



NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL

TO THINK - TO RESPECT - TO COMMUNICATE

*Jonathan D. Pizzi, Ph.D.
Principal*

March 19, 2015

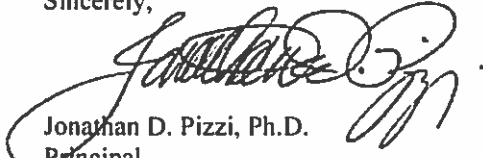
Janet D. Allison, Director
Commission on Public Secondary Schools
New England Association of Schools & Colleges
209 Burlington Road
Suite 201
Bedford, MA 01730-1433

Dear Ms. Allison:

Pursuant to our conversation on Wednesday, March 12, 2014, attached please find the Five Year Report for Needham High School. You will find that the Needham High School NEASC Follow-Up Committee has provided the CPSS with detailed information regarding the recommendations for improvement as outlined in the 2009 Accreditation Evaluation Report.

Thank you once again for your support and feedback throughout the decennial evaluation follow-up process. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Jonathan D. Pizzi, Ph.D.
Principal

enc.

cc: Daniel Gutekanst, Ed.D., Superintendent

REQUIRED STATISTICAL DATA SHEET

School: Needham High School **Principal:** Jonathan D. Pizzi
City, State: Needham, MA **School Telephone:** (781) 455-0800
E - MAIL Address: jonathan_pizzi@needham.k12.ma.us
FAX Number: (781) 449-5111
Dates of Evaluation: November 15-18, 2009

Grades: 9-12 **School Enrollment:** 1,438 at time of the evaluation
Grades: 9-12 **School Enrollment:** 1,619 at present time

Based upon the state's definition of a dropout, indicate the dropout rate for the most recently completed school year as well as for the preceding two years:

<u>0.5%</u>	2013
<u>0.1%</u>	2012
<u>0.3%</u>	2011

DISPOSITION OF ALL VISITING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

	Two-Year Report		Five-Year Report	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
COMPLETED	6	11%	17	32%
IN PROGRESS	35	66%	21	40%
PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE	9	17%	9	17%
REJECTED	0	0%	0	0%
NO ACTION	3	6%	6	11%
TOTAL*	53	100%	53	100%

**The totals should reflect the number of recommendations in the original decennial evaluation report. Both total numbers should be identical. Do not include highlighted recommendations.*

Electronic Signature of
Principal/Headmaster: Jonathan D. Pizzi

Electronic Signature of Co-Chairs
of Follow-Up Committee: Jonathan Bourn, Assistant Principal; Kathryn Clayton, English Teacher

Date Progress Report Submitted: April 15, 2015

FIVE-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT FOR NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL

1. Use school-wide rubrics in all departments to inform curricular decisions

Classification: NO ACTION

Response: Since the 2009 NEASC accreditation visit, the Committee for Public Secondary Schools changed its requirements from a mission statement to core values. During the same span of time, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has made significant changes in the operation of public schools including, but not limited, to the new educator evaluation system, adopting the Common Core Standards, and the need for District Determined Measures (DDMs) of student progress. While the need for core values in a school is clear, the pressing changes in policy and procedure from the state have been and are the paramount concern.

As such, a distinct majority of Needham High School's professional energy has been directed at better understanding and implementing these new requirements. Professional development for the 2013-2014 school year, for example, was dedicated to training staff on the new educator evaluation system. In conjunction with these efforts, department time has focused on building departmental rubrics and expectations in preparation for District Determined Measures. Additionally, Needham High School has used and will use a significant portion of its collaborative time to advance the study of cultural proficiency.

As we engage in these efforts and more, we are discovering again those core values that stand the test of time and legislation, while also uncovering those we need to adopt. As of this five-year review, Needham High School has not adopted a new core values statement pursuant to the expectations delineated in the 2011 standards. The follow-up committee will further address this work.

2. Ensure that that all teachers align instruction to the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations.

Classification: IN PROGRESS

Response: As the leadership and staff at Needham High School navigate the myriad changes detailed above, we are constantly reflecting on and inquiring whether these new regulations in fact change the job as we know it, or are a new iteration of commonly held best practices. As a result of these on-going efforts, we have had open dialogue about what we believe and how we instruct our students. Recently, the adoption of the Common Core Standards has helped us weave literacy instruction into all of the high school's curricular offerings.

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In partnership with Olin College and the Needham Education Foundation, Needham High School piloted an interdisciplinary course titled The Greater Boston Project. In this course, initially offered in 2013-2014, 50 seniors worked with a math, a history and an English teacher to study the history, culture and economics of Boston and its surrounding communities. The class emphasizes the inter-connectedness of these and other domains, as well as how historical events and culture impact the area, how population statistics impact politics, and how cultural or legal circumstances create and perpetuate the realities of modern Boston. Additionally, this course is a pilot for a one-to-one technology initiative, where each student and instructor has a dedicated iPad to collaborate inside and outside of class.

The technology & innovation committee has recently been working on visiting local schools and researching ways to potentially go 1-to-1 with technology and assessing the difference between types of technologies such as iPads, macs, and Chromebooks. The Technology & Innovation committee has been working on providing staff-taught tech-related workshops with professional development days/sessions to help staff members adapt new technology such as Google Platform, websites, using varied technology, and device applications in their teaching. Finally, efforts are underway to issue each teacher a laptop or technology device.

In science courses, simulation programs are used to demonstrate particulate behavior. The Graphical Analysis/Logger Pro program is used to look at patterns and analyze data sets, and to present the identified patterns.

The administrative structure of Needham High School supports shared expectations for best instructional and pedagogical strategies for all teachers. Every non-professional status teacher is evaluated by a department head or director and a building administrator multiple times throughout the academic year. The high school administrative body, called the cabinet, aligns expectations for teachers and meets regularly, every seven school days. Additionally, every member of the cabinet meets with district administration monthly. With these meetings, we align expectations for current staff and new hires.

Our collective efforts with advancing cultural proficiency have been geared towards, among other things, assisting our staff in better delivering instruction to all students, and in turn, helping our students become global citizens in a progressively diverse culture and workforce.

3. **Align course specific rubrics with school wide rubrics**

Classification: IN PROGRESS

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Response: As previously mentioned, departments have vigorously created and adapted departmental rubrics and common formative assessments in preparation for the implementation of District Determined Measures. To date, these efforts have not been aligned around school-wide rubrics for the aforementioned. Thus, course rubrics are well within the purview of commonly held expectations for delivering high-quality learning experiences for all students.

4. **Provide additional school-based administrative services to support enrollment increases**

Classification: IN PROGRESS

Response: Since the 2009 NEASC visit, Needham High School has added staff every school year to meet growing enrollment. Concordantly, Needham High School added a third assistant principal for 2013-2014 school year. The third assistant principal assists with the day-to-day operation of the school, educator supervision, and he also increases the possibility for developing more personal connections with students and families in a growing school.

Also, during the 2012-2013 school year, Needham High School added an office aide to manage of the school's attendance communications. This additional staff member helped to give parents a singular point of contact to report absences and freed up the two secretaries working in the grade level office to provide further administrative supports to students, families, and staff.

Future planning includes efforts to expand these secretaries from 10-month employees to 11-month employees, and restoring a secretary position to assist the departments with their day-to-day operations, as there is currently one secretary shared by four departments.

The guidance department added two full time school counselors to its ranks for the 2013-2014 school year. The additions reduced the overall student loads of the counselors, creating improved personalization with students as well as increased academic, therapeutic and career counseling support.

5. **Explore possible solutions for college course opportunities during the school day**

Classification: IN PROGRESS

Response: With Needham High School's rotating bell schedule, establishing partnerships with area colleges has been difficult. However, Needham High School students did enroll in a networking course at Olin College for dual enrollment credits during the 2013-2014 school year.

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Additionally, Needham has built closer connections with Olin College through the the Research Experiences for Teachers Program, as well as the Greater Boston Project. We hope to increase dual enrollment opportunities through these budding partnerships.

Another possible opportunity is MassBay Community College's Dual Enrollment Program for students needing additional transition support to either complete high school or enter post-secondary academics. One student has enrolled in the Dual Enrollment Program with MassBay, and we look forward to interviewing her about her experience as a possibility for other students.

6. **Develop a plan to address current and projected space needs and limitations of the facilities.**

Classification: IN PROGRESS

Response: Since 2009, several instructional spaces have been repurposed to create new classrooms. For instance, four Chromebook carts have been added to Needham High School, which have the dual benefits of allowing access to technology and freeing up computer labs that once featured desktop consoles. One of those classrooms has been repurposed to fit our Personal Learning Center classes, and the former space is now used for a new robotics class and STEM laboratory called the DaVinci Workshop. A curriculum room has been repurposed to become a fully scheduled classroom as well. One office suite has recently been converted into a classroom for the 2014-2015 school year and will be used primarily for health education classes. Other minor construction projects have created office space for added school counselors and the new assistant principal.

For the 2015-2016 school year, plans are being created to expand the square footage of the cafeteria in order to meet growing enrollment with minimal disruptions to the current schedule. Recently, additional furniture and free seating options (i.e. tables with stackable chairs) have been added to the cafeteria to accommodate crowding.

The 2009 renovations and additions to NHS (completed in 2009) allow the school to accommodate 1,450 students. Currently, NHS

7. **Establish and implement a process to use the school-wide rubrics at the school level and inform the community.**

Classification: NO ACTION

Response: As stated above, school-wide rubrics and core value expectations have not been specifically defined by Needham High School, given the recent changes from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. However, aggregate and individual

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student progress will be reported via the new District Determined Measures, and student growth will be woven into our progress reports to parents.

8. **Create a system of data management and assign responsibility for the results of assessments that utilize the school-wide rubrics.**

Classification: IN PROGRESS

Response: All of the above criteria, excepting the portion around school-wide rubrics, will be met or are in progress because they align with our obligations to assess students with District Determined Measures and to assess educators through evidence of student progress as part of the new teacher evaluation system. Student achievement data will be stored using the PowerSchool student data management software.

9. **Enable the Connections Program to collaborate with specific departments regarding curriculum.**

Classification: COMPLETED

Response: Since 2009, several positive changes have been made to the Connections Program. Most notably, the Connections Program is now completely independent of the Transitions Program, and students access the Connections Program only through the team meeting process. The Connections Program was also assigned a full-time special educator in 2010-2011. In 2012-2013, a full-time, dedicated teaching assistant was assigned to the program, and the program's hub moved to an office suite that suited the needs of the program. For the 2013-2014 school year, a full-time clinician was added to the program to provide in-school therapeutic supports and to communicate with providers outside of school. All of the students in the Connections Program work with one assistant principal. All of the Connections staff, plus the district director of guidance and the student support coordinator at the high school, meet weekly to address student needs and problem solve.

The result of the additional staffing and organization has allowed for greatly improved communication and articulation between the Connections Program and the academic disciplines. The special educator and the full-time TA are now able to make real-time, one-on-one connections with teachers and students to provide meaningful and timely support to the students in the program.

10. **Update the progress of the Mission and Expectations Committee's assessment of the alignment of the Mission, Expectations, and Core Values with the 2011 NEASC standards.**

Classification: IN PROGRESS

Response: Needham High School has created a NEASC Follow-Up Committee, which, among other tasks, is reviewing the school's current mission statement and core values and revising them to meet not only the 2011 standards for accreditation but also our changing needs and plans. The committee meets once a month during a newly created common planning time on Friday mornings.

11. **Assess the capacity of the Special Education department to respond to increased case-loads.**

Classification: IN PROGRESS

Response: While special education enrollments have increased with the overall school enrollments, the special education staff has been expanded to meet the staffing needs of the building. A 1.0 FTE special education position was added to the budget effective for the 2014-2015 school year. Additionally, increased communication and improved articulation between middle schools and Needham High School have helped us develop programs and allocate resources to most appropriately address the needs of the newly matriculated students. The Connections Program and the Insight Program both target specific cohorts of students, which not only allows the specialized programs to meet the needs of challenging students, but also allows the special education teachers to more adequately focus their attention on the students in their skills classes. While numerically adding one student to a skills class might not seem problematic, without the specialized supports, the special education liaisons might find themselves spending a disproportionate amount of time on that student's needs, perhaps at the expense of other students.

12. **Describe the work of the ILT (Interdisciplinary Learning Team) in forwarding interdisciplinary learning and instruction**

Classification: Completed

Response: The Interdisciplinary Learning Team (ILT) was established during the 2013-2014 school year. The ILT stemmed from the Interdisciplinary Learning Initiative, a collaborative initiative between the Needham Public Schools and the Needham Education Foundation. The ILT is aimed at launching an interdisciplinary academic model of learning at the high school that has a broad and lasting impact on student learning. The mission of the ILT is to seed, promote, nurture, and evaluate interdisciplinary learning opportunities at Needham High School. The ILT also serves as an advisory board for The Greater Boston Project (an 8-credit, double-block course taught by a history, an English, and a math teacher) and other interdisciplinary initiatives like Art in the Dark, an interdisciplinary art and world history unit; Kinetic Sculpture, an interdisciplinary sculpture and robotics unit; and The Da Vinci Workshop, an innovation lab where

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students have the space to practice 21st century learning skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, etc. in an independent learning environment where the teacher serves as mentor. This year, one of the main goals of the ILT is to bring the best practices of the current interdisciplinary courses and units to the greater faculty by offering a professional development workshop for teachers.

13. **Update progress in providing a common preparation period during the school day including the planned discussion of an extended school day as a vehicle to provide such opportunities**

Classification: Completed

Response: During the 2013-2014 school year, the superintendent, in collaboration and partnership with the community and the local education association, were able to extend the school day for the high school. By reducing the number of half days and by shifting the bell schedule on Friday, Needham High School currently has a common planning time (CPT) built into the contractual schedule. Every Friday morning from 7:30-8:30, teachers are able to work in groups to plan lessons, collaborate on the creation and implementation of District Determined Measures, or meet about individual students. Additionally, one meeting a month is held for standing committees such as the Technology and Innovation Committee, the Freshman Academy, the Sophomore Academy, Faculty Council, the Culture and Climate Committee, the Interdisciplinary Learning Team, and the NEASC Follow-up Committee.

14. **Provide evidence of continued progress in the uniform use of school-wide rubrics at the individual student level to communicate achievement**

Classification: No Progress

Response: As stated previously, most departmental work has been focused on the creation and implementation of the District Determined Measures, as well as the creation of common rubrics across courses to improve consistency between and among educators. As the work of the District Determined Measures becomes second nature, and as the NEASC Follow-Up Committee revises the mission, expectations, and core values, Needham High School will be able to fold the work together to create and employ school-wide rubrics at the student level.

15. **Provide evidence of increased minority student enrollment in Advanced Placement courses.**

Classification: In Progress

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Response: While a program or structure has not been created to increase minority enrollment in AP classes, there is a building-wide effort, from classroom teachers, school counselors, and administrators, to increase enrollment. Below is a table that shows the number and percent of students of color enrolled in Advanced Placement courses at Needham High School.

Race	2014		2013		2012	
	2014 Students	% of Total Enrolled	2013 Students	% of Total Enrolled	2012 Students	% of Total Enrolled
African Am	8	0.02	5	0.01	3	0.01
American Indian	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.00
Asian	46	0.10	38	0.10	20	0.06
Asian/Am Indian	1	0.00	1	0.00	5	0.01
Asian/Black	1	0.00	0	0	0	0.00
Hispanic	13	0.03	10	0.03	7	0.02
White	379	0.85	336	0.86	300	0.89
Grand Total	448	1.00	390	1.00	336	1.00
Non-White	69	0.15	54	0.14	36	0.11
White	379	0.85	336	0.86	300	0.89
Grand Total	448	1.00	390	1.00	336	1.00

FIVE YEAR PROGRESS REPORT FOR NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL
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1. Develop measurable indicators for civic and social learning expectations

Classification: In Progress

Since the 2011 progress report, Needham High School has focused its attention on new mandates and procedures from the state department of education. As of that progress report, the special education and world language departments had identified civic and social expectations for students in their courses. With NEASC adopting new regulations for Core Values, the professional community will re-visit the civic and social expectations expressed in the Core Values statement, and will continue the work with departments to identify opportunities for students to learn and practice those expectations.

2. Utilize the mission statement in all public discussion of policy

Classification: Completed

Needham High School faculty members consistently utilize the mission statement in public discussion of policy. The special education department refers to the mission statement at monthly Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) meetings with parents. The Fine Arts Department refers to the mission statement when presenting to the public regarding the high school FPA (Fine and Performing Arts) program. Additionally, they plan to add portions of the mission statement to their concert programs.

Although the World Language Department does not engage in public discussions of policy, department members focus on the mission statement during meetings with parents about travel abroad possibilities and expectations surrounding the travel experience.

The high school leadership team including the principal, assistant principals, and athletic director consistently refer to the mission statement during public discussions of policy. For example, during parent curriculum nights, student class meetings, and parent and student athletic informational meetings administrators reference the mission and core values of NHS relative to school and state policies. Additionally, the mission and core values are referenced during discussion of policy at School Council meetings.

3. Include specific academic expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices in all written curriculum

Classification: Completed

All Needham High School departments have their courses mapped on ATLAS and meet regularly as departments to align curriculum, share instructional strategies,

and discuss assessment practices.

4. **Coordinate curriculum within departments to ensure that curriculum content is consistent in the same course taught by different teachers**

Classification: Completed

In addition to having their curriculum, instructional strategies and assessments mapped on ATLAS, departments meet regularly to align, share, and discuss best practices. Monthly department meetings routinely center around common rubrics, with different members of the department working on discrete portions of the rubric as it pertains to their course or grade level. Less formally, teachers frequently use Friday morning Common Planning Time to meet in small groups to coordinate similar courses, or to articulate the integration of one sequential class to the next. Additionally, middle school teachers will be travelling in teams by department to visit the high school to observe the curriculum, instructional strategies and assessments being used to better inform the practices of the sending school within departments.

5. **Create common course-specific assessments**

Classification: Completed

In addition to the common course-specific assessments referenced in the two-year report, every Needham High School course uses course-specific assessments as part of the evaluation process and in creating district determined measures to assess student growth.

6. **Provide formal opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction**

Classification: Completed

With the creation and active contributions of the Interdisciplinary Learning Team (ILT), Needham High School has made formal interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students. A course named “The Greater Boston Project”, instructed by a math, social studies and English teacher, has been created for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. An interdisciplinary unit on Art history has been created and implemented for a World History and Latin class. A new robotics course pulls in many domains of STEAM instruction into the fold. The leadership class “Be the Change” combines aspects of psychology, sociology, civics, and problem solving into the learning opportunities for students.

7. **Seek and utilize student feedback in all courses**

Classification: Completed

Originally stemming from the Social Emotional Learning committee initiative, teachers frequently surveyed students regarding the expectations that they set in their class at the midpoint and end of the course. This process elicited feedback from the students about how or if the members of the class were living up to stated expectations of the class, and provided an opportunity to amend those expectations. Additionally, the school recently conducted a building wide survey on cultural proficiency, and members of the administrative Cabinet reviewed those responses and will share them with the school community as well. With the new evaluation system, teachers are required to gather student feedback as part of the evaluation process.

- 8. Establish and implement a process to use the school-wide rubrics at the individual student level and inform students and families**

Classification: No Action

While course specific and teacher specific rubrics are common in Needham High School, we have not fully implemented school-wide rubrics for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, the work of revisiting the Core Values statement drives the expectations that would be measured by school wide rubrics, and the work on reviewing our mission is underway. Second, the requirements set forth by the state put a premium on the implementation of course specific rubrics as per their requirements.

- 9. Build formal planning time into the existing schedule for intra-and inter-departmental collaboration**

Classification: Completed

During the 2013-2014 school year, the Superintendent spearheaded an initiative to increase the length of the school day for all of the Needham Public Schools. The result of that successful effort was to create an hour of Common Planning Time (CPT) every Friday morning where teachers can collaborate and connect within their departments and with professionals from other departments as well.

- 10. Formalize a guidance curriculum to be used with all students**

Classification: Completed

Specified curriculum have been developed and are being implemented at all grade levels, 9-12. The Grade 9 guidance curriculum focuses on orientation to the high school experience and to Needham High School in particular. This includes exploring the concepts of study skills, good decision-making, creating a four-year high school plan, all with an eye toward creating a rewarding and satisfying high school experience. In the Grade 10 curriculum, students are introduced to the idea of career exploration. This curriculum is delivered through classroom lessons and

through guidance seminars. Each student is equipped with an online account in the web-based “Career Cruising” application. The guidance curriculum for Grade 11 aids students in creating a foundation for post-secondary planning. For most Needham High students, this means commencement of the college selection process, while significant support is also given to students choosing other post-secondary options. These include exploring “gap year” possibilities, volunteerism, military service, technical and trade schools, etc. The Grade 12 curriculum is an extension of this process, in which students work closely with their guidance counselors to finalize post-secondary plans and to prepare for post secondary life.

- 11. Increase library/media support personnel to meet the needs of students and teachers**

Classification: Completed

Through the reorganization of staffing and responsibilities, NHS has been able to provide level service to students and staff accessing library resources.

Mission and Learning Expectations for Student Learning:

- 12. Communicate the mission and student learning expectations to all students actively and consistently**

Classification: In Progress

The mission statement is posted in nearly every classroom and in the main lobby of Needham High School. It is also printed in the student handbook and appears on the high school website. NHS teachers have developed and consistently use department-wide rubrics to communicate learning expectations to students. Teachers center day-to-day teaching activities and curriculum development around student learning expectations, and teachers communicate the mission and student learning expectations to all students actively and consistently. Additionally, the Guidance Department is beginning work to determine ways to integrate the mission and student learning expectations into their seminar series and the post secondary process for juniors and seniors.

- 13. Create data management and responsibility for the rubrics assessment results**

Classification: Completed

With the implementation of the District Determined Measures, and student performance data being attached to teacher evaluation, data management and assessment results will be kept by primary and secondary evaluators, and will also become part of a teacher and school’s overall data collection.

- 14. Implement a thoughtful and comprehensive process to regularly review and revise the mission and student learning expectations**

Classification: In progress

With the creation of the NEASC Follow-Up committee, the current mission statement will be revised to reflect the 2011 NEASC standards for accreditation. This body will also be responsible for sharing the Core Values statements to different stakeholders, which will necessarily foster some adaptation and change. Given that the next visit will be in 2019, there are four years for the Follow-Up Committee to review the adapted Core Values.

Curriculum:

- 15. Ensure that each teacher is aware of the academic expectations for which the department has assumed responsibility**

Classification: In Progress

Most NHS teachers are aware of the academic expectations for which the department has assumed responsibility. For example, the Social Studies Department is fully aware of its responsibility for the Research Skill expectation and every course in the department included a research skills project or paper. During Fine and Performing Arts department meetings and during curriculum work, teachers discuss their responsibility to the school-wide expectations, especially those involving creativity and directing one's own learning. The science department has codified the academic expectations for student learning. Each teacher is aware of their responsibilities in ensuring the appropriate implementation of these academic expectations within their classroom. The expectations are consistently reinforced during department meetings. This year the World Languages Department will work on assessing each student according to the school-wide communication rubric.

- 16. Maintain current staffing levels to support the curriculum offerings**

Classification: Completed

Although student enrollment increases each academic year, staffing levels have increased in conjunction with and in anticipation of a larger student population. Needham High School has been fortunate enough to expand course offerings, including the Greater Boston Project, with generous donations from the Needham Education Foundation. The funding for that course has now been assumed by the full school budget.

- 17. Provide sufficient time devoted to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum**

Classification: Completed

Needham High School has an active and thorough curriculum review process. That cycle typically dictates which departments focus on their curriculum review work. That having been said, there is appropriate funding in the district to provide teachers with valuable summer curriculum writing and revision opportunities from almost every department in the school. Additionally, within the contractual work month, teachers have department time and common planning time to review, revise, and implement curriculum.

18. Provide additional opportunities for professional development in content areas

Classification: Completed

NHS is focused on providing opportunities for professional development in the content areas. For example, department chairs provide staff members with articles regarding instructional practice and encourage discussions around highlighted principles at department meetings. Furthermore, department chairs encourage teachers to attend conferences in their respective content areas. Additionally, the Social Studies department chair worked with the district's Professional Development Committee to establish a contents specific professional development offering with other districts. Fine and Performing Arts department staff members have and continue to participate in Teachers as Scholars and state, regional and national music or art related conferences, including MMEA conference, AP workshops, etc.

Instruction:

19. Require that all instruction be based on the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning

Classification: Planned for the Future

While the main precepts of "to think, to respect, to communicate" do pervade Needham High School's philosophical approach and day to day operations, teachers do not deliberately anchor their instruction to the mission statement. With the shift toward Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations, this provides an ideal opportunity for the NEASC Follow-Up committee to not only identify and articulate Core Values, but also allow instructors to consciously and deliberately tie their instructional practices to those Core Values.

20. Structure school-wide time dedicated to the discussion of instructional strategies

Classification: Completed

During the 2012-2013 school year, early release and delayed opening time was dedicated to a variety of staff led workshops. Many of these workshops focused

around best practices as well as provided exposure for cross-curricular opportunities. Some workshops focused on the teaching of mastery objectives. As stated previously, almost all of the professional development time in 2013-2014 was dedicated to the implantation of the teacher evaluation system.

In the 2014-2015 school year, the Common Planning Time exists as a regular opportunity for staff to discuss and share best practices. Sometimes these conversations are focused topically for similar courses, other times these dialogues center around best instructional strategies for one student or group of students.

21. Increase departmental and school-wide professional development activities focused on instructional strategies

Classification: In Progress

The Needham High School Leadership team has taken measures to increase departmental and school-wide professional development activities focused on instructional strategies. Specifically, the Social Studies Department devotes departmental professional development time to developing and adjusting instructional strategies for Source Analysis Skills. In the same fashion, two English Department teachers provided a demonstration of their summer work on a grammar sequence, and others across the disciplines have expressed interest in more of this. Overall, the efforts to update the Atlas Curriculum Database in every department has specifically moved the school toward reaching this goal. Additionally, over the past three summers, there has been specific work focused on course curricula updates. Every department consistently strives to spend most of their department time collaborating about instructional strategies; however, with both content specific and SEL instructional demands time remains and obstacle.

Assessment of Student Learning:

22. Establish and implement a process to use the school-wide rubrics at the individual student level and inform students and families

Classification: In Progress

NHS has begun the work of establishing protocols and practices for making effective use of the school-wide rubrics that we have developed at the individual student level. Students in Skills Center classes use iterations of the rubrics when working on their "First Fives" to start every class; these students self-assess their achievement of the school-wide academic expectations, and the data from those self-assessments is reported to parents at annual IEP meetings. This work is challenging and remains ongoing as teachers are continually realigning curricula and the associated rubrics with Common Core standards and the data gleaned from newly developed District Determined Measures.

23. **Establish and implement a process to use the school-wide rubrics at the school level and inform the community**

Classification: No Action

As stated previously, the school has focused much of its work with rubrics on the requirements of district determined measures. Additionally, with the Follow-Up committee beginning the work of revision the Core Values, this will likely impact the criteria and metrics used in school wide rubrics.

24. **Align course-specific rubrics with school-wide rubrics**

Classification: No Action

As stated previously, when the work of implanting and revising rubrics for district determined measures and student achievement are common practice, and after the Follow-Up committee has created a new Core Values statement, Needham High School will begin the work of aligning course-specific rubrics to school-wide rubrics.

25. **Develop and implement a plan for utilizing school and student data on civic and social expectations**

Classification: No Action

Since the 2011 progress report, Needham High School has had to shift almost all of its professional time and resources to the teacher evaluation system and district determined measures. In 2012-2013 however, efforts were underway to create metrics for the criteria set forth by the Social Emotional Learning committee. Additionally, Needham High School continues its work with staff and students on Cultural Proficiency. There are certainly tenets of Cultural Proficiency that will be reflected in the school's civic and social expectations.

26. **Ensure that school-wide expectations are communicated to students along with assessment protocols and rubrics**

Classification: In Progress

While there has been some department progress on assessment protocols and rubrics, there is no formal process for communicating school-wide expectations to students in a consistent manner. As the NEASC follow-up committee develops the new Core Values statement, it will also work on sharing school wide expectations,

assessment protocols, and rubrics to students and to the community.

27. **Provide more opportunities for formal discussions about student work and assessments**

Classification: Completed

The biggest challenge in providing opportunities for formal discussion of student work and assessments is time. Nonetheless, NHS made discussions of student work and assessments a priority in 2010-2011. Every academic department devoted many hours to the development and implementation of common formative assessments. Teachers who teach the same courses have worked collaboratively during department-based professional development time to create assessments that be used in different classes, regardless of the teacher, to gauge student achievement of course-specific learning goals. In addition, the departments have worked to update ATLAS to reflect assessment practices in the courses we teach; this work is ongoing.

Building on this success, NHS now uses Department, Faculty, and Common Planning Time to review student work, and to better align expectations assessed by common rubrics.

28. **Provide more professional development opportunities in the area of standards-based assessments**

Classification: In progress

Over 30 hours of department-based professional development time has been allotted to standards based assessments and common formative assessments in the 2011-2012 school year. A beginning-of-the-year professional development opportunity for standards-based assessments was presented by the principal to the staff regarding standards-based assessments as the drive train to curriculum design and instructional strategies. That philosophical model will be applied to departmental work as they explore and use standards based assessments in their classes.

29. **Develop and implement a method of communicating student and school progress toward meeting school-wide academic expectations**

Classification: In Progress

Coupled with our efforts to revise the mission statement to a Core Value statement and to use school wide rubrics, NHS will look into reporting student progress on school wide academic expectations using Powerschool student management software. Additionally, the SEL (Social Emotional Learning) committee seeks to provide students with feedback on their work regarding civic and social expectations.

SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

- 30. Explore possible solutions for part-time teaching positions**

Classification: No Action

While the rotating schedule may limit the opportunity for part-time staff to collaborate, it also provides teachers and students flexibility and variety with their learning experiences, specifically the alternating long block and short block periods. With a fixed schedule, Needham High School would not be able to allow for long block periods that currently allow in-depth research and academics. Additionally, part time staff are scheduled to have teaching and duty periods close together, so that in some cases, part time staff have entire days off. This makes the part time positions more attractive to potential candidates.

- 31. Provide professional development for non-teaching staff members to enable them to provide additional support for student learning**

Classification: In Progress

The Common Planning Time initiative has allowed teaching assistants and paraprofessionals to have the same weekly one hour opportunity to meet and discuss strategies and best practices, as well as an opportunity to receive instruction and assistance in their work with Needham High students.

School Resources for Learning:

- 32. Formalize procedures to better advise parents on course recommendations**

Classification: Completed

Over the past two years, NHS has focused on improving school-to-home communication on many levels. For example, a Course Level Descriptions Committee was established to create new level descriptions with the goal of clarifying course expectations for students and parents. This committee created a visual representation of the three academic levels that now appears at the beginning of the Program of Studies. Additionally, teachers continue to meet with students and many parents about course selection. Furthermore, all NHS departments provide information about course content and student learner expectations for each level on the Needham High School website.

During the 2014-2015 school year, there will be an Elective Fair held after school for students to visit with teachers and students currently enrolled in the many electives offered in the school. That same evening, parents will be invited into an interdisciplinary learning night where those course, as well as new electives, will be

shared with parents.

33. Review and revise the Re-evaluation of Materials policy

Classification: Planned for the Future

The NHS Media Center is very much the “Hub” of the school and offers various supports for 21st century learning. The library provides a wide-range of materials, technology, and other information resources in a variety of formats. Although, the librarian consistently seeks opportunities to acquire new sources for materials, the school has to formalize a review process for the Re-evaluation of Materials Policy. Currently, the librarian is a long-term substitute, and once a full time librarian has been hired, we will renew the work on the Re-evaluation of Materials Policy.

Community Resources for Learning:

34. Develop a plan to address the cafeteria size to comfortably fit the necessary number of students

Classification: In Progress

During the 2011-2012 school year, the NHS administration took one significant step to address this issue by allowing both juniors and seniors open campus privileges. This significantly reduced the number of students using the cafeteria in each of the three lunches. This will remain an area of focus for the next few years as enrollment numbers continue to increase. Additional furniture has been donated by alumni to add increased seating in the courtyard as well. Work is currently underway with constituents in the town to build an addition to the cafeteria to accommodate the growing student population.

35. Establish a timeline to make additional improvements in the auditorium

Classification: No Action

Needham High School is well aware of the need for additional improvements in the auditorium; however, the town is currently involved in a number of override or debt exclusion projects. One elementary school recently completed construction, and feasibility studies are underway for two more elementary schools in the district.

36. Maintain current level of financial support for high school programming, personnel, facilities, equipment, services, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning

Classification: Completed

Needham High School has been able to increase its professional staff annually since the 2009 NEASC visit. The school is in the planning stages of a one to one student

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technology program that is scheduled to take place in FY 2017. The math department was able to acquire \$70,000 to order and implement new textbooks for the CME curriculum. Wireless Internet access was made available for the entire building, and the bandwidth has been increased four fold for the 2014-2015 school year. Needham high school is in the midst of a comprehensive technology replacement cycle, for all student and staff machines. By the end of FY 2016, every staff member will have a MacBook laptop. About 90% of current staff have school laptops to use in planning, grading, and instruction.

To accommodate increased student enrollment, the Town of Needham has allocated over \$200,000 in FY 2015 to increase the number of classroom spaces. In addition, the town has allocated funds to assess the feasibility of cafeteria and classroom expansion at the high school.

37. Continue to assess financial needs based on student data

Classification: In Progress

Needham High School consistently assesses financial needs based on student data including student populations, course selections, and graduation requirements. Enrollment projects are closely monitored to recommend staffing increases throughout the school. The evaluation of MCAS, SAT, AP and course specific testing data informs departments about academic achievement and the necessity of shifting allocations for specific programs or academic courses.

Additionally, the Special Education Department determines financial needs by a close analysis of in-school and out-of-district programs. Furthermore, the department has hired staff to expand its in-school programming to keep students in their district programming. The Guidance Department has consistently worked with food service to offer to students who qualify for free and reduced lunch and other low income students services such as mentoring program, scholarships for College Board testing, access to information about financial aid for post secondary programs, and local scholarships.

III. Substantive Changes

Needham High School's enrollment since the Two Year Progress report has increased to 1,619 students. While staffing has increased to meet the expanded enrollment, the repurposing of physical space to create classrooms has been maximized.

As a result, the increased enrollment coupled with the 100% room utilization has impacted course offerings and schedule flexibility. While the district is pursuing options to expand classroom and cafeteria space, there are no plans to expand student performance, activity and athletic space. The expanded enrollment has resulted in greater demand for these school offerings, placing greater strain on these spaces.

IV. Core Values and Beliefs about Learning

In development

V. Examples of Initiatives

Needham High School continues its dedication to the work of cultural proficiency evidenced by the creation of a Culture and Climate Committee. This committee consists of teachers, students and administrators from the high school. The group recently conducted a whole school "I am Needham" documentary and reflection, and plans for additional activities and projects to demonstrate and celebrate the diversity in the school and community.

Needham High School has recently partnered with The Education Collaborative Connections Academy (TECCA) to provide on-line learning to assist students with interrupted instruction. To date, two students who were in therapeutic day treatments were able to engage in an appropriately rigorous curriculum, with the goal of transitioning them back to school with an academic foothold in their classes. We have also used online classes to address the needs of other students with interrupted instruction.

Needham High School will also begin to explore and train the staff with the ALICE school safety protocols created by Response Options. Plans are to train a small number of staff this spring in a train the trainer model. We would anticipate a whole staff roll out in the fall of 2015.

VI. Strengths/Achievements

The English department instituted a whole school read for their summer reading assignments. Each year, every student will read one book in common, with the goal that every teacher in every content area weaves the book into their classroom.

This past summer, the school read “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian” by Sherman Alexie.

Needham continues to make progress with interdisciplinary learning, evidenced by the creation and staffing of the DaVinci Workshop. The workshop environment is available for students to visit on their own or with classes to create and experiment with STEM initiatives. Additionally, the Interdisciplinary Learning Team has created an Art History unit that will be co-taught by a Latin and World History teacher. One portion of the lesson was completed recently with a trip to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

VII. Restructuring or other Reform Initiatives

VIII. Follow-Up Program at Needham High School

The NEASC Follow-Up committee has been formed for the 2014-2015 school year. This committee will start by examining the Mission, Expectations, and Core Value statements for the school to align them with the 2011 standards. This committee will become the Steering Committee in advance of our next NEASC accreditation visit in 2019. Currently, the Follow-Up committee meets on the first Friday of every month to complete this work.

The committee is a blend of veteran and newer staff, and each department has a representative on the committee. The members of the committee are;

MEMBER	DEPARTMENT/POSITION
Jonathan Bourn	Assistant Principal*
Katy Clayton	English
Jess Davis	Special Education
Maurice Louis	World Language
Sam Martyn	PE & Wellness
Karen Vona McIntyre	Library, Media
Rob Murphy	Mathematics
Jen Nehill	History & Social Sciences
Jonathan Pizzi	Principal
Snow Powers	Fine & Performing Arts
Annapurna Vakati	Science
Mary Jane Walker	Guidance

* Indicates Committee Co-Chair



Needham High School

MISSION & EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

APPROVED MAY 27, 2007

MISSION STATEMENT

To Think; To Respect; To Communicate

Needham High School draws from the strengths of the community to create teaching and learning partnerships between faculty, parents, and students, both on an individual level and in groups, in order to provide a high quality education.

The school offers students a variety of opportunities to excel and a diversity of perspectives from which to learn in an environment that is both nurturing and challenging.

The balanced student is able to participate actively in school and society, be creative, and self-advocate while determining his or her unique path to fulfillment.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

A Student at Needham High School will:

- Write effectively
- Research effectively
- Read critically
- Solve complex problems
- Think critically
- Communicate effectively
- Demonstrate effective organizational skills
- Monitor and direct his or her learning using various feedback sources

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

Students at Needham High School will:

- Demonstrate integrity, character, and responsibility for one's actions
- Make healthy and responsible decisions
- Understand and respect diversity

CIVIC EXPECTATIONS

Students at Needham High School will:

- Contribute positively to local, national and/or global communities