report that the library provides them with a wide range of materials, technology, and other information services; and 70.3 percent report that the library staff is willing to help them find the information they need or want.

The library staff frequently surveys faculty informally in order to streamline library use and improve instruction. Statistics about library and material usage prioritize purchase of print materials and online support applications and databases. For example, as a result of budget cuts, statistics on database and feedback from faculty were utilized to determine which databases should continue to be funded. The library/media specialist also compiles yearly annual reports on various aspects of the library, such as library use by individuals and classes, as well as circulation by patron type and by material type.

Because the library/media services are successfully integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices and because the library has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff, the staff is able to actively engage 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 faculty is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school; be responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning; and conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves that school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the American Disabilities Act (ADA), and English language learners, have an appropriate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who regularly collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to provide effective inclusive learning opportunities for all students, and perform ongoing assessments using relevant data, including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure all students are able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Support services staff continuously collaborates with all stakeholders in order to ensure students are able to achieve the school's stated learning expectations. The special education program leader and school psychologist are members of the collaborative intervention team and provide guidance to the team on when a timely referral to special education should be made. In addition, special education teachers are available to support teachers in developing intervention strategies for use in their classes prior to the CIT referral. Professional development has been provided for both general and special education teams in effective co-teaching practices; several teams have already attended and plans are in place for additional teams to be trained. Every effort is made to keep these co-teaching teams together from year to year in order to maximize the effectiveness of the teams.

Special education teachers are involved in co-teaching opportunities to provide support for identified students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations in inclusive settings. Co-teaching is available in many of the core academic classes, focusing on providing support for grades 9 through 11. Many of the co-taught classes are level 3 courses, which provide a level of pacing and practice that allow students to achieve mastery in critical skills. These level 3 courses include a high number of special education and Section 504 students, limiting the ability of the planning and placement team to designate these classes as time with non-disabled peers. The special education department does provide co-teaching opportunities in the level 2 courses and is considering ways to expand those offerings. Typical peers are involved in several of the self-contained courses, such as the teaching and learning and adaptive physical education courses. This provides students with more significant needs with an opportunity to develop friendships with their non-disabled peers, and provides the peers an opportunity to develop their own leadership skills. Inclusive extracurricular opportunities include a unified basketball team and bowling outings.

There is an appropriate continuum of services available to meet the needs of all identified students: consultative services, co-taught courses, learning lab, self-contained courses focusing on English and mathematics as well as life skills instruction, and an in-district alternative program. The Pathways program is a small, intensive program located on the Palmer campus for special education students who require embedded, therapeutic practices to benefit from their educational opportunities. This program allows students to remain in-district and experience success in moving toward the district's 21st century learning expectations. Students may take electives at the high school and participate in the extracurricular activities of the school. Field trips for the life skills course, which allow students to generalize skills in typical settings, have been reduced due to budget constraints. Section 504 students are no longer able to access the learning lab course. School counselors continue to serve as case managers for Section 504 students and monitor their progress regularly. Special education teachers serve as case managers for their students.

There is an appropriate number of staff to meet the needs of all identified students including students with IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and ELL students. Caseloads for special education teachers are manageable at a range of five to fifteen students per teacher. School counselors have a caseload of approximately 190 students, with the director of school counseling having a reduced number of approximately 75 students. The number of paraprofessional staff is appropriate to assist teachers and students in meeting IEP goals and objectives. The vast majority of paraprofessionals are employed on a part-time basis as the block schedule lends itself to this model. While the paraprofessional staff does receive mandated training in areas such as de-escalation strategies, they do not have dedicated time for in-district training, as they do not work on professional development release days. An ELL non-certified instructor provides direct instruction for this population. The ELL

instructor sees students for small group instruction, meets with teachers and school counselors, helps plan student courses, and is a resource for students and families.

In addition to regularly scheduled triennial evaluations, special education teachers use STAR assessment results to develop specific IEP objectives for individual students. Students participate in PSAT/SAT testing as appropriate, and this provides additional data points to track student progress. The special education department uses relevant data to improve their services. Progress toward attainment of IEP goals and objectives is tracked and completed quarterly, using assessment methods such as direct teacher observation, pre- and post-baseline data, and curriculum-based assessments. Under the direction of the program leader, special education teachers review this data in department meetings each month to make necessary adjustments to curricular, instructional, and/or assessment practices. The special education department reviews cohort data as well as individual data to ensure all students are receiving appropriate services. The Montville Transition Academy is a new program implemented this year to provide services for the 18 to 21-year-old population who continue to require an IEP. Both vocational and independent living skills are addressed. Students are able to practice skills in natural settings while receiving appropriate levels of support. Providing this transition program in-district allows students to be integrated into their local community while allowing the district maximum oversight and parent involvement.

Due to the efforts of the support services, all students, including special education, Section 504, and ELL learners, have an appropriate level of challenging opportunities to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations in the least restrictive environment.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The implementation of focused study halls to support students in achieving the 21st century learning expectations and graduation requirements

Commendation

The streamlining of the pre-referral process for students considered at-risk

Commendation

The variety of ways in which information is communicated to parents about available support services

Commendation

The effective use of available technology to deliver services to students

Commendation

The implementation of a comprehensive developmental guidance curriculum

Commendation

The wide range of physical and mental health services offered to students on a regular basis

Commendation

The availability of the school-based health center to meet specific student health needs within the school building

Commendation

The dedication of the library media/specialist and support staff to provide access to the facility for staff and students before, during, and after school

Commendation

The wide variety of resources available to students and staff in the library/media center to support the curriculum, independent learning, and research

Commendation

The continuum of services and inclusive opportunities available to meet the needs of all identified special education students

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure sufficient technology technology in special education classrooms to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to move additional co-teaching opportunities from level 3 to level 2 courses

Recommendation

Ensure that Section 504 students have access to the support services necessary to achieve the school's learning expectations

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body provide adequate funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies; technology support is in place but has been somewhat limited by budget cuts.

Montville High School offers a wide range of school programs and services that are dependably funded. The school offers all students, both general and special education, a variety of classes to meet their needs. Montville High School offers numerous Advanced Placement classes, including Environmental Science, Government and Politics, Calculus, Chemistry, Computer Science, English Language, English Literature, Psychology, Spanish, United States History, and Physics. The school also offers University of Connecticut Early College Experience (ECE) classes, including The American Experience (interdisciplinary history and English, grade 11), American Studies, English Literature, Human Development and Family Studies, Maritime Studies, Spanish, Statistics, and Biology. The school offers Public Speaking (grades 11 and 12), an Eastern Connecticut State University dual enrollment course, as well as College and Career Pathways, a program through Three Rivers Community College. Also in partnership with Three Rivers, the school offers Algebra II, Teaching the Young Child, Computer Aided Drafting, Design II, and Graphic Design II. The school provides English language learner classes as well as a comprehensive special education program. Full-inclusion special education opportunities are provided via a collaborative teaching model for most core subjects. A Transition Academy provides special education students between the ages of 18 and 21 with the opportunity to learn and experience vocational and workplace skills. The Palmer Building houses an alternative setting that includes a project-based learning program for students whose learning needs are not being met in the regular school setting and the Pathways trauma-based special education program. Edgenuity, a computer program, provides credit recovery and online courses. The school-based health center, run by United Community Family Services, has a nurse practitioner available daily to assess and meet the medical needs of students as well as a social worker who is available daily to address mental health issues with students who are enrolled in the program.

Nevertheless, the economic recession has had a prolonged and negative impact upon the funding for the district. The original FY 2018 budget represented a decrease -0.10 percent, but the state withholding of Education Cost Sharing funds in November 2018 saw a reduction of \$1,000,000, or -2.75 percent. In order to mitigate this, the board of education agreed to an adjusted spending plan to move some expenditures to the following school year. Flat and reduced budgets have affected Montville High School students in a number of ways. Staffing losses over the last few years have included the equivalent of 5 teaching positions, an assistant principal, and part-time secretary. The high school has also lost programs and other positions that include a certified nurse assistant program, an SAT prep class, a floating sub, two paraprofessionals, the director of the English language learners program, the computer lab monitor, some athletic programs, supplies, and additional reductions in course offerings. Several classes that were offered yearly are now offered on an every-other-year basis. Four teachers are now shared with the middle school and social studies lost a full teacher to the Palmer Building. The English department has lost several courses and has experienced increased class sizes as a result of budget cuts. Overall, the past two years have seen a steady budget of \$100,000 in the instructional materials and supplies budget line. This budget covers paper, classroom supplies, and teacher supplies.

Funding for professional development is viewed as adequate by most teachers. Funding for professional development was decreased by 50 percent two years ago by the board of education. For both fiscal and philosophical reasons, the district has shifted its professional development focus to showcase more in-house expertise rather than bringing in one-time presenters at great cost. Professional development also takes place during PLC and department meetings, with most half-day professional development sessions taking place within departments. Some conference attendance is still being funded, although attendance at conferences will not be approved unless the conference topic will have a direct impact on the instructional program. Teachers report that they are reluctant to ask to attend conferences because of the tough budget cuts in staffing. LEARN, the district's regional education service center, provides two regional professional development opportunities for non-core

subject area teachers. Funding for curriculum development has been consistent over several years, with any teacher who desires to work on curriculum over the summer being supported. Field trips have experienced a 50 percent cut district-wide.

The district provides computers for both staff and students, with a replacement plan based on a five-year usable lifespan. The district leases teacher computers; therefore, the computers are replaced at contract end. All teachers received new laptops for the 2018-2019 school year. The district also purchases computers for student use and has fallen behind on replacement. The average age of student desktop computers is nine years, and the average age of laptops for student use is five to six years. This includes computers for the following: computer labs, library/media center, art, laptop carts used across disciplines, freshman learning center, and technology education labs. The wireless network was recently upgraded to handle all students having 1:1 access to the network. However, the 1:1 device initiative is currently in a pilot phase with a small number of classes participating. The library/media specialist has not had funds in the multimedia budget for two years, although departments can purchase multimedia resources through their own budgets. The new science curriculum requires greater technology access than can be provided through the science department's outdated laptop cart.

Because Montville High School makes a concerted effort to maximize resources despite the difficult budget climate of the state, students are provided with a wealth of opportunities for meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations in diverse settings.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

These programs are effectively coordinated and supervised by the Montville Public Schools' director of facilities in ongoing communication and collaboration with the principal. The director of facilities meets on a weekly basis with administrators and also meets as needed with the superintendent to review the scheduled maintenance and repair orders to be completed. All requests for needed repairs are submitted electronically by teachers and staff. These are then prioritized by the principal and the maintenance director. The director of facilities creates the schedules for the high school's custodial staff and is responsible for their training and supervision. All staff receive safety training on an annual basis. The maintenance budget has been adequate to ensure necessary salaries, supplies, and equipment needed to maintain the facility, although some staffing cuts have occurred in the past two years. In 2009, the district completed a major renovation, modernizing the HVAC and infrastructure and installing new boilers and a new ventilation system. This was a code compliance renovation that brought the building fully up to code. The renovation did not include air conditioning except in key areas such as the offices, library, and computer labs. However, a demand-controlled ventilation system was installed that constantly monitors building air quality and adjusts the flow of fresh air as needed. By running the ventilation system at night during periods of excessively hot weather, the district is able to cool down the building so that temperatures are acceptable during the day.

The district has made an intensive effort to reduce energy consumption and to implement environmentally sound practices. In the 2017-2018 school year, Lithonia lights (LED daylight harvesting lights) were installed in all of the classrooms and the hallways, saving the district over \$20,000 per year in electricity costs. Cleaning equipment and outside maintenance machinery are also cleaned and maintained on a regular schedule. All water fountains have been replaced and eyewash stations updated subsequent to the remediation of excessive manganese in the water supply. The hot water is shut off at nights and on weekends; this has saved 50 percent of the energy costs associated with hot water. Although the high school is 1.5 times the size of the middle school, it uses 20 percent less energy. Green cleaning materials are used throughout the district. Likewise, the fourteen acres of athletic fields are maintained without the use of chemicals. Fields are over-seeded once per year and fertilized twice per year. Currently, beneficial nematodes are being used to control grubs. The director of facilities is justifiably proud of the numerous efforts made toward energy savings and environmental sustainability.

The director of facilities has direct input into the development of the budget for facility improvement and repair. All major facilities are on a formal repair/replacement plan. This includes equipment such as the elevator and boilers and efficiency projects. An audit was performed by the School Facilities Management System of the Department of Education in May 2017. This provided a building assessment that developed a priority list of maintenance work for every building in the district. The capital plan provides some monies to update/replace equipment on an as-needed basis. All major equipment is inventoried and catalogued by the MHS director of facilities. Individual teachers are responsible for informing him of any classroom or departmental concerns. These reports are submitted electronically and concerns are addressed in a timely manner. Classroom and cafeteria furniture are also replaced on an annual basis as part of the maintenance plan.

The individual departments (i.e., science, business, life management, technology education, art, physical education) are responsible for cataloging their own equipment. Each department prioritizes the purchase and repair of equipment based on needs served by that equipment. There is no set replacement/repair plan in place for department-specific equipment, which is evaluated on an as-needed basis. Replacement/repair requests for department-specific equipment are submitted to the building principal for review and approval.

The custodial staff at MHS includes 5.5 full-time personnel. One daytime custodian works during the school day from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., mainly in the cafeteria area, including the kitchen. The remaining 4.5 custodians

clean the building after school hours. A recent cut of a full-time custodian has resulted in each custodian being responsible for cleaning 36,000 square feet daily. The district maintenance staff consists of four full-time employees as well as the director of facilities. These individuals are responsible for maintenance in all five district schools. A full-time maintenance staff member was also recently cut. The Endicott survey indicates that 58.3 percent of students and 86.1 percent of staff feel the school is well cleaned and maintained, and 44.1 percent of students feel the furniture and equipment in my classroom are in good condition.

Because the school maintains a clean, safe, energy-efficient, and environmentally safe environment, students are supported in their learning and their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs and capital improvements but does not have a long-range technology.

Montville Public Schools' documented long range plan for facility needs and capital improvements includes the following items for improvement or replacement over the next five years: school buses, a wheelchair bus, vans, updates to the courtyard, technology education downdraft work tables, technology education utility fan, technology education flooring, tennis courts, baseball infield, and resurfacing the track. However, the capital improvement plan is often not funded when budget cuts are needed. Enrollment projections indicate a decline in student enrollment over the last several years. The district currently does not have a long range technology plan. When the state stopped requiring five-year technology plans to be filed, the district made the decision that budget constraints on the purchase of technology made a five-year projection difficult.

While Montville Public Schools engage in long-range planning to address future needs, when a long-range technology plan is in place, parents and students will be assured that students' learning needs will be met in the future, including sufficient up-to-date technology.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- central office personnel
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

The budget process for Montville High School begins informally at the beginning of the school year and involves, in varying degrees, all teaching staff. The principal polls department heads regarding any significant needs expected for the next school year. Those needs would include funding for textbooks, staffing increases and infrastructure for newly proposed programs, and capital needs for equipment to maintain existing programs. During the fall, department heads involve teaching staff in developing budget requests (i.e., books, equipment valued in excess of \$250, new and continuing technology licenses) for any existing or newly approved program needs. Additionally, department heads, with input of department members, submit general requests for non-bid consumable supplies and equipment maintenance. In the spring, each department then submits an itemized, quote-based request for specific supplies and maintenance. While only some departments such as art, technology education, science, and family/consumer science, have significant consumable and equipment supply needs, each staff member has the opportunity to submit requests for classroom supplies through the state bid order. After determining the validity of requests, the principal then presents the budgetary needs to the superintendent of schools. The superintendent then develops a district budget which is discussed, amended and voted on by the board of education (BOE). He/she then presents the BOE budget to the public and town council. At that point, staff is encouraged to attend public meetings at which the budget is discussed and debated. Once the town government sets the school budget amount, the principal then solicits department head and staff input in the event that cuts to the requested budget are needed.

Because all stakeholders are involved in the budget process, there is a clear understanding of how the school's educational priorities are established and carried out.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

Although the building was originally constructed in 1961, several renovations over the years have kept the facility current with best practices in education. The school is committed to providing a comprehensive high school program. The most recent renovation, in 2009, resulted in a new family and consumer science wing with state-of-the-art culinary facilities and a daycare lab; a complete renovation of the science rooms with new fume hoods and ADA-compliant sinks; the moving and updating of the library/media center; the provision of state-of-the-art technology education facilities. Technology education and family and consumer science facilities have also benefited from Perkins grant funds for new equipment. Other recent upgrades have included wireless hubs in every room to support the planned shift to a 1:1 device program; new lighting throughout the building; a new demand-controlled ventilation system; the replacement of water fountains and eyewash stations. The computer-aided drafting lab was recently replaced. The auditorium was renovated after a fire in 2001. The school is surrounded by fourteen acres of athletic fields that are well maintained. While most teachers and students reported that the site and plant were more than adequate to meet the needs of the educational programs and services, there are two notable exceptions. The gymnasium is small, with limited off-court space and seating, and does not reflect the popularity and number of sports offerings. Likewise, the music classrooms are very much too small to support the size of this highly popular and successful program.

Because the site and plant support the delivery of most of the school's high quality programs and services, students are better able to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- parents

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school adequately 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.

In July 2017, the Hartford Steam Boiler Company visited with the school maintenance director. A list of protocols for building maintenance was developed including procedures for cleaning major equipment such as the gel fuel boiler as well as yearly inspection. The EPA tested the air quality in June 2017. Documentation regarding asbestos abatement, fire marshal reports, water tests, radon air quality, oil tank testing, boiler inspection and all other facilities regulations are maintained in files in the bulk storage area. Health records and up-to-date physical information for students are maintained in the nurse's office. Blood borne pathogens compliance is done online yearly by all faculty and is available in the central office. All science rooms are locked and chemicals are secured when rooms are vacant or unattended by staff, in accordance with local safety requirements. A second locked door leads to a chemical storeroom that contains all non-household chemicals, including proper cabinets and ventilation for chemical storage.

Because the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations, students are assured that their learning environment safely supports their education.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

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.

MHS has several parent information nights. Back-to-school night is usually held within the first month of school, and parent-teacher conferences are held after the first quarter closes in November. Attendance rates for back-to-school night and parent-teacher conferences have declined over the years. The principal reports that approximately 250-350 people attended back-to-school night in 2017. In 2014-2015, 87 parents attended parent-teacher conferences, but in 2016-2017, only 59 parents scheduled meetings. Conferences are scheduled both in the afternoon and the evening to reach as many families as possible.

Other events that MHS sponsors in order to reach families include freshman orientation (approximately 90 percent participation), eighth grade curriculum night (approximately 40 percent participation), athletic seasonal information meetings (all parents of athletes are required to attend), and AP/ECE night (no attendance data is available). Additionally, parents are invited to attend Undergraduate Awards Night, Senior Awards Night, the National Honor Society Induction, and the World Language Honor Society Induction. Approximately 97 percent of families of undergraduates attend these events and as many as 99 percent of families of seniors. Parents are included on the school governance/parent advisory board.

Aspen is the current student information management system used by the district. This program allows parents and students direct access to grades throughout the year. Progress reports are made available through the Aspen portal every quarter. Report cards are sent home four times per year. Teachers can send grade reports on assignments and standards anytime they choose to or upon request of a parent or student. Teachers reach out to parents through email, phone or mail on a regular basis. Aspen provides parents, teachers, and students with contact information, attendance records, transcripts, and schedules. Aspen provides parent emails and phone numbers to teachers. The vast majority of students and parents receive grade reports, the monthly newsletter, and other information electronically, but reports cards and newsletters are mailed home as well so that 100 percent of the parent population has this information.

Events at MHS are advertised in a variety of ways such as the district website, the MHS marquee sign, The Chieftain student newspaper, and social media including Facebook and Twitter. District-wide information goes out to 100 percent of families through the Global Connect System. School counselors set up parent/student meetings and collaborative intervention team meetings (CITs) to address pressing and/or urgent student issues. Special education teachers extend invitations to parents and guardians for PPTs. Parents are informed of extra help offered to struggling students through focused study halls. Students were informed of these study halls during their class advisory meetings. Parents are also informed that teachers will set up after-school help sessions as needed and that reading intervention is available through the reading intervention class. The counseling office extends invitations to families of juniors and seniors for college and financial planning. The director of counseling reported that in 2017, approximately 27 families attended financial aid night. Counseling also reports that approximately 70 percent of senior parents attend senior planning meetings, while fewer parents attend the junior planning meetings.

Counselors reach out to less connected families via emails and phone calls. The website includes substantial information. The Global Connect System communicates with all families about upcoming events. Student government solicits parent participation in significant events. The special education department sends home journals daily, and parents send responses back. Teachers work with counselors to reach out to less involved parents, including phone conferences for parents who are reluctant to leave home.

The Endicott survey reveals that 59.5 percent of parents believe that the professional staff actively engage families as a partner in the education of their children. The Endicott survey also shows that 69.4 percent of faculty believe that they are active partners with families in their children's education.

Because of the many vehicles used by the school to communicate with families, most families are well-informed about the education of their children.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

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

The Endicott survey reveals that 74.7 percent of parents believe that the school has effective partnerships with parents, community, business, and higher education. Parent involvement is both extensive and diverse at MHS. Parents are invited to participate on the school governance council that meets the first Monday of the month and the parent advisory group (PAG) which organizes fundraisers through tag sales. Both of the committees' roles is to ensure that parents are involved in developing and monitoring programs that align with MHS core values and beliefs. The Montville Athletic Booster Organization (MABO) provides supplemental financial and other means of support to enhance the Montville High School athletic department. In the past five years, the boosters have provided over \$60,000 in athletic equipment, apparel, and other items for the high school sports teams. Some typical expenditures include the following: \$1,000 scholarship for male athlete, \$1,000 scholarship for female athlete; coaches' CHSCA dues; senior night flowers for graduating athletes; fees for awards banquets; MVP apparel and recognition for all sports; ECC championship medallions; away game snacks. Parents are also active in the drama program, serve as mentors for senior celebrations, coaches for athletic teams, hosts for job shadows and internships, interviewers for mock interviews, and chaperones for trips ranging from community service to speech and debate competitions. The music boosters provide extensive support for the music program.

Over the years MHS has worked to develop both formal and informal productive business, community and higher education partnerships that support student learning and continues to pursue new opportunities. Students have options to participate in programs such as job shadows, internships, early college programs, and career fairs. The internship program has been running under the guidance of one of the school department chairs for numerous years. Connections have been made with a variety of local businesses and community services, including Montville town police, State Farm Insurance, the town office, American Ambulance, and all three of the elementary schools in the district. This has moved students out into the community in a professional capacity and given them valuable career experience. Job shadowing is also encouraged for all students at MHS. Students exploring internship options are encouraged to first job shadow at the site. Students in the college and career readiness course participate in Whose Job Is It Anyway coordinated by community partnerships and Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce. Students in personal finance classes attend March Money Madness to participate in financial workshops coordinated with Chelsea Groton Bank. MHS offers an occupations class which provides authentic community job opportunities, including venues such as a local auto body repair shop, the district bus garage, the Social Service Department in the community food and clothing bank, a pet grooming facility, and a local physical therapy establishment. A local nursery provides vocational opportunities for several students.

The mission of Active Athletes is to motivate, recruit, and encourage student athletes to perform acts of community service within the student body and throughout the community at large. In 2016, Active Athletes participated in the Wounded Warrior Project, raising nearly \$3,000. In 2017, Active Athletes participated in a Back the Blue campaign raising \$1,240 for the Montville Police Department's K-9 unit. For the past three years, Active Athletes has also completed a Christmas caroling project. Athletes worked with the chorus teacher to practice Christmas carols in preparation for visiting various rehabilitation centers/nursing homes in the community and the Montville Senior Center where they put on a holiday concert for all.

Montville High School has partnerships with several higher education institutions, including the University of Connecticut, Eastern Connecticut State University, and Three Rivers Community College. In 2016, 178 students were enrolled in Early College Experience (ECE) courses and 134 students were enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Career and Technical Education (CTE) partnerships include three areas: business, family and consumer science, and technology education. CTE has yearly meetings with community members, businesses in each respective area, parents, and students to discuss needs and improvements. Other partnerships that support student learning include Adolescent Learning and Leadership Institute (ALLI);

Southeastern Regional Action Council (SERAC); and Safe Futures, New London. The Polar Express program gives teachers the opportunity to sponsor families who need support during the holidays.

The unified sports team participates in partnership with other area teams in a Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference regional bowling tournament, an Eastern Connecticut Conference basketball tournament, basketball scrimmages with surrounding schools, and the Unified Olympics at Woodstock Academy.

Because of the wealth of partnerships offered by parents, community, businesses, and higher education, students have numerous authentic opportunities to develop and practice their 21st century learning skills.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The wide variety of course offerings that continue to be funded despite significant overall reductions to the budget

Commendation

The intensive efforts made by the director of facilities to increase energy efficiency and maintain environmentally safe practices throughout the facility and grounds

Commendation

The demand-controlled ventilation system that constantly monitors and adjusts fresh air flow depending on where people are in the building

Commendation

The inclusive budget process that involves all stakeholders

Commendation

The provision of updated facilities and equipment to maintain the comprehensive nature of the high school programs

Commendation

The wide variety of communication vehicles used to engage parents as partners in their children's education

Commendation

The wide variety of partnerships with parents, community, businesses, and higher education institutions

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and fund a long-range plan to ensure sufficient up-to-date technology to support student acquisition of 21st century learning skills.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to address space limitations in the gymnasium and music classrooms

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

Chair(s)

Chair: Mrs. Mary Pierangeli - Dudley-Charlton Regional School District

Assistant Chair: Carol Luckenbach - Connecticut River Academy

Team Members

John Allen - Putnam High School

Cynthia Bryan - Wethersfield High School

Jennifer Carvalho - Bolton High School

Lindsay Castonguay - Oxford High School

Brian Humpal - Masuk High School

Rob Kennedy - Amity Regional Senior High School

Jennifer Monaco - Seymour High School

Fred Redeaux - James Hillhouse High School

David Rollinson - Killingly High School

Patricia Roszko - Joel Barlow High School

Andrew Skarzynski - Torrington High School