

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND  
COLLEGES**

**COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

***REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE***

**Foxborough High School**

**Foxborough, Massachusetts**

March 25 - 28, 2012

Bryan D. Luizzi, Ed. D., CHAIR

Keith Pfeifer, Ed. D., ASSISTANT CHAIR

Jeffrey Theodoss, PRINCIPAL



# STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Statement on Limitations</b>	
Introduction.....	7
Overview of Findings .....	10
Quality of the Self-Study	
Discussion of Significant Findings regarding Teaching and Learning and the Support of Teaching and Learning	
School and Community Summary.....	15
Teaching and Learning Standards	
Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations .....	18
Curriculum.....	24
Instruction .....	32
Assessment of and for Student Learning .....	41
Support of Teaching and Learning Standards	
School Culture and Leadership .....	50
School Resources for Learning.....	59
Community Resources for Learning .....	68
Follow-Up Responsibilities .....	84

## APPENDICES

- A. Roster of Visiting Committee Members
- B. Commission Policy on Substantive Change



## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

### Teaching and Learning Standards

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

### Support Teaching and Learning Standards

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

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

## **Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study**

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Foxborough High School, a committee of eight members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included 18 students and six parents/community members.

The self-study of Foxborough High School extended over a period of 17 school months from September 2010 to January 2012. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, parents, and community members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Commission, Foxborough High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

## **The Process Used by the Visiting Committee**

A visiting committee of 16 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Foxborough High School. The Committee members spent four days in Foxborough High School, Foxborough, Massachusetts, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, central office administrators, and vocational institutions, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Foxborough High School.



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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 48 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 34+ hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

## **Overview of Findings**

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

### **Teaching and Learning at Foxborough High School**

Foxborough High School's core values and beliefs about learning effectively communicate the school's beliefs about student learning, and serve as a guide for the development of policies, decision-making, and reflective practice. The core values, beliefs, and learning expectations were developed using a thoughtful and deliberate process with input from a variety of constituents and representative of the greater community. Teachers and some students and parents are familiar with the core values and beliefs about learning statement. The 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations flow naturally from the previous mission statement and student learning expectations developed prior to 2005. The core values statement includes mention of the partnerships between Foxborough High and the community; the strength of these partnerships, and their direct influence on the educational experience at Foxborough High, can be seen throughout the school each day. The comprehensive curriculum, diverse extra-curricular opportunities for students, and focus on empowering students to become thoughtful, responsible, and productive citizens is evidenced throughout the building.

The curriculum at Foxborough High School emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge focused on inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking much of the time. These opportunities are enhanced by authentic learning opportunities available on and off campus to students through various programs. Additionally, there is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum. The district has demonstrated this to be an important component of teaching and learning at FHS by explicitly including it in the teacher evaluation guidelines. Building leaders, including department leaders, take an active role in the delivery of curriculum through informal walk-through visits. Additionally, building administrators review professional goals with teachers to ensure alignment with building and district initiatives. Due to this focus, common

assessments focused on student mastery of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are in frequent use throughout the school. Foxborough High School's total academic program offers students a wide array of courses as well as opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities, athletics, community-based learning, and project-based activities. Of particular note is the FHS music program, which is understandably a source of pride throughout the school community.

Instruction at Foxborough High School is generally focused on depth over breadth and tailored to meet individual student needs. Teachers differentiate instruction, provide inquiry-based experiences for students, and capture the "teachable-moments" in the classroom. These efforts help to create an atmosphere in many classes that is centered on student engagement with the curriculum. Teachers at Foxborough High School are dedicated to their students and to their craft. They are frequently seen after school and during preparation periods meeting with students in need of extra help. Additionally, there is a strong commitment to professional development and growth throughout the staff, and the district supports many of these efforts. Staff regularly demonstrates an enthusiasm for their school, a dedication to their students, and a pride in their profession. This enthusiastic and thankful spirit permeates the building and contributes to the positive school climate and culture at FHS.

Teachers and administrators frequently and informally examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. Many teachers use formative assessments often in their classrooms, resulting in more student-centered approaches to instructional practices. Common assessments are given each quarter to students as well, providing a baseline for consideration, planning, and growth. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning; of particular note, the "Strive for 85" senior exemption initiative is reflective of the school's core values, empowering students to strive for excellence. Teachers often give students the opportunity to correct mistakes and revise work, which results in deeper understanding and authentic growth for the students.

## **Support of Teaching and Learning at Foxborough High School**

The climate at Foxborough High School is positive, supportive, enthusiastic, and appreciative. The principal works tirelessly to nurture an environment where students and staff are engaged and feel valued. He is frequently seen throughout the building talking with students, staff, and the community, and in these conversations he is consistently upbeat and positive. He provides students with a voice through his open communication and professional yet personal style. He is a visible and approachable leader, is respected and well-regarded by students and staff members alike, and is praised by the wider Foxborough community. He is assisted in his administrative efforts by two assistant principals who are also highly visible and closely connected to the school community; as a result, the building leaders function as a successful team. Faculty members strive to meet the needs of every student and dedicate a great deal of time both to classroom and after school activities. Efforts are consistently made to help students connect with the school, nurturing the overall positive and trusting environment. Students appreciate these efforts and take advantage of the offerings and activities provided. Student work and awards are displayed throughout the school, and students express satisfaction with the faculty and support staff.

Foxborough High School has numerous programs and services to meet student needs. Through their Building Based Support Teams, faculty is engaged in the process of identifying and helping struggling students early and effectively. The communication from the support services to families effectively engages parents as partners in the educational process. The school counseling staff works throughout the school community to support students with admirable success. Through the group guidance program, counselors meet regularly with students and provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling, with a different emphasis at each grade level. The library media center is well-equipped with current resources and technology, and these services are occasionally integrated into the curriculum in support of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Across the school, there are timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students in support of each student's success. These coordinated efforts help Foxborough High School in its mission to empower students to strive for excellence.

The Foxborough community has a commendable history of providing dependable funding for the high school's academic program. The budgeting

process is comprehensive and inclusive, and high school staff members have opportunities for input at various points in the process. The recently renovated building, and the impressive facilities that resulted from this work, are used frequently and well by the FHS faculty, staff, and students. Although the auditorium was not a part of the upgrade, other facilities, including the library, gyms, locker-rooms, and music rooms are well-designed spaces that reflect the pride of the FHS community. The building is clean, well-maintained, and the staff has adequate equipment to maintain these high expectations. Teachers reported a sense of pride about the condition of their building, and the work of the custodians and plant manager enhances the positive environment at the school.

Many parents are involved in the life of the school and support the faculty and staff. Community members appreciate the school's efforts to keep them informed and involved, and they give input into the practices and services of the school through meeting with the principal, e-mail and phone calls. Local businesses support the school and help encourage student attendance and involvement in co-curricular activities. The strong community support and significant relationships with the local community, businesses, and area post-secondary institutions directly benefit the students and staff of Foxborough High School.



## School and Community Summary

Foxborough High School is a 9-12 grade school located in Foxborough, Massachusetts, in Norfolk County. It serves the Town of Foxborough and a small percentage of students in the METCO Program from the Boston area. The population of the town is 17,087 (2009 Town Report).

The Town of Foxborough is located at the intersections of Routes 95/495. It is in eastern Massachusetts, bordered by Walpole on the north, Norfolk on the northwest, Sharon on the northeast, Wrentham and Plainville on the west, and Mansfield on the south/southwest. The town is 24 miles south of Boston and 20 miles north of Providence, RI. It is about 21 square miles in area and has 100 miles of state and local roads.

According to the US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey, the median household income is \$90,601. This is 22.9% above the state average. The per capita income is \$40,828 and 2.9% of the residents are categorized as below poverty level. According to the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the town's unemployment rate is 6.6% as of May 2011.

The town's population is 95.9% white, 0.9% black, 2.2% Asian/Pacific Island, 0.4% Hispanic, and 0.0% American Indian with 1.0% of the population listing itself as multi-race, non-Hispanic. The town's age distribution is 5.8% under 5, 15.2% aged 5-14, 37.7% aged 15-44, 28.4% aged 45-64, and 12.9% aged 65 and over. There have been no significant changes in the composition of the student body of Foxborough High School. Three percent of the student population is black, 2% is Asian, 2% Hispanic, 92% is white, and less than 1% is American Indian. There are no significant changes expected.

The following percentages represent the highest level of education attained by parents/guardians: 94.7% have a high school diploma or higher and 42.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher. According to the 2009-2010 Foxborough High School Annual Report Card, 1.06% of the student population does not speak English as their first language.

There are seven schools in the district. Five are public, one is a charter school, and one is private. Of the public schools, there are three elementary and one middle school sending students to Foxborough High School. The current student population for grades K-8 is 2002. Foxborough High School's current

enrollment is 839 students, as of February 2011. Total enrollment for all schools is 2,855. At this time (2011-2012), there are 27 METCO students from Boston who attend Foxborough High School.

The student body of Foxborough High School is increasing about 1-2% per year. According the Massachusetts DESE Report, the school's graduation rate is 97.4%, while the dropout rate for the last 2 years is 1.0%. Presently, there are 413 boys and 426 girls. The 2009 per pupil expenditure for the district was \$11,480, as compared to the state average of \$13,006. Eleven percent of the high school's student body is eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. 70.02% of local resources were spent on public education, and 68.8% of local taxation was spent on schools.

At Foxborough High School, the student attendance rate for the past 2 years is 95.1%. The teacher attendance rate for the 2009-2010 school year was 96%. Eighty percent of students attended 4-year colleges, 13% attended two-year colleges, and 7% either entered the work force or the military.

Nearby educational opportunities available to students and the community include Bridgewater State College, Bristol Community College, New England Institute of Technology, and Universal Technologies Institute. With Boston and Providence within 24 miles of Foxborough, there are numerous other educational institutions and opportunities.

Various awards are presented to students. These include, but are not limited to, academic, awards in each department, athletic awards, music and art awards, as well as specialty department awards. Students can receive Underclassmen Awards, Underclassmen Certificates of Excellence, Patriots All-Star Awards for Achievers, the Presidential Spirit Community Award, the Superintendent's Award, and National Merit Semi-Finalist and Finalist Awards. Awards are also given for Daughters of the American Revolution, Best Buddies, Life Skills, PAVE, and Student Leadership. Book Awards from a series of colleges go to grade 11 students, and one senior earns a Medallion Award in each department. The class valedictorian receives the Massachusetts Secondary School Administration Association Award, and Warrior of the Year goes to one boy and one girl. Winners of the New England Art Education Conference have their portfolios displayed in the Attleboro Art Museum. There are also a several athletic, town-sponsored and donated awards for students.



Foxborough High School has business partnerships with the New England Patriots, Gillette Stadium, Invensys, local police and fire departments, local and regional media outlets including the Sun Chronicle, the Foxborough Reporter, the Foxborough Cable Access, Inc. and Caritas Norwood Hospital. The Foxborough YMCA established and maintains a satellite Wellness Center, located at the high school, for the Foxborough school community. Foxborough High School is fortunate to have support from virtually every group in town, which helps the school to maintain its budget during difficult economic times. Foxborough Public Schools receives generous financial support from many organizations, in particular "Foxborough: A Community Enriching Schools" (FACES), which donates significant monies toward district wide teacher initiatives.

## Core Values, Beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations

### Conclusions

Since 2005, the Foxborough High School community has been engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. At that time, students, parents, administrators and teachers met to create a mission statement for the school. The committee later determined that the mission statement did not adequately reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, nor did it reflect changes in the Standards for Accreditation, which led to a creation of core values in 2009. The 2009 committee consisted of teachers, administrators and students. Although parents were not actively engaged in the process, they were provided information via the school newsletter. In 2010, the final version of the core values statement, which was developed by this committee, was agreed upon by the school council, faculty and administration. Research based best practices were used to formulate the core value statement. These include works such as Transforming Schools: Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement (Zmuda, Kuklis, Kline, 2004) and Breaking Ranks 1 and II (NASSP 2006, 2009).

Foxborough High School established a clear set of written core values set forth in a publicly accessible document in 2010. These core values are prominently displayed in the halls, have been provided to the community through the local and school newspapers, and are reinforced via the Warrior acronym. In addition, the creation of the Warrior Huddle, a non-academic advisory group comprised of students and faculty, serves as a platform for emphasizing the core values throughout the school community. The core value statements, while posted in most classrooms, were often difficult to find and were not given prominence. In navigating the school website, the core values and beliefs about learning were not easily available. (Self-study report, teacher interviews, student interviews, student shadowing, class visits, panel presentations, school website)

As a whole, the school has a set of beliefs that has been developed by a group of key stakeholders. When asked, teachers were always able to accurately cite and discuss all of the core values and beliefs about learning. On the other hand, only some students were able to express familiarity with the core values and beliefs

about learning. Those students who were able to recall the core values were also able to discuss their impact on learning and assessment. Likewise, some parents were able to cite specific core values and beliefs about learning and the impact this has on their child's learning. (Self-study report, teacher interviews, student interviews, student shadowing, class visits, panel presentations, school website)

As a result of the collaborative process, Foxborough High School has a set of core values and beliefs of learning understood by many of the stakeholders in the school community. Many students, teachers and parents can articulate the learning expectations needed to be prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A lack of accessibility to these documents currently prevents all members of the community from having an awareness of the core values' importance and function within the curriculum. When all members of the school community are knowledgeable of the core values and beliefs about learning, these values are most likely to be a unifying force in the school. (Self-study report, teacher interviews, student interviews, student shadowing, class visits, panel presentations, school website)

Foxborough High School has a well-defined set of measurable academic, civic and social learning expectations. While the learning expectations are clearly articulated, there are inconsistencies in the descriptors for each level of proficiency, particularly at the advanced and proficient levels. For example, for the Reading Actively and Critically rubric, the advanced level uses descriptors such as "consistently," "connects," and "supports," while the Critical Thinking Rubric uses the descriptor "exemplary" at the advanced level, a possible source of confusion for students. Teachers expressed an interest in reexamining these rubrics in light of the descriptors, citing the need to be consistent across disciplines and levels. Furthermore, there is a large discrepancy in the Endicott survey. While 94% of staff believes that the learning expectations are challenging and measurable, only 61% of the students share the same sentiment. Therefore, it is clear that despite the lack of a plan for future revision, there is a need to reevaluate the rigor of the learning expectations and the accompanying rubrics. (Self-study report, Endicott survey, classroom observations, teacher interviews, student work)

The learning expectations set forth in the rubrics are aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Overall, these rubrics are analytic in form and clearly state what students must accomplish to be successful on each of the learning expectations. Each rubric clearly states the desired level of achievement each

student is expected to attain, and these learning expectations are very consistent in their connection with the core values. (Self-study, teacher interview, classroom observations)

While it is clear that the school has invested significant time and resources into developing and incorporating these learning expectation rubrics, thus far the rubrics have had only a moderate impact on curriculum, assessment and instruction. By expanding the use of the rubrics and ensuring they are consistently implemented across all disciplines, students will have frequent and relevant feedback focused on school-wide performance expectations. (Self-study, classroom observation, teacher interview, student interview, Endicott survey, Standards committee, student work.)

The culture of Foxborough High School actively reflects many of the schools core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. A safe, supportive environment is established through behavioral expectations by teachers, administration and the student handbook. Changes have been made to curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices in response to the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Through professional development and collaboration within departments, curriculum is being rewritten in a backwards design format to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Instructionally, efforts are being made to improve differentiation, collaborative learning styles, and the use of technology across all disciplines. For example, teachers are being trained through professional development classes to incorporate both technology and differentiation. Furthermore, the district annually provides teachers with funds to pursue training in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Funding is also being provided for new curriculum to create additional health courses in the wellness department. In assessment, the development and implementation of school wide rubrics has begun the process of increasing consistency in assessment practices. Furthermore, in a few classes, students are asked to self-assess and reflect on their work using a variety of rubrics. (Self-study, teacher administration interviews, student work, classroom observations)

Through the creation of the non- academic group, the Warrior Huddle, students are able to learn and discuss civic and social core values and their relationship to the school community. The composition of these groups is multi-grade level, and enables students to form positive relationships with an adult not seen in the student's academic schedule. Another change has been the creation of common formative and summative assessments across most academic courses. In general,

the common formative and summative assessments are tied to the school wide learning expectations. (Self-study, teacher interview, students)

The culture of Foxborough High School is respectful, collaborative and supportive. Most collaboration is intra-disciplinary, with staff reporting that more time needs to be allocated for intra- and cross- disciplinary collaboration. The support staff is seen as an integral part of the school community, providing clear support of the core values and learning expectations. For example, the school has instituted Roti (Response to Intervention) via the BBST (Building Based Support Team), and extensive school to career services. The combination of school counselors, a school-to-career counselor, and a separate college admissions counselor provides students with comprehensive services dedicated to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (classroom observations, self-study, teacher interview, students, school support staff, student handbook)

A clearly defined process and timeline for the review of the core values document does not exist at this time. School leaders and faculty are able to cite readings and research to support their understanding of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. The school community has worked collaboratively to discuss 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, with informal feedback from the local business community. The school has close ties with local businesses through internships, PAVE (Partnership for Academic and Vocational Excellence), annual scholarships and school to career partnerships. In addition, a dynamic partnership with the local YMCA provides students with in-school fitness opportunities both during and after school. (Self-study, teachers, administration interviews)

Student achievement in school wide learning expectations is regularly examined via data analysis of standardized testing, school wide rubrics, and common departmental assessments. Performance on each school wide rubric is reported out to parents on a semester basis via mail and the parent portal component of Power School. Currently, data teams are forming, with the intent to assess student performance on the school's learning expectations. However, the professional learning community model (PLC) has not yet being implemented. Discussion of student performance on school wide learning expectations has primarily taken place at faculty and department meetings. (self-study, teacher and student interviews)

The district and community priorities have been taken into account in the creation of the core values, beliefs and learning expectations by the school committee, faculty and administration. The district strategic plan clearly reflects the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations set forth by the high school core values statement. However, teachers believe that the strategic plan needs to more accurately reflect the social and civic expectations established by the high school. (strategic plan, district mission statement, teacher interviews)

The staff at Foxborough High School understands the importance of examining multiple data sources to support the process for the review and revision of its core values and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. While the administration and faculty are in the beginning stages of examining the role of data teams and PLCs in this process, as a whole, they have yet to create a protocol for a systematic review and revision. The establishment of an ongoing review process ensures that the core values and beliefs remain a living document that continuously informs and impacts curriculum, instruction and assessment. (self-study, teacher interview, core values and beliefs panel, school board, school leadership)

### **Commendations**

1. A collaborative and defined process to establish the core values and beliefs about learning
2. The ability of many stakeholders to readily articulate the core values and beliefs about learning
3. Clearly written analytic rubrics that are aligned to the core values and beliefs about learning
4. Strong community support for core values and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
5. A district strategic plan which clearly reflects the core values and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

**Recommendations**

1. Evaluate, standardize, and revise the descriptors for each rubric with a focus on consistency of language and appropriate rigor
2. Ensure there is at least one rubric for each academic, civic, and social learning expectation
3. Implement a regular, formal review process for the core values, beliefs about learning, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

### Conclusions

At Foxborough High School, students regularly practice and achieve each of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations articulated in the school's Core Values and Beliefs about Learning. Students have multiple opportunities to read actively and critically (learning expectation #1). For example, English students created a new scene based on their understanding of the book, *Of Mice and Men* while social studies students completed primary source analysis of historical documents such as *The Declaration of the Rights of Man* and *the Declaration of Independence*. Student work samples from each grade level and many courses focus on student practice of writing for a variety of purposes and audience (learning expectations 2 and 3). Ninety-six percent of the staff agree that the curriculum ensures student practice and achievement of all stated learning expectations. School-wide rubrics are used to evaluate a minimum of four common assessments in a full year course. Opportunities for students to practice use of oral skills to communicate ideas (learning expectation 4) occurs by the use of a language lab in which students can speak directly with their peers, the teacher, embed their voices into presentations, and participate in practice via video. Students are provided with opportunities to practice using technology effectively (learning expectation 5), in art (create Photo shop commemorating 9/11) and business (marketing plan Power point) classes. Students develop critical thinking skills for assessing information and problem solving (learning expectation 6). This is demonstrated in chorus through an exercise where students discussed the characteristics of Swahili culture that were embedded in the lyrics of a song they were about to learn. Although the school's learning expectations are practiced, they are not clearly articulated in curriculum documents; therefore, there is no assurance that there will be a commonality of experience for students over time. (Student handbook, teacher interviews, self-study, classroom observations)

A common curriculum template is used across all subject areas. This template includes essential questions, content, skills, instructional strategies, Massachusetts frameworks learning standards, and general sample assessment practices. However, the template does not include units of study, concepts, the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, and detailed sample assessment practices. Although not explicitly in the curriculum documents, detailed sample



assessments and actual common assessments are in a shared folder on the network. A template format is used across all curricula which includes the following common subheadings: Massachusetts frameworks learning standards, essential questions, instructional activities, and sample assessments. Some content areas, for example, world language and biology, include identification of units of study as does honors English grade 9. However, the curriculum for world history grade 9 as well as introduction to foods do not designate individual units of study. Similarly, concepts that connect ideas which tie the essential questions together are clear in some curricula such as journalism, yet they are not shown in other areas such as introduction to art and design, French 2 honors, U.S. history, Irish literature and culture, and jazz ensemble. Although the learning expectations are clearly stated in the American literature and physical science honors curricula, they are not clearly identified in many of the other curricular documents, including pre-calculus, computer imaging, chemistry college prep, and badminton. Detailed descriptions of sample assessments are used in the curricula for Spanish 2 honors, consumer life skills and math. A lack of detail in describing sample assessments is demonstrated by a review of the geometry curriculum, physical science honors, writer's workshop 9, and alternative biology 2. Effective learning for students depends upon a common guideline for delivery of the knowledge and skills as identified in the curriculum. (Classroom observations, self-study, teacher interviews, student interviews)

Mention of the use of school-wide analytic rubrics is inconsistent while the use of course-specific rubrics is not articulated in curriculum documents. The use of school-wide rubrics is evident in some curricula such as drawing, painting and Printmaking 2, Senior Inc., CBAD 2, Physical Science Honors, and environmental science. However, reference to the use of school-wide rubrics is not mentioned in the curricula of orchestra, concert band, and Alternative Biology 2. Articulation of the use of rubrics within curriculum documents ensures an opportunity for fair and equitable assessment. (Curriculum folder, teacher interviews, K-12 coordinator)

There is sporadic emphasis on depth of understanding and application of knowledge focused on inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking. Stakeholders agree (92.4% parents, 89.4% faculty) that the school's curricula focuses on inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking, and eighty-one percent of students report that they believe they are challenged in their classes. For example, lessons focused on an inquiry approach were observed in

chemistry during a lab to measure oil slick density as well as in a U.S. history class where students were asked to create an offline Facebook entry about one of the transcendentalists with posts to other transcendentalists. However, the application of an inquiry focus was not widespread throughout the building, with examples of traditional, teacher-centered approaches occasionally being demonstrated. In a few classes, students were passively watching films, reading without interactions, and listening passively to lectures. The use of student problem-solving was also inconsistently applied. Students in geometry used sketchpad to design a polygon and measure its area, and other students designed a house in relation to plot size and other environmental factors. In contrast, other classes involved teacher explanations and teachers answering problems without working towards a deeper understanding through higher-order thinking strategies. By consistently expecting students to strive and grow through challenging and engaging experiences, they develop a deeper understanding of essential concepts and are more able to effectively apply their understanding effectively. (Endicott survey, classroom observation, teacher interviews, curriculum folder)

There are infrequent formal opportunities for the development of cross-disciplinary learning. While there are strong efforts made by teachers to informally exchange ideas about teaching and learning, only 47.1% of teachers believe that sufficient time is provided to engage in formal discussions with their colleagues in other departments. Fifty percent of the students agree that teachers include topics from other subject areas in their classes, an area noted by the faculty as a critical need to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning at the school. Opportunities for teachers to formally dialogue across disciplines will enrich the taught curriculum providing students with the ability to make connections about today's world. (Curriculum self-study committee, teacher interviews, department head interviews, assistant superintendent, self-study, Endicott survey)

Authentic learning opportunities are available on and off campus to students. Authentic learning opportunities are made available for students through programs such as P.A.V.E., school to career, certified nursing assistants at sturdy hospital, the credit for life fair, job shadowing, collaboration with the career specialist, work study program with job coaches, and community service. These opportunities are articulated to students via the group guidance program as well as through the program of studies. Such authentic learning experiences will help

to inform students of options for career choices enabling them to begin preliminary planning for their future in the supportive environment of the school. (Student interviews, counselor interview, direct observation, self-study, student shadowing)

There is sufficient emphasis on informed and ethical use of technology. The Board has developed a clearly articulated policy regarding use of electronic media in the district. This policy covers safety procedures and guidelines, employee and student use and responsibility and audits. Students sign an acceptable use form in order to access and use technology in the building. This form outlines the school's expectations for use as well as consequences for violating that use. Ninety-five percent of staff and 83% of students feel that the curriculum adequately addresses ethical use of technology. The school-wide learning expectation for using technology effectively includes a component on appropriateness of research. In addition, the English department recently added a new course titled media literacy which incorporates an informed approach to the access and use of the Internet and validity of web sources. When the ethical use of technology is emphasized, students will become respectful and responsible digital citizens. (Teacher interviews, Endicott survey, curriculum documents, school policy, student handbook)

By design, there is alignment between the written and taught curricula. Conditions that ensure the alignment of written and taught curricula are explicitly stated in the teacher evaluation guidelines. Pre- and post-observations include curriculum and lesson plan discussions. The principal expects those teachers undergoing summative evaluations to provide him with a unit plan to review and discuss. Department heads and administration take an active role in reviewing a teacher's power school assessments as well as conducting informal observations to check for curricular alignment. Principals and assistant principals review professional goals with teachers during the first month of each school year to ensure alignment with district initiatives. Criteria for these professional goals are tied to student achievement of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Explicit adherence to common assessments is documented and referenced during scheduled department meetings. Tied to this, 98.8% of FHS faculty agrees that there is alignment between written and implemented curriculum. Supporting observations included a "Newton's Law" project that was being implemented simultaneously in multiple classrooms, and there was evidence of common lessons on quadratic equations in ninth grade math classes. The English department maintains adherence to pacing guides in a collaborative approach.

Finally, multiple sources referred to department head meetings where fidelity to written curriculum is routinely discussed. When the complexity of curriculum documents increases to include all critical components of teaching and learning, students will have access to and experience with challenging opportunities. (Endicott survey, curriculum self-study committee, classroom observations, shared teacher database, coordinator, curriculum self-study committee, evaluation handbook, principal)

There is a sufficient mechanism in place to discuss curricular coordination and vertical articulation between district schools although the process can be limited to an informal basis between teachers. The district has established a curriculum review cycle that began in 2005-2006 and will conclude in 2015-2016. Each June the curriculum review team submits a report to the assistant superintendent in order to determine areas of need. The June 2011 review resulted in the purchase of the program, “developing writing and thinking skills across the curriculum”, which became the basis for a summer workshop for teachers across the district. Professional development opportunities are used to provide teacher training in this area. In October 2011, all teachers participated in a program titled “comprehension across the curriculum: Teaching Students How to Think Through Text”. K-12 coordinators in the elective areas along with K-8 coordinators working with core department heads ensure communication across the district. At the building level, program progression is articulated to students via the student handbook’s pathways to advanced placement in science, world language level transfer possibilities and math program progression. Department heads must develop an action plan for their respective departments that dovetails with the district’s overall strategic plan as well as building goals. Writing across the disciplines and the “One Book One School” (Outliers) program, protocols for inquiry based science projects, and topics at weekly department head meetings all demonstrate this ongoing dialogue. The principal uses weekly department head meetings as a vehicle to brainstorm ideas and solutions to identified problems and for instruction in the use of school-wide data to ensure vertical alignment of skills across grades. Department heads articulate administrative goals to staff via monthly department meetings. In addition, principals in the district meet twice a month to exchange ideas and update each other regarding issues of concern for the district. Having a regular mechanism in place to coordinate and articulate curricula ensures continuity of teaching and learning for students over time. (Principal interview, K-12 coordinators, curriculum self-study committee, professional development day agendas, program of studies, principal interview)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities and the resources of the library/media center (LMC) fully support the implementation of the curriculum including the co-curricular program and other learning opportunities. Class sizes for the current school year average less than 20 which allows for effective implementation of the curriculum as well as for personalization of learning. Eighty-nine percent of teachers believe that class size was adequate for effective implementation of instruction. Eighty-five percent of students and 86% of parents believe that adequate material needed for course work instruction was available. A comparable 92% of staff agreed with this assessment, and 88% of staff also believes that the facilities fully support their curriculum implementation. The phrases “absolutely adequate” as well as “everything they need” were used by teachers to describe the availability of materials for curriculum implementation. Eighty-six percent of parents agreed with this. In addition to the customary budget process, teachers have the option of seeking grants to fund needs and initiatives through the F.A.C.E.S. foundation. These budget reports connect to satisfactory students reports in the level of available technology. Likewise, these expenditures are reflected in the use of technology in instruction. World language labs are utilized at least once during every schedule cycle. Both the media specialist and English teachers state that they are confident with the depth of reference materials used or needed for planned units. Additional budget allotments address material needs and supplements to instruction in the music, and arts department. The level of funding of materials in support of the curriculum allows the school to provide comprehensive offerings, academic and co-curricular, thereby enriching student engagement in the learning process. (Classroom observation, building tour, Endicott survey, school budget documents)

The district supports the school’s professional staff with sufficient personnel for the ongoing development, evaluation and revision of curriculum using assessment results and current research. The maintenance of a formal curriculum review cycle is articulated in the school’s 2011 Strategic School Plan. Department heads oversee curricula at the building level in the core academic departments of science, math, social studies and English. These department heads work closely with two K-8 coordinators in the sending schools – one coordinator for math and science and the other for English language arts and social studies. Additionally, the elective areas work with K-12 coordinators. Curriculum review teams comprised of teachers, department heads, and coordinators have been established to examine proposals for curriculum work and to ascertain needs for

revision at regular intervals. For example, the English language arts curricula was under review in 2010-2011, and funds were allocated to update that discipline's curricula during 2011 summer workshops to incorporate the national Common Core State Standards. In 2009-2010, both business/industrial arts and the fine arts were reviewed for this same purpose. The curriculum review teams are under the direct supervision of the district's assistant superintendent who holds final approval. Decision-making is based on performance data results from the common assessment initiative (four assessments per full year course), MCAS, PSAT, SAT, cohort groups, composite performance index, and student grade data via Power School. The district uses current research such as, but not limited to, differentiated instruction, Reed's "Studying Skillful Teachers", Research for Better Teaching Incorporated, and the John Collins writing program to determine its course of action. With sufficient support, the professional staff is empowered to align and update curricula making use of best practices to help students practice and achieve the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Curriculum self-study committee, department heads, assistant superintendent, school committee, curriculum review cycle document, K-12 coordinators, strategic school plan)

The district has made a strong commitment of financial resources for the ongoing development, evaluation and revision of curriculum. In 2010-2011, over forty curriculum projects took place ranging from the development of curricula for courses such as Media Literacy, Irish Literature and Culture, Film and Novel, and Real World Writing to re-sequencing Algebra 2 to the creation of models and samples for the MCAS appeals portfolio. An additional 44 curriculum projects were completed in 2009-2010. Eighty thousand dollars was allocated for professional and curriculum development in 2011. Teachers on the curriculum review teams were paid \$448 for their participation. This amounted to \$5,824 for the English/Language Arts K-12 team and \$1,344 for the Music K-12 team. Curriculum review cycles pair a high-density subject area with a low density one to help manage time and costs. By making curriculum development and revision a funding priority, the school district is providing students with the preparation necessary to function in a skilled and independent way as adults. (Self-study, K-12 coordinators, budget, curriculum self-study committee, school committee, superintendent)

While collaboration takes place within departments, purposeful collaboration across the disciplines is infrequent. While there are strong efforts made by teachers for the informal exchange of ideas about teaching and learning, only 47.1% of teachers believe that sufficient time is provided to engage in a formal

process of collaboration to review, evaluate and revise curricula. This area has been noted by the faculty as a critical need to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning at the school. A collaborative culture focused on applying knowledge and skills based on written guidelines for curricula will increase opportunities to deepen student understanding. (Curriculum self-study committee, teacher interviews, department head interviews, assistant superintendent, self-study, Endicott survey)

**Commendations:**

1. Common assessments for student practice of learning expectations, which illustrate how the taught curriculum is aligned with the written curriculum
2. Strong involvement of teachers in the development of curriculum
3. District financial support for the development of curriculum, staffing, instructional supplies and the resources of the library/media center
4. Common curriculum template used in all subject areas
5. The regular opportunities provided for students to practice and achieve each of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
6. Expansive comprehensive curricular opportunities for all students

**Recommendations:**

1. Articulate the school-wide learning expectations clearly in the written curricula
2. Review and revise common curriculum template to include units of study, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, and sample assessment practices
3. Provide formal opportunities for teachers to collaborate in the development, evaluation and revision of curricula
4. Implement professional development activities centered on higher order thinking

### Conclusions

Since the initiation of the school's core values and beliefs about learning, teachers began reviewing their instructional practices in light of these values and beliefs. Additionally, professional development within each department is designed to ensure practices are consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Throughout the school, there is a focus on sharing instructional strategies and analyzing student work. For example, the math department head sends a weekly email called Friday Files where teachers (on a rotational basis) share a best teaching practice or an eye-opening moment with colleagues. School-wide rubrics are based on 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and are being applied consistently across the building by all departments as required. While teachers do not have significant formal time to collaborate, members in each department share the same lunch and instructional-based conversations do occur during both lunch and after school. When teachers' instructional practices are only periodically examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, best instructional strategies are not always effectively understood and delivered. (Classroom observations, self-study, teacher interviews, district evaluation documents)

Teachers' instructional practices often support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Student experiences at Foxborough High School are personalized in many ways. Various departments offer electives in which students who sit in the same classroom take the class for either college preparatory or honors credit. Teachers from the math department use Geometer's Sketchpad in computer labs and in classrooms which allows students to challenge themselves and reach their own potential based on their ability-level. An art teacher demonstrated how an assignment to design a graphic art illustration was utilized to explore a social issue. Instruction is also personalized through a newly created program called Warrior Huddle. Within this program, students across all grade levels are assigned two staff advisors. Warrior Huddle groups meet twelve times per year for thirty minutes with a heterogeneous grouping of students. The main goals of the Warrior Huddle are to pair each student with an adult in the building who can serve as their advocate and to create a mechanism in which students from different grade levels interact with



each other on a regular basis. Students are also provided the opportunity to personalize their program through Virtual High School (VHS) courses, independent studies and dual enrollment in college coursework. Fifty student slots are available to students interested in VHS, with a teacher available to help guide them in the computer lab during a designated period each semester. Twenty-five students took advantage of this opportunity during a recent semester. One student shared that she participates in an independent study this semester where she works with a district elementary school teacher to learn about the teaching profession, a field she hopes to explore after graduation. While the variety of options and the flexibility of program permit students to individualize their programs, less differentiation was seen within individual courses to meet students' diverse needs. Assessments in most areas do not provide student choice, and instructional practices tended to be whole-class reading, discussion, and/or problem solving. While the diverse program empowers students to design customized experiences based on their interests and goals, teachers' instructional practices are not yet personalized to enable all students to achieve the schools 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and, thereby, maximize their opportunities for success. (Classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, teacher interview)

In addition to teachers' personalizing instruction, there are some examples of informal cross-disciplinary learning. The math department moved trigonometry and logarithms to the fall semester enabling students to have more success in physics. English teachers have created historical projects based on the novel *Animal Farm*. This past summer all students and staff members were required to read the novel, *The Outsiders*. Based on this assignment, students in CBAD class were asked to create a new cover for the book. They also had to write a reflection paper on the assignment. In non-core subjects, interdisciplinary instruction is also evident. The choir recently sang a song in French and Swahili. In United States History, students worked to connect how music in the mid-1950's is reflected in historical events. When teachers engage students in cross-disciplinary learning opportunities to support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, students can apply their learning throughout many subject-areas. (Teacher interviews, self-study, student shadowing)

In general, students appear to be engaged as active and self-directed learners. Students are often assigned project-based learning activities that are evaluated with school-wide rubrics. These rubrics have helped students understand teacher expectations for these projects. The math department and science department

have Eno Boards in every room and use them regularly. Students often go to the front of the room to show their work. In a physics class, students were at the Eno Board answering questions from a true/false handout. In addition, students use mini white boards in a variety of math classes. In geometry, students were simplifying radicals, and in calculus, students were working with derivatives. Teachers provided immediate feedback when students held up their answers. Students in world language classes go to the language lab once per cycle. When inside this lab, students participate in activities ranging from grammar review to interpersonal dialogue. Students can also access radio and television stations from other countries and use web-based materials to supplement their learning. While these activities reflect students being active and self-directed, other classroom instruction witnessed through observations was less engaging and more teacher-centered. When teachers engage students as active and self-directed learners to support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, students are able to understand the material much more thoroughly. (Teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing)

Teachers make some effort to emphasize instruction that focuses on inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills. Eighty-two percent of parents believe their children's teachers emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills. However, during observations, the use of these practices appeared to be inconsistently delivered in many classrooms throughout the school. The opportunity to analyze student work in mathematics showed students participating in critical thinking assignments that are aligned with the school-wide critical thinking rubric and the open response rubric. In geometry, students complete projects using Geometer's Sketchpad. In physical science, students designed and built a marble track roller coaster, and in physics, students completed a boat project. A display case in the science wing features a poster project where students were asked to equate a cell to a real world organization. When teachers provide opportunities for students to demonstrate inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills to support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, students can apply their learning to the real-world. (Self-study, Endicott survey, teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing)

Teachers make efforts to apply the knowledge and skills in their subject areas to authentic tasks. Foxborough High School currently operates a school store during lunchtime, where student volunteers to sell snack items and school-related clothing. In Spanish, students research the life and work of a famous

Spanish speaker, which includes a biography and research and make a typical dish from his/her country. Within the guidance department, a career specialist works with students seeking career opportunities and internships - taking advantage of the strong partnerships that exist between the community and school. Students in CBAD were able to explore a social issue of their choice to create a graphical display. In this same course, students competed to design the school's yearbook cover. However, in many of the core content areas there are relatively few examples of authentic tasks that students must complete as a part of their learning. When students apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks to support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, they can apply their learning to the real world. (Teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing)

Many students are engaged in activities that allow them to self-assess and reflect on their own learning. Seventy-one percent of Foxborough High School students report teachers provide them with opportunities to assess their own work. Physical fitness testing is used to track student progress throughout the semester. Furthermore, in a 9<sup>th</sup> grade English class, peer review was used during a long composition assignment. Many teachers, at their discretion, permit students to re-write their writing assignments after receiving teacher feedback and before being issued a grade. In statistics class, students are able to redo multiple choice questions if they provide an explanation as to why the answer is correct. When teachers provide opportunities for students to self-assess and reflect on their own learning to support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, students learn from their mistakes and continually improve. (Teacher interviews, Endicott survey, self-study, classroom observations, student shadowing)

Technology has been incorporated into instruction throughout FHS. All math and science classrooms have Eno Boards and projectors and are using them on a regular basis. Access to technology is more limited in other disciplines. The English department has two rooms with Eno boards and projectors. The English department also has five carts with projectors. The history department frequently uses PowerPoint presentations to instruct students on new material and organize their lessons. Core departments have dedicated computer labs that can be accessed by other departments when available. As noted earlier, students within the world language department utilize the language lab once per cycle. The district currently employs one technology integration specialist who creates professional development opportunities for teachers to integrate technology

effectively into the classroom. However, the district lacks a clear vision for technology integration. For instance there has been little development in expanding wireless Internet connections beyond the media center. Nonetheless, teachers appear willing to try innovative instructional techniques. By providing teachers with opportunities to integrate technology into instruction, students are taught using various techniques, thereby increasing access into the content for all students. (Classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, teacher interview, student work, evidence box)

Some teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student. Formative assessments used during instructional time help to meet the needs of each student. Students in the jazz band were asked to perform rhythmic dictation exercises to a musical selection that they later played. The teacher gave feedback to individual students throughout this warm-up. In chorus, the teacher gave students individual and group feedback during the lesson. In geometry, students used mini white boards to simplify radicals to demonstrate to the instructor whether the students understand the material in real time. . When teachers use formative assessments to adjust instruction, they are better able to meet the needs of each student. (Classroom observations, student shadowing)

With regard to differentiated instruction, students enrolling in various courses are able to take the classes for honors or for college preparatory credit – even though they are in the same class together. Teachers report class expectations are different for honors and college preparatory students. Honors students are expected to analyze material more thoughtfully and they are required to read an extra book and report on it. However, multiple students report that the honors option simply means you get more homework. Students in Tribal Wars are given their choice of topics for a research paper on *The Iliad*. The science department gives students many opportunities for hands-on learning through laboratory experiments and projects. For instance, a marble roller coaster project, a Rube Goldberg project and a boat project are all implemented in science classes. In physics, honors students were required to solve equations algebraically with Newton’s second law when a “circle” method of instruction was used to solve similar problems in college preparatory to aid students who had weaker math skills. Currently at FHS, differentiated instruction based on student interest and/or ability is not a widespread practice. When teachers effectively differentiate instruction, students are able to engage with content in meaningful and significant ways. . (Evidence box, classroom observations, student shadowing, teacher interviews)

Students who need academic support outside of the classroom have several options. Special education students may be assigned to an academic lab where they have the ability to work on assignments with support. English and math tutoring is also available during the school day and after school. The English department and math department offer MCAS Review classes for students needing additional help and provide an opportunity for students to elect to take an SAT Preparation course to supplement their math experience. When students are offered additional venues for support, students' needs are met more often. (Classroom observations, student shadowing, teacher interviews)

Teachers use students working in groups in a variety of settings. While eighty-four percent of students report that teachers use group activities in their classes, effective group work was not consistently observed. In several classes, students were placed into groups but then asked to complete routine tasks where the understanding was not deepened through the collaborative experience. Additionally, classes were often held whole-group, where reading or discussions were teacher directed and led, and the students' engagement appeared low. There were also classrooms where students were actively engaged in a collaborative experience that enhanced their understanding; however, these classes were not typical of a student's experience at the school. When students are provided the opportunity to work in groups, students are able to actively engage in content to develop mastery of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Classroom observations, Endicott survey, student shadowing)

Teachers provide additional support and use alternative strategies within the regular classroom to meet the needs of students. Teachers are readily accessible after school for help. English and mathematics tutoring is available during the school day and after school to all students. Special education students may be enrolled in the Academic Lab class for the purpose of receiving help with homework and furthering their study skills. However, the focus of the support center too much of the time is on homework. Teachers, particularly, in college preparatory classes, often provide guided notes when lecturing. In English a teacher worked with students in the computer lab to instruct students on how to write a comprehensive paper with supported evidence, encouraging students to make notecards and create an outline before writing. When teachers adjust their instructional practices with additional support and alternative strategies, each student's academic needs are met; by so doing, all students are given a better

chance to meet the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, teacher interview)

In most cases, teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices. Teachers are using student achievement data from a variety of sources for various purposes. The majority of departments use common mid-term and final exams. The results of these assessments are analyzed during department meetings to help inform future instruction and to revise exams. The science department reviewed MCAS data to determine that students were struggling on questions involving diagrams. The guidance department reviews PSAT data to determine students who could benefit from enrolling in SAT review classes. This data is also included in the School Report submitted to colleges. When teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by using formative and summative assessments, students benefit from frequent feedback to aid the mastery of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Classroom observations, self-study, teacher interview, student work)

Teachers spend significant time examining student work during department meetings. However, colleagues across disciplines have not yet had the opportunity to examine student work together using the school wide rubrics. Efforts have been made in some subjects to provide models of exemplary work. All departments are required to use the school's learning expectations rubrics for a minimum of two assignments per semester and teachers report that these assignments are also reviewed and discussed to help improve future instruction. District administrators report that reviews of student science labs have resulted in lab reports with a common format at the middle school and at the high school. When teachers improve their instructional practices by examining student work, students benefit from an enriched learning environment from improved feedback and clearer academic expectations in the future. (Classroom observations, student shadowing, teacher interview, student work)

Some teachers gather feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents. However, this feedback is not always used to adjust instruction. Thirty-five percent of students report their teachers ask them for ideas about the improvement of instruction. Freshman surveys and senior exit surveys are reviewed at faculty meetings. Some teachers use midyear and end of course questionnaires to get feedback from students about their course and teaching strategies. Supervisors provide feedback through the

school's formal evaluation process. Informal feedback in the form of supervisor walk-throughs and peer observations does not occur on a regular basis. When teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by soliciting feedback from a variety of sources, they are able to make improvements in their instruction. (Self-study, Endicott survey, classroom observations, student shadowing, teacher interview, student work)

Teachers have made some efforts to examine current research and to engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice. Teachers have five professional development days built into the school calendar. On one of those days, teachers took part in a reading comprehension workshop led by the superintendent. Opportunities to review district curriculum are provided every summer and teachers are paid the district curriculum rate for this work. Teachers discuss best practices informally during lunch time and after school. In 2010-2011, the district allotted \$45,000 for course reimbursement for district personnel. Several staff members report that not all staff are able to take advantage of this as funds are regularly exhausted. When teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by examining current research, students benefit from innovative instruction. (Classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, teacher interview, student work)

Most teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Ninety-five percent of faculty report maintaining expertise in their content area and content specific instructional practices. Similarly, eighty-three percent of students believe their teachers are knowledgeable about their content area. Collaboration exists within content areas, but this practice is accomplished primarily during informal time. At times, teachers use their lunch time to share specific instructional practices with colleagues. More consistent formal time for collaboration would allow for more departmental and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Professional development money is available to district staff as well. Five staff professional development days are built into the school calendar, but this time is often devoted to specific school-wide issues and initiatives. In addition to opportunities for all staff, new teachers are required to participate in a two year mentoring program which provides each new teacher with a mentor who advises and observes their classes. When teachers can focus professional development, review of current research and best practice, and time for exploring mastery of their subject area, students benefit from an improved

learning experience. (Self-study, Endicott, survey, teacher interviews, student work)

Commendations:

- 1 The two-year new-teacher mentoring program which provides feedback to beginning teachers on their instruction
- 2 The ability to access the Warrior Huddle program for all students
- 3 a knowledgeable and committed staff who care deeply about helping all students learn

Recommendations:

- 1 Increase the amount of regularly scheduled and formal time for teachers to collaborate within the content areas as well as across content areas
- 2 Implement a formal process to increase cross-disciplinary instruction activities
- 3 Ensure that all teachers integrate the use of formative assessments into instructional practices
- 4 Integrate the best practices of differentiation into instruction in all areas
- 5 Increase opportunities for students to be involved in higher order thinking and problem solving  
Increase opportunities in all classrooms, especially the core subject areas, for authentic learning experiences to engage all students



## Assessment of and for Student Learning

### Conclusions

While the professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on the use of school-wide rubrics, to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Additionally, the school has a process to assess whole-school progress towards these expectations as well. Each department has primary responsibility for assessing two 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Individual student progress is formally assessed using the school-wide rubric once per term and reported out twice a year at the end of each semester. Each department has provided a chart that shows the specific assignments and corresponding rubric that is addressed. The English, social studies and world language departments all use common department assessments to evaluate the school wide writing expectations using the school wide rubric. The wellness department piloted the social and civic expectations rubric during the 2010-2011 school year for all freshmen and sophomore students. Currently, there is no formal process for evaluating the social and civic expectations during junior or senior year. The students and staff consistently report that the school wide rubrics are used in all classes to measure progress. Almost all of the staff report having an understanding of the formal process. The administration is responsible for gathering data based upon individual student progress in order to assess whole school progress. Report card data on achievement of the learning expectations was collected and disaggregated by grade level for the 2010-2011 school year. The analysis of data did not reveal that a formal assessment of the data had occurred in order to communicate whole school progress. By employing a formal process to assess individual student progress, the staff ensures strong awareness of student progress in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Without a formal process for assessing whole school achievement, the school has no way of sharing with its school community the progress it is making to assist all students to achieve the learning expectations. (panel presentation, Endicott survey, students/teachers)

The school's professional staff regularly communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students and their families. As established in the formal assessment process, teachers are required to report student progress in achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for their designated areas of primary responsibility once a semester.

This information is relayed through a report card supplement sent home to parents and available on the Power School system. Teachers are encouraged to update their grade books on Power School at least every two weeks in order to communicate assessment results. The report card format also offers an opportunity for teachers to personalize a brief narrative evaluation of the student's progress each term. Two-thirds of parents believe that the school provides them with a formal report that explains their son or daughter's progress in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Consistent communication of student achievement in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations ensures student and parent awareness student progress. (Teachers, students, parents, Endicott survey, self-study)

The school's professional staff communicates the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community. The January-February edition of the Principal's newsletter, "The Foxworthy," outlined the school's formal process for reporting out student progress. The newsletter also included data collected on student achievement for each learning expectation disaggregated by grade level for 2010-2011. "2011-2012 Semester 2" data was reported for the whole school, grades 9-12 collectively and included the Wellness departments assessment of social and civic expectations.. Interviews with the administrative team revealed that the school committee receives a report on the school's progress twice a year. By effectively communicating with all stakeholders, FHS ensures that all constituents have the capacity to make informed decisions in support of the school's core values and beliefs about learning. (Teachers, students, parents, self-study, Endicott)

Most of the professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. However, a clear and consistent protocol is not being used to convey how the staff reached their conclusions about the perceived inequities. Both the world language and math departments have collected data that revealed an achievement gap in their respective content areas. World Language teachers found that students were unsuccessful in achieving the two-year language requirement for graduation. In response, the department created Spanish IA and Spanish IB. These two courses teach Spanish at a slower pace, offering the students more opportunities for success. In the math department, pre-calculus teachers reported areas of weakness in the pre-calculus students' math skills, and therefore the algebra 2 curriculum was amended to close the inequities in student's knowledge base. Math and science departments have collaborated to strengthen the math skills

needed for physics so that students have skills necessary to succeed. Teachers in the English, world language, and social studies departments have used department meeting times to discuss student work and targeted levels of assessments. The school also has a program to identify students having difficulty achieving their potential. Through the Building Based Support Teams a group of staff comprised of an administrator, guidance counselor, and two classroom teachers identify students using feedback from classroom teachers and conversations with students and parents to determine strategies and create actions plans to monitor and ensure student progress. The continued use of faculty and staff energies and professional meeting time allows staff to analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Implementing a formal protocol for this process will ensure all staff address inequities in student learning through this data analysis, as well as enabling staff to disaggregate and analyze data according to sub-group (ethnicity, gender, etc). (Students, administration, teacher, self-study)

Teachers attempt to communicate to students the school's applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed in the up-coming unit of study, although the practice is not yet widespread throughout the building. Some teachers use unit preview handouts with essential questions, key topics/terms, and upcoming assessments to introduce unit expectations. Regular use of pre-lab questions exist in most science classes. There is recurrent insistence by teachers that expectations are being communicated to students. However, 64.5% of students confirm an understanding of learning expectations and that their teachers communicate those expectations to them prior to most units of study. If teachers consistently share applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations prior to units of study, students will be better able to focus their efforts in order to meet each expectation. (Student, teacher, Endicott survey, self-study)

Prior to summative assessments, the vast majority of teachers consistently provide students with the corresponding rubrics. The corresponding school-wide rubrics are distributed with most assignments, especially cumulative projects or process papers. The social studies and English Departments provide detailed rubrics and checklists in addition to the school-wide rubric for research paper assignments completed by juniors and seniors. Both the music and business departments developed project specific rubrics that are explicit in the expectations. The wellness department uses skills rubrics to measure the student's abilities in different sports and physical fitness levels. The world

language department uses oral response rubrics to evaluate levels of proficiency. The math and science departments provide student lab reports and project assignments, which include project specific rubrics. Seventy-seven percent of the students agree with the statement: "I understand in advance what work I have to accomplish to meet my teachers' expectations." Of the students who responded, 88.5% agree that teachers use rubrics to assess their work, and 79.5% report that they understand the rubrics that their teachers use. More than seventy percent of parents also say that they are familiar with and understand the school wide rubrics. With consistent use of specific assignment and summative assessment rubrics, students understand in advance how to accomplish and meet their teachers' expectations, and therefore are better able to meet these expectations. (Endicott survey, student work, self-study, teachers, students)

In most units of study, a majority of teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Most teachers use some formative assessment strategies such as check-ins, homework review, and warm-up activities; however, the range of these assessment strategies is limited and tends to be more traditional than cooperative, authentic, or dynamic. The wellness department uses Fitness Focus Days to check-in with student progress on the various fitness activities established in their curriculum. The English department frequently uses textbook generated assessment materials such as reading guide questions and grammar review worksheets to assess student's progress. The math department consistently employs a warm-up activity for each class, but variations in these activities are limited. Students are often asked to solve several problems on prior knowledge at the beginning of class. Teachers employ a variety of summative assessments. Examples include unit tests, journals, quizzes, chapter analyses and summaries, oral presentations, Power Point presentations, unit projects, writing portfolios, research papers, labs and lab reports, midyear and final exams. The science department assigns a boat project for all Honors Physics students where students use their understanding of circuits to create a boat that must have two speeds and travel several meters. The CP physics students are also tasked with a similar project where they create a mousetrap car based on their understanding of energy and machines. The English department adheres to a more traditional approach to summative assessment frequently using process papers and exams to assess student progress especially in core courses. The elective curriculum reveals a differentiated approach to assessment with emphasis on creative application of skills and higher ordered thinking through project-based assessments. With a

limited range of assessment strategies, students cannot authentically demonstrate their proficiency in achieving established learning expectations. (Student shadow, student work, teachers)

Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of summative assessments, including common assessments. The faculty collaborates and analyzes summative assessments formally during full day professional development experiences. Agendas have included time for teachers to work departmentally on common summative assessments. Summer work has been made available for teachers to review curriculum and assessments for common courses. Social studies teachers revealed that the department collaborates during some department meetings to review common assessments evaluating 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. They also have used department meeting time to revise the US history common assessments in order to align them with state benchmarks. Science teachers have collaborated on a common lab report format for physical science and biology, developed as a result of feedback from both eighth and ninth grade teachers. Collaboration and discussion of formative assessment occurs on a more informal basis. Teachers have conversations about formative assessments with colleagues who teach similar courses. Most of the math teachers agree that they use warm-up activities as formative assessment much of the time, but they could not be sure that every teacher uses the assessment every day. Common reading guide questions in English and social studies are used by teachers. Some curriculum documents for some departments have outlined formative assessments. The social studies department includes journal writing and group activities in the assessments for their US history curriculum. The wellness teachers added frequent self-assessments to their formative evaluation process during Fitness Focus Days. When collaborative opportunities are used to create, evaluate, and revise assessments, teachers ensure a consistent alignment with learning expectations. (Teachers, student shadow, student work, self-study)

Many teachers regularly provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Small class sizes allow teachers to have one-on-one conversations and check-ins with students on a daily basis. Most teachers circulate through the classroom checking-in with students and offering clarification or guidance as students complete an activity or an assignment. The world language and computer assisted design and drafting (CADD) classes also have labs that give teachers the ability to monitor students as they work and provide instant feedback remotely. While 68.5% of students

report that teachers offer suggestions to help them improve their school work, teacher feedback does not consistently address the specific criteria established in the rubric used with the assignment. On a research paper assessed with the school wide writing rubric, teacher comments through the essay were limited and rarely addressed the areas of assessment established by the rubric. Sixty-three percent of students agree that teachers assess their school work in a reasonable amount of time, and 64.2% agree that the teachers' grading is fair and consistent. Only when all students receive consistent and specific feedback aligned with school-wide learning rubric criteria will they be able to revise and improve their work in order to continually make progress towards achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Student shadowing, student work, teacher interviews, Endicott survey)

Many teachers use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Teachers in classes are using formative assessments, but overall results of those assessments are not being used to modify or adapt instruction. In some math and science classes, students expressed confusion during check-ins and dip-sticking assessments; however, little to no whole class instruction followed to clarify these confusions. Some teachers modify their agendas in order to address a lack of understanding or progress. For example, the Public Speaking class had difficulty critiquing non-verbal cues of a pageant speech. Instead of proceeding with her plan of fishbowl speeches, the teacher engaged the students in a game of charades in order to reinforce the importance of non-verbal cues. In an American Sign Language class, teacher observations of students working on a project where they had to sign the lyrics of a song led to an extension of collaboration time in order to offer individual feedback to each group. World language teachers use the language lab once per cycle to assess students' oral skills through group conversations and individual activities. Teachers' ability to monitor students remotely allows for frequent check-ins and direct feedback during the assessments. Wellness teachers administer a skills test on an on-going basis and use the results to group students based upon their skill levels. Instruction is then differentiated to bring all students to the same level at their own rates or based upon their individual needs. The English department's curriculum indicates a use of pre-tests during grammar units and pre-writing activities. However, it is unclear as to how some of the administered assessments help to inform instruction since observations of some core academic classes reflect a more teacher directed approach to material. By consistently using formative assessments and using the results of those assessments to swiftly adapt and adjust instruction to address student needs,

teachers can better ensure that instruction targets specific student need, thereby continually deepening and extending the opportunities for student growth. (Student shadowing, teachers, self-study, student work)

Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice on a formal and informal basis. Teachers and administrators examine evidence of students learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. Standardized tests such as MCAS, AP and SAT results are reviewed to find ways of changing instruction and curricula. Two years ago, the math department rewrote the Algebra 1 curriculum after examining MCAS results. Students showed a weakness in the data strand relative to box plots and histograms. Since the current text book did not address this topic, this unit was added to the curriculum. As a result of MCAS data, the English department proposed to the faculty the idea of a school wide summer read. The proposed book, *The Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell, would expose all students to a contemporary non-fiction work. The science department reworked the physical science curriculum based on discussions with and data from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science teachers. The common lab report rubric designed for the 9<sup>th</sup> graders is also being used for the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. In summer 2011, physics and pre-calculus curricula were reordered and aligned to give the students more continuity and success in their learning experience. The use of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations has encouraged discussion regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment; it is unclear if these discussions have initiated changes in the curriculum. Professional development time has been used for the examination of student work including writing and critical thinking prompts, video projects, oral presentations, technology assessments and Power Point presentations. A reliance on data from standardized assessments appears to be driving revisions to curriculum and instruction. The guidance counselors use data from report cards along with individual student meetings to identify a need to improve instruction for some students who are struggling to access the curriculum. Data from alumni is not available and therefore has not been used to address weaknesses or celebrate strengths. By formally examining data, staff can align instruction and curriculum to ensure students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate achievement in meeting student learning expectations. (Teachers, teacher interview, support staff, self-study)

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

percent of teachers agree that school-wide grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised. In September 2010, Foxborough High School recomputed the cumulative weights of grade point averages (GPA) to better align with the Massachusetts State College and University of Massachusetts GPA Requirement System. In April 2010, senior students from a civil liberties class proposed to the school community the 'Strive for 85' campaign. Seniors who achieve an average grade of B (85%) or better from terms 1-3 and a minimum average of 80% in Quarter 4 are exempt from taking senior finals. This change was adopted late spring 2010 and is evidence of the school's belief in encouraging students to mature as independent learners. As a result of the revisions to grading practices and implementation of Strive for 85, students are able to demonstrate responsibility for and ownership of their learning as well as understand their progress in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Self-study, students, teachers, panel presentation)

#### Commendations

1. Formal process of evaluating student progress in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> learning expectations using school wide rubrics
2. Departmental implementation of common assessments
3. Communication of student progress in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
4. Use of school wide rubrics to assess individual student progress
5. Informal collaboration among staff to discuss student work and assessments
6. Frequent communication of learning expectations to students
7. Widespread use of teacher-generated and assignment specific rubrics
8. The variety of summative assessments used by many teachers
9. Professional development for collaboration and analysis of summative assessments
10. Assessment of civic and social expectations for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders by the wellness department

#### Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a formal process to assess juniors and seniors on social and civic learning expectations
2. Develop and use formal and consistent data analysis protocols, including the use of disaggregation of data



3. Develop and ensure the use of a greater range of formative assessment strategies to allow all students to demonstrate their proficiency in achieving established learning expectations
4. Discuss and implement a formal process to evaluate the effectiveness of formative assessments so that consistent checks of student progress occur prior to summative assessments
5. Ensure that teacher feedback on assessments aligns with school-wide learning expectations and rubrics

## School Culture and Leadership

### Conclusions

Foxborough High School has consciously and systematically built a safe, positive, and respectful school culture. The effort to build a respectful and supportive school culture has fostered student responsibility for their learning and shared ownership and pride in attending the high school. Students, staff, parents/guardians are involved in decision-making relative to school improvement. Through formal structures such as School Council, the Principal's Coffee's, Student Council and development of the student handbook, the school's core beliefs and values are shared and communicated. The school's core beliefs are prominently displayed throughout the building though some are an earlier version. The core beliefs serve as guiding principles for civic and social learning and expectations. The principal is actively engaged in communicating the core values to students and staff through an array of strategies. The student discipline system builds from the core values and beliefs and is administered by leadership in such a manner as to reinforce the core values. The Best Buddies and the Warrior Huddle are overt initiatives designed to promote the core values. Foxborough High School's exemplary music program, robust athletic and co-curricular participation and extensive elective offering support the diverse opportunities to learn and participate in the school. Students cite multiple examples of opportunities to participate in goal-setting through Group Guidance and the Strive for 85 programs. As a result of all these initiatives and offerings, Foxborough High School has created a community of learners committed to the stated core beliefs (student and parent handbooks, teacher interviews, Endicott surveys, students, faculty, and faculty meeting agendas)

Foxborough High School provides an equitable, inclusive and heterogeneous experience for some students over the course of their high school experience. However, most course offerings are tracked, thus not allowing full access to all course offerings. In recent years, efforts to offer a more heterogeneous course selection including open enrollment in elective courses, open participation in co-curricular activities and opportunities to learn outside the school have improved access to the general curricula. Students in open enrollment classes are allowed to take the course for honors or college prep credit. If a student chooses honors level participation, they are expected to complete additional assignments at a more rigorous level. If a student struggles with the honors expectations, he/she

may change his/her enrollment to college prep, where less is expected of the student. The differences in course weighting and the different expectations levels create a more tracked system rather than a true heterogeneous grouping. While Foxborough is working toward a more heterogeneously- grouped school, presently all students do not have access to all classes and equal opportunity to learn curricula which address higher order thinking. (Self-study, standard committee, program of studies, students and staff)

Through the Warrior Huddle there is an on-going advisory so that each student has an adult who knows the student well and can assist the student in achieving the learning expectations. . The school implemented the Warrior Huddle during 2011-12. Thus, the Warrior Huddle advisory is still in the development and implementation stage. Students also meet with guidance personnel in Group Guidance, which helps all students have an opportunity to meet the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations; the Group Guidance forums do not meet frequently but are a usual tool in connecting with all students. The advisories cover such topics as goal setting, opportunities to do community service or community based learning, the core values of the school, team building, and mentoring and conflict resolution. The school is committed to the continuation of the Warrior Huddle and Group guidance sessions, but the process of embedding advisories is still evolving and thus the impact on students is emerging. (Warrior Huddle program description, parents, teachers, students and the leadership team)

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal has instituted small group professional learning communities and encouraged staff to participate in professional discourse about teaching and learning. Professional development resources within and outside the school are utilized to maintain an understanding of best teaching practice, to improve knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> century curricula, cooperative learning , inquiry, differentiation of instruction, and formal and informal assessment. The staff is encouraged to reflect upon their teaching as part of department meetings and other formal and informal communication structures. There are monthly department meetings as well as monthly faculty meetings, where teachers have some time to review student work and develop and review common assessments. Otherwise, teachers collaborate as they can, particularly when they are teaching similar courses. Foxborough High School department meeting minutes and faculty meeting minutes reflect the effort to discuss teaching, learning, and assessment. Teachers also use formal graduate courses and

readings to maintain current content knowledge. Professional development courses are also provided throughout the year, through a partnership with the Norfolk County Teacher's Association. The Foxborough School District has offered professional development on the following topics: "Looking at Student work", "Analyzing and Assessing Student Work," "Development and Implementation of Rubrics by Content Area," " Differentiation in the Classroom," and "Using Inquiry Principles and Protocols to analyze MCAS data". Teachers are encouraged to write proposals to a local non-profit foundation to support unique or teacher-centered professional development. This foundation has supported over \$30,000 of professional development within the past five years. The leadership team is also open to suggestions for small group or large group professional development. The one significant need is for staff to have intra-department and inter-department time to discuss teaching, learning, and assessment. The professional staff has multiple opportunities, through a variety of professional development resources to gain an understanding of best educational practice and delivery. Though a variety of resources exist, the impact would be greater on teaching and learning if teachers had more formal time to talk about curriculum, instruction and assessment.

The leadership team has in place a research based supervision and evaluation system that focuses on student learning, teaching, instruction, and assessment. Administrators have been provided professional development on the use of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy as an essential element in providing evaluations linked to student growth. The leadership team has also used Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) as a resource regarding supervision and evaluation. Articles relating to teaching, learning, and assessment are regularly reviewed and discussed by the superintendent's leadership team and used to bring practice to the Foxborough School District. Research for Better Teaching including "Observing and Analyzing Teaching", "The Skillful Teacher", and the "Principles of Effective Teaching" have been used as core elements in analyzing teaching and learning and providing feedback to teachers about their delivery of instruction. "Breaking Ranks" has also been utilized with staff to discuss 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching practice and delivery. The implementation of best practice evaluation and supervision could be enhanced by a walk through system by which leadership provides systematic feedback to teachers on a regular basis. The Foxborough High School leadership team is utilizing best practice research to guide and implement supervision and evaluation practices. The system could be enhanced by more systematic and regular walk-throughs as a means to providing feedback about teaching and

learning. The substance of the supervision and evaluation system is helping to guide teaching and learning and ensuring that the core values are carried out. (Self-study, interviews, standard committee)

Foxborough High School uses a standard schedule of one period being an hour in length and the rest being 58 minutes in length, six periods per day within a seven day rotation. Class periods alternate except Period 1 depending on the day allowing for classes to meet at different times of the day. The non-rotating Period 1 exists to allow delivery of music programming and advance course offerings. Additionally, this aspect of the schedule permits 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to take math at the high school for advanced classes. A block schedule of 90 minutes was designed but never implemented several years ago due to input from staff. Concerns were expressed about students with disabilities not being able to attend to task for such a long period of time. Within the present schedule, time is allotted for department meeting and faculty meetings to discuss teaching and learning. However, it is not clear that department meetings are consistently used to discuss 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning. Teachers noted that more time is needed to hold collaborative discussions and to design and implement more interdisciplinary courses. There is no time allotted to hold discussions between various departments. The schedule, with 46 minute class periods, does not promote the emphasis of in-depth learning for all students. . (Self-study, student shadows, parents, teachers, superintendent's interview and classroom observations.)

Class sizes and student/teacher load enable teachers to meet the needs of different learning styles of students. Class sizes average 16 students per class in English, 17 students per class in mathematics, and under 20 students per class in other disciplines. Science classes sizes are suitable for both instructional and lab use. Freshman classes have the greatest class sizes, but class size routinely diminishes during the sophomore through senior year. Both students and parents believe the student to teacher ratio at Foxborough high School supports the schools 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning expectation and fulfillment of the school's core values. The Foxborough School Committee has been committed to maintaining class sizes that support teaching and learning as well as reasonable case management sizes for special education professionals. Consequently, reasonable and supportive class sizes have afforded teachers the opportunity to differentiate instruction, accommodate students' needs, and the support necessary to meet the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Self-study, classroom observations, student shadows, parents and superintendent's interview).

The principal works with other building leaders to provide instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal is a visible and dynamic leader, who personifies leadership in action. The principal, along with the assistant principals and department heads, is responsible for ensuring that teachers have quality instructional plans and that the instructional plans are executed. The leadership team also ensures that curricula reflect current best educational practice. A member of the leadership team meets with each professional staff member to establish goals that reflect "The Principles of Effective Teaching" as well as school and district improvement goals. The principal shares new initiatives and other components of 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations at faculty meetings, school committee meetings, parent meetings, in local newspapers and student publications. The principal and the leadership team make every effort to support teaching, learning, instruction and assessment so that students are provided a rounded educational program that supports the school's core values and beliefs. (School council minutes, standard committee, Endicott survey, teacher interviews, parents)

Foxborough High School leadership and staff have made considerable effort to include varying stakeholders in decision-making at the school. The principal models accessibility and openness to ideas and suggestions by maintaining an open door policy. Foxborough High School has a school council comprised of students, staff, administrators, and parent/guardians, which is a venue to share ideas and suggestions about school improvement. The school council meets nine times per year and assisted in development of the latest statement of core values, beliefs and learning expectations. The school council is not seen as a decision making body but rather as a conduit for ideas and information flow. Senior students are encouraged to complete surveys about their educational experience at the school. The surveys also have utility in bringing forth ideas for new courses and delivery of education. Parents are also surveyed about their student's educational experience. While there is not a consensus that decision-making is a shared process through these vehicles, there is a strong flow of information about the school which is appreciated by parents and community members. The principal also holds monthly coffees with parents and community members, which have an open agenda and where issues and concerns can be raised. The principal has attempted to gain support of new school initiatives by conveying information to staff and students. The recent attempt to introduce a block schedule was an example. The block schedule went through varying input

and communications processes. After a pilot introduction and through teacher input and evaluation, the block schedule was not implemented due to teacher concerns. Parents and students were surveyed about the introduction of long distance Virtual High School programming. Due to favorable input from parents and students, the Virtual High School programming was started this year. Though leadership has utilized multiple strategies to convey information about the school and its programming to a wide variety of stakeholders, systematic engagement in school decision-making does not occur. Foxborough High School is a school that models effective communication strategies, but it will improve when students, parents, and teachers have meaningful input into decision-making. (School council minutes, standard committee, senior surveys, students, parents).

Teachers regularly demonstrate initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and best educational practice by reviewing their instruction and teaching. Teachers at Foxborough High School make every effort to understand student needs and to develop programming to serve these needs. Department heads serve on and lead a number of school committees related to school improvement and delivery of instruction including the new summer reading initiative, school council, and the creation and implementation of a variety of professional development opportunities. Both teachers and administrators invest in the student population at Foxborough High School by serving as advisors, mentors, coaches, co-curricular activity leaders, and providing individual tutorial. Teachers serve in a leadership capacity by chairing the professional development committee and other standing curricula committees. Teachers and administrators serve on curriculum development committees during the summer where new course syllabi are developed, new curricula are written and up-dated, and new assessments are developed and piloted. Department heads actively support the supervision and evaluation processes by conducting observations and providing staff detailed feedback about planning, instruction, and assessment. The school has developed protocols where teachers are required to update student grades in Power School every two weeks and where teachers are expected to make regular calls home about student progress. Foxborough High School has a school culture where professional staff feels empowered to be a part of the change process. As a result, Foxborough High School is a school community that believes in and practices shared leadership and where teacher leaders flourish. (Principal, superintendent, teachers, students, and school culture and leadership committee)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and diligent in pursuit of achieving Foxborough High Schools 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. There is a strong, positive, and collegial relationship between the various district stakeholders. The school committee has supported the need for additional staff, funds for professional development, strategies to improve instruction, teaching and learning and provided time to implement the needed changes. The school committee has supported the new Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations and has given the superintendent the freedom to implement needed changes. To improve delivery of the wellness curriculum, the principal recently presented the need for an additional .6 wellness teacher as well as a partnership with the YMCA to provide a fitness center within the school. Both the superintendent and school committee supported these initiatives because of the strong correlation to improving the delivery of health and fitness for all students. At least one member of the school committee, the superintendent, and the principal has served on the District Strategic Planning Committee, Technology Master Plan Committee and the Response to intervention Committee. Just as the school committee has given the authority to the superintendent to implement the necessary changes to improve teaching and learning, the superintendent has given the principal sufficient authority to make these changes. It is a strong and productive working relationship which has enhanced the school's ability to deliver a quality education and provide a positive, respectful school culture. (Self-study, principal, superintendent, school committee, students, parents and staff).

The school committee and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the high school and support improvements to teaching and learning. The principal has authority to govern the school through school committee policy. The principal has multiple job responsibilities including general maintenance and cleanliness of the building, evaluation and supervision of staff in accordance with Department of Education standards, rules and regulations, professional development for all staff, and leadership of the instructional, teaching and assessment systems within the building. The principal sets high standards for himself and students and staff within the building. The principal conveys information about the educational system to the superintendent and school committee including new initiatives to support school improvement. The principal seeks input from a variety of stakeholders about the operation of Foxborough High School on a regular and systematic basis. The principal shares his authority with his leadership team and delegates as necessary. Each member of the leadership team is clear about their



responsibilities and functions within the building. Regular leadership team meetings are held to share information to improve the school. The principal is a member of the superintendent's leadership group and thus shares information about Foxborough High School and its Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectation with other district leader. Thus, there is a clear vertical articulation of ideas, strategies, and delivery systems to improve education. The recent program additions of Strive for 85, Warrior Huddle, and the long distance Virtual High School learning opportunities within the school reflect the ability of the principal to change the educational program and adopt 21<sup>st</sup> century learning practices. The present collaborative leadership culture in the Foxborough School District and the Foxborough High School supports the ability of students to achieve the learning expectations of the school. (Parents, teachers, principal, superintendent, school leadership committee, district policies)

**Commendations:**

1. Strong, collaborative district and school culture
2. A comprehensive research-based supervision and evaluation model
3. Comprehensive professional development program and delivery system
4. The strong working relationship within the building between staff and members of the administration
5. The principal's regular sharing of information with the community
6. Extensive and well supported professional development program

**Recommendations:**

1. Research, evaluate and ensure teacher evaluation system supports teaching and learning for all staff;
2. Provide time for staff to talk about professional development as it relates to teaching and learning;
3. Provide meaningful input to students, parents and guardians in the decision-making process;
4. Ensure that professional development opportunities are equitably distributed among all staff
5. Research, evaluate and ensure time is provided to enhance delivery of small learning committees and discussions within and among varying departments;

6. Study and implement ways to deliver more heterogeneous learning opportunities across the school
7. Ensure that every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in at least one heterogeneously grouped core course and report those courses
8. Review the current master schedule to ensure the structure of the school day best enables all students to develop deep and lasting understanding of the school's curricular goals, including 21<sup>st</sup> century student learning expectations

## School Resources for Learning

### Conclusions

Across the school there are 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. These programs include but are not limited to Response to Intervention (RTI), Building Based Support Teams (BBST), Alternative High School, Therapeutic Program, Partnership Academic and Vocational Excellence (PAVE), academic labs, certified math and English tutors, and MCAS prep classes. Support staff collaborates with students, parents, teachers and administrators to determine appropriate intervention strategies for students. RTI is designed to provide early intervention for any student experiencing difficulties. Referrals can be initiated by anyone who is concerned about a student. There are four Building Based Support Team (BBST) teams comprised of an administrator, guidance counselor, and two teachers who address student referrals and develop intervention strategies. Once an action plan is developed, the student's guidance counselor disseminates the information to the student's parents and teachers to ensure support for the student. If initial interventions are unsuccessful, referrals are forwarded to the special education and guidance directors for further assessment. If further interventions are necessary, the Alternative High School or Therapeutic Program may be considered. The Alternative High School and Therapeutic program provide services for students who benefit from a small structured classroom focusing on behavioral, therapeutic, and educational supports. PAVE is a special education program that prepares students for life after high school by providing vocational training, employment, and/or independent living. Fully included special education students are provided academic support through the Academic Lab. The school also offers academic support through the tutoring center which is staffed by certified math and English teachers; any student can access this service. Staff analyzes students' 8<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS results to determine which students will benefit from MCAS support through an MCAS prep class. Foxborough High School provides comprehensive intervention strategies for all its students. The implementation of timely, coordinated, and directive interventions provides early identification for at risk students and focuses on helping them to meet the school's 21<sup>st</sup> learning expectations. (Self-study, teachers, students, parents, school support staff, Endicott survey)

The school consistently provides information to families, especially those most in need, about available student support services. The support services staff communicates frequently and effectively with families. They receive information through parent coffees, Foxworthy News, mailings, individual phone calls, emails and the school's website. Eighty percent of parents and staff believe that support staff effectively communicates information, while 80% of students indicate they know who to access for support if needed. Communication between parents and school personnel is an essential component of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Parents receive a letter and/or phone call notifying them of the BBST referral and the action plan for their child. Support staff regularly maintains lists of available outside resources to share with families, counseling agencies and academic supports. Support staff provides evening presentations, Program of Studies, College Panel, and AP Informational nights as a way to communicate information to families. The school utilizes PowerSchool as an additional way to communicate electronically with parents on their child's progress. The administration identifies students who are missing parent contact information. In collaboration with the guidance department, these parents are individually contacted for the missing information. The school collaborates with the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) to provide information to families of special needs students through the district website and several annual workshops such as Basic Rights. Support staff has access to the software program Babelfish to translate school documents for English Language Learners and their families. In addition, they will provide translators for meetings with parents. The school understands the importance of strong communication. Through effective communication between school and home, teachers and parents are better able to collaboratively support student progress (students, parents, school support staff, Endicott survey, self-study)

Support services staff members effectively use technology to deliver a range of coordinated services for each student. SEMS Tracker is used by the special education and guidance departments to maintain IEP and 504 plans. Teachers also have access to SEMS and are able to review accommodation plans to better support their students. In addition, special education utilizes assistive technology programs such as Dragon, Naturally speaking, Kurzweil, interactive white board software, and audio books to further support student learning. Special education staff members are also piloting an iPad initiative with non-verbal autistic students, which is proving to be quite successful. The guidance department uses Naviance in the developmental guidance program, enabling

students to explore career and college opportunities. The program is an integral part of the curriculum which is why the counselors feel the need for further training on the program. They want to better understand how to fully utilize all of the programs features. All support staff members use Power School to communicate with students and their families and to access information related to individual students, including, but not limited to, attendance, grades, scheduling, IEP and 504 alerts, and health alerts. The library catalog is housed online as part of the SAILS library network (online public access catalog). The library/media center maintains accounts with Discovery Education online streaming, JSTOR (online access to academic journals) through the Boston Public Library, wikis, EasyBib, Gale, ProQuest and MassONE (storage in the cloud hosted by the MA DESE) for use by students and staff. By using technology effectively, students and staff are able to access relevant, timely information to support student growth through high school and beyond. (Teachers, students, support staff, self-study, classroom observation)

In the area of school guidance counseling services there are an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. The guidance office is a welcoming, friendly place. Upon entering the office, people are always greeted and immediately made to feel comfortable. Staff recognize this is a vital part of the department due to the nature of their work. The space is adequate and meets the needs of the staff and students. The guidance staff consists of four counselors, including the department head, along with the school-to-work and college counselors. The counselors have an average caseload of 250, with the director having a smaller load due to additional responsibilities. College and school-to-work counselors help to provide even more services to students beyond the four counselors. The counselors divide their time among course selection, personal counseling, post-secondary planning, special education services, group counseling, and crisis intervention. They spend the majority of their time working individually working with students on post-secondary planning and personal issues, including about 100 hours a year delivering group guidance lessons to students, approximately 60 hours a year meeting with students to discuss scheduling, plus additional time resolving scheduling conflicts. They attend all IEP, BBST, and mental health team meetings. The counselors are responsible for administering all MCAS and advanced placement exams, as well as proctoring the exams and developing EPP plans. These indirect services absorb a significant amount of time which limits their direct contact with students. By aligning resources to meet student needs, the school counseling office is meets the needs of students in the development of their 21<sup>st</sup> learning

expectations as they progress through high school and prepare for success beyond. (Observations, teachers, students, parents, school leadership, school support staff, Endicott survey)

The school counseling staff meets regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling. Through the group guidance program, counselors meet with students between 7-8 times per year to deliver a comprehensive developmental curriculum for each grade level. Various aspects of career and college exploration are pursued each year. In freshman year, the focus is initially on orienting students to the high school, and students are then introduced to community involvement, volunteer, and extracurricular opportunities. In alignment with the core values, the curriculum focuses on respect for self and others, bullying, cyber bullying, and social media and its impact on individuals. The sophomore program emphasizes exploration of careers, majors, and potential programs for both. Students are given the personality profile, "Do What You Are" based on the Myers-Brigg to help guide them in the search for careers/majors that might be a good fit. Students are also introduced to the development of a resume. In junior year, the program becomes more focused on identifying post-secondary programs to begin to visit. The hope is for students to explore the many options beyond high school. Students who are interested in college can supplement their work with their guidance counselor by meeting with the college counselor to discuss potential colleges. Students who are career or vocational bound have the opportunity to supplement their exploration by meeting with the school-to-work counselor. In senior year, the emphasis is on understanding the college/postsecondary application process. All students participate in the group guidance program. Students in the substantially separate programs, Alternative High School and Therapeutic Program, are invited to participate in the group sessions but are often unable to access this resource because of their disability. The guidance staff also meets with every student each year to provide academic planning. In junior and senior year, additional individual meetings are provided to support students in their post-secondary planning. In addition to group guidance, students are offered a wealth of opportunities in which to explore their interest through college admissions fairs, vocational school fairs, military visits, construction career day, a community service fair, job shadowing, internships, and various field trips with the school-to-work counselor. The guidance counselors also collaborate with the middle school staff in assisting the transition of students from the middle to high school through "Move up Day". The developmental guidance program empowers students to succeed academically and socially

through a variety of appropriate programs to help student prepare for the future and be successful in the present. (Teacher interview, teachers, students, parents, school leadership, school support staff, Endicott survey)

The entire counseling staff works collaboratively with community and area mental health agencies to provide outreach and referrals for students and their families. Support personnel refer students to community agencies for a variety of reasons: mental health issues, substance abuse issues, and homelessness, to name a few. They work with the agencies such as Riverside Community Care and Foxborough Council on Aging and Human Services. The effective collaboration between the counseling staff and outside agencies expands the range of service options available to students in times of need. (Teacher interview, school support staff, self-study)

The counseling staff uses ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The school administers a school wide survey to all freshmen and seniors to gather information related to its programs. The counseling staff meets with the principal to discuss the findings of the survey as it relates to their work and ways to improve the services they provide. The guidance counselors administer surveys to all students at the completion of the group guidance courses to gather information on ways to enhance students' learning. In addition, parents are asked to complete an evaluation after informational nights. The counseling staff currently administers paper surveys. The guidance office analyzes testing data to support student progress. They examine the PSAT results for 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> grade students to determine potential success in Advanced Placement courses. MCAS results are also examined to determine strategies to assist students who might have failed the exam. They are also reviewed to improve skills for students who score in the "needs improvement" category. Guidance counselors are responsible for developing MCAS Educational Proficiency Plans to strength identified weaknesses in needs improvement (NI) student scores. The use of ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community guides the support staff in their decision making on behalf of students. (Self-study, support staff, teachers, students)

The school's health services have one certified nurse, who is also licensed by the American Heart Association and holds a BSN and M.Ed. The nurse provides assessment of acute illness and injury, case management of special healthcare

needs, administration of medication, mandated screenings – vision, hearing and scoliosis for grades 9 and 10, and she provides outside referrals. The FHS nurse is the head nurse for the district, which is a stipend position. The school nurse frequently provides students and parents with outside referrals related to students' on-going health issues. The nurse maintains a referral list of outside providers for related issues, including, but not exclusive to, anxiety, weight management, eating disorders, vision assistance, psychiatric, and general medical concerns. The school nurse meets monthly with other district nurses and the school physician to remain current on medical trends. The total health program at FHS provides for and meets the needs of all students at FHS. (Support staff, nursing staff, and self-study)

Library/media services are occasionally integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices in support of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Eighty percent of students state they do not use the library during class time. The library staff is responsive to requests for materials, information, and/or help to support learning when approached by students or staff. The library provides a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum. Teachers are involved in making decisions about the selection of materials for the library/media center so that the available resources best meet their curricular and instructional needs. The Library/media specialist works collaboratively when approached by teachers but generally does not pro-actively seek out opportunities to connect skills used in the library with the school's curriculum and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. This limited collaboration between library/media center and curricular areas is not able to fully support and enhance student development of essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as information and media literacy. (Panel presentation, teachers, students, school support staff, Endicott survey, classroom observations)

The library/media services have sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide a comprehensive library media program. There is a full-time certified librarian, two full-time educational assistants, a Virtual High School coordinator who also supervises lab central and a tutoring area staffed with full-time certified teachers in English and mathematics. Library/media staff are very friendly, knowledgeable and willing to help those who seek it. The facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school. Library/media center hours of operation as 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 7 a.m. – 2 p.m. Friday. Informally, parent and community comments, which come from School Council meetings and Coffee Conferences



held with the principal or superintendent, are also considered. The library/media services personnel maintain a strong collection of materials that support the curriculum and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Students, self-study, school support staff, Endicott survey, teachers)

Support services for identified students, including special education, section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners have adequate support systems in most areas but are limited in others. There are eleven certified special education teachers, one special education director for the district, sixteen special education aides, one ELL specialist for the district, two tutors who specialize in mathematics and English, a social worker, and a part-time psychologist. The special education department has adequate staffing to address the ongoing needs of students. However, support staff indicates a significant increase in social-emotional issues, which directly impacts the students and staff. There is one school psychologist employed 80% of the time and a full-time social worker. The school psychologist is responsible for all educational and psychological testing as well as group counseling for identified students. These responsibilities along with only working four days a week significantly impact her availability to provide individual counseling. The social worker is primarily responsible for providing individual counseling for identified students as well as delivering resiliency curriculum through the Interpersonal Dynamics course. She also maintains a regular schedule for individual counseling. Staff reports that at times when a student is experiencing a personal crisis, of a non-emergency nature, there can be a considerable wait time for appropriate counseling supports. The nature of the job requires work to be done on an individual basis which is more restrictive than a group environment. By adequately staffing and supporting areas focused on helping students with learning and/or social needs, Foxborough High School is committed to helping all students meet its expectations for student learning. (Self-study, support services, Endicott survey, standard committee)

Support services staff collaborate extensively with teachers, counselors, target services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The special education liaisons communicate extensively with teachers to assess the progress of their students, and they collaborate on the modification of curriculum for individual students. In order to assist teachers in meeting the needs of all students with learning differences, the special education program provide educational assistants in a variety of core classes in grades 9-11. The special education director reviews schedules during the summer to

determine where the resources of the assistants can be best used. The regular inclusion of educational assistants in the core classes supports both the student and teachers in meeting the students' learning differences. It also creates a collaborative environment between staff members. In addition, educational assistants are in labs to provide additional support for students. Special education liaisons regularly communicate with teachers regarding the learning expectations for their students. The social worker communicates with staff members regarding the social-emotional needs of students. The school psychologist collaborates with staff regarding student progress for initial evaluations, annual and 3-year evaluations. The guidance counselors are responsible for overseeing and reviewing 504 plans for identified students. They collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure that appropriate accommodations are being utilized and that students are making effective progress. Across the school teachers receive regular communication from support services regarding students who may need extra support. Extensive collaboration not only supports but also ensures all students are identified and receiving appropriate assistance. (Self-study, support services, Endicott survey, classroom observation)

Support Services programs provides adequate inclusive learning opportunities for all students. The vast majority of classes offered at Foxborough High are open to all students. Most classes include students with IEPs and/or 504 plans. Several students from the PAVE, Alternative High School and Therapeutic programs are integrated into classes. Appropriate accommodations and/or modifications are provided for all students with IEP and/or 504 plans in order to create inclusive opportunities. All students have the opportunity to engage in work-study programs with job coaches, as needed, within and outside of the school in real world settings and situations. Examples include, but are not limited to, the school store, working in local businesses and schools, and participating in everyday situations such as ordering food at a restaurant and cooking. The school provides extensive opportunities for inclusive learning for all students which enrich the learning environment for everyone. (Self-study, support services, Endicott survey, classroom observation)

Support services programs by design perform ongoing assessments using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and to ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Some support services use the results of MCAS and PSAT testing to evaluate the educational proficiency of students. Students who fall below proficient may be placed in the following classes to help them increase their

proficiency: Academic Lab, MCAS prep, SAT Math Prep, SAT English Prep. Any person -- parent, teacher, student or other -- may refer a student to the BBST for assessment. Teachers indicate that the implementation of BBST has provided students with necessary learning accommodations while significantly lessening the number of referrals sent to the special education department. Support service programs regularly use assessments and feedback to improve their services; therefore, all students are receiving the help they need to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Support staff, teachers, classroom observation, self-study, parents, students)

### **Commendations**

1. Knowledgeable and dedicated support staff focused on helping all student succeed
2. Building Based Support Team focused on helping each individual student
3. A collaborative and effective structure of the school counseling office
4. The provision of library/media center materials and technologies in support of student learning
5. Approachable and knowledgeable library/media center staff
6. Effective communication with entire school community
7. Academic lab and tutoring program designed for students in need of additional support
8. The school-to-work program
9. The wide variety of programs developed to help students at all levels of need

### **Recommendations**

1. Review the roles and responsibilities of the social worker and school psychologist to ensure there is adequate counseling support to meet the social- emotional needs of the student body
2. Develop and implement a plan to integrate library skills into the school's curriculum

## Community Resources for Learning

### Conclusions:

The community and district's governing bodies collectively provide adequate and dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services. More than 700 students (approximately 85% of the study body), 85 staff members (approximately 80% of staff), and 119 parents participated in the Endicott Survey with conclusions that 86.1% of students agree that the school has a wide range of programs and services, while 95.3% of staff and 91.8% of parents concur with the student response. Parents as taxpayers are willing to fund this wide range of programs and are satisfied with how the money is used and distributed. Several programs provide students and their families with subsidies for fees for busing, parking, or athletics.

Greater course and program selections for students have been provided in recent years such as Russian Literature, public speech and debate, anatomy and physiology, introduction to forensic science, health education, and Virtual High School programs despite the recent economic downturn. While the budget illustrates the school has been level funded for several years, the budget has actually increased to accommodate several needs, e.g., MCAS tutors, guidance counselors, and extracurricular salaries have grown. Despite these increases, according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2010 Per Pupil Expenditures Report, Foxborough still only spends \$12,125 per student, which is slightly below the \$13,055 state average. In addition to funding from the town, though, Foxborough has access to several innovative programs, community groups, and businesses which provide resources and support to educators. FACES (Foxborough: A Community Enriching Schools), a community non-profit group provided \$36,848 in 2011 alone. Since 2008, FACES has awarded 38 grants totaling just over \$138,000. These grants provide essential materials that teachers otherwise would not have. As a result of a combination of community resources, Foxborough is able to provide students with a wide range of programs and services, enhancing their experience and curriculum. (Endicott survey, parents, school leadership, self-study, department leaders, per pupil expenditures report, teachers)

The school has sufficient professional and support staff, and it prides itself on its ability to retain faculty despite difficult economic times. In fact, staffing in several areas has increased over the last three years with the addition of MCAS tutors, technology lab supervisors, guidance support, English and Math teachers, and an anticipated Health teacher for the upcoming school year. However, staffing for the school psychologist, nurse, and social worker has not increased. The Foxborough community is satisfied with the staffing capabilities of the school, with 85.4% of students pleased with the number of teachers, 91.8% of teachers supportive of town funding of professional and support staff, and 88.2% of parents in agreement that the community provides dependable funding for staffing. Class sizes are adequate with several classes consisting of fewer than 20 students. It is possible the school's ability to avoid cutting staff positions in the most year was in part due to the teacher union's agreement to accept a 0% increase over the last fiscal year. It is apparent that Foxborough is able to provide the necessary professional and support staff required to support the student body. (Observations, budget, self-study, Endicott survey, parents, administrators, department leaders, teachers)

The district provides acceptable funding for ongoing professional development and curriculum revision but inequities of distribution of these funds exist. The Professional Development Team's mission statement points out that Foxborough's goal is to "provide a variety of opportunities for all staff members to improve professional practice." Funding has been provided for five staff development days, which have been organized by either the superintendent or the Professional Development Team. The school prefers to have faculty members lead this professional development or to have courses offered at Foxborough, rather than off-site, as a means to conserve money. Funding was also available for curriculum development, especially with the creation of new courses, as seen in the Science department and Wellness department. An examination of the budget revealed that \$113,650 was allocated for total staff professional development across the district for the 2011-2012 school year, with \$45,000 divided into three seasons for graduate course reimbursement. The tuition reimbursement allows teachers to take up to three classes per year, for sixty percent reimbursement. Funding has increased for this reimbursement over the last three years but it is only available on a first-come, first serve basis, and is not necessarily available to everyone. Many faculty members and administrators are looking for an alternative method of distributing these funds. While the district is able to provide funding for professional development and curriculum enhancement opportunities, the distribution of these funds is

inconsistent and limited. As the district secures adequate professional development resources and ensuring they are equitably appropriated, all staff will continue to learn and grow in order to improve their instructional practices for students. (Professional development team, budget, teachers, self-study, panel presentation, school leadership)

The school is taking conscious steps towards equipping itself for the 21st century world. There is a willingness to incorporate technology into the school, and care is taken to try to ensure it enhances the learning environment. As a result, technology inclusion has been gradual, deliberate, and well-constructed. Despite slow progress, 91.8% of faculty surveyed were satisfied that the school funded a wide range of technology support. All science and math classrooms, and several English, world language and history classrooms are outfitted with interactive whiteboards. In addition, the English, math, science, history, technology, business, world language, and art departments each have access to a computer lab, with two additional computer labs attached to the Media Center. Students were generally satisfied with this accessibility, prompting 71.7% of students to agree that the school has a sufficient number of computers. Scheduling for the computer labs appears to be difficult at times, and many educators wish that there were mobile labs (with computers or tablets) within the school. However, the school is not equipped for any kind of mobile technology, with wireless internet restricted to the Media Center. Technology support is funded in the budget, with money distributed to the various technology administrators, support, network services, hardware, software, and maintenance. Any technology issue is quickly handled via the Helpdesk link off of Foxborough High School's webpage. In addition to the funding provided by the school, funding has been provided through the district's Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) budget, as well as through grants from businesses and organizations. Companies such as Invensys Foxborough allow students to be on the cutting edge of technology, providing funding to the technology education department and science department on several occasions. Through a combination of the district government body and community support, Foxborough is provided with adequate funding to match their traditional technological goals; in the years ahead, FHS will need to continue developing its technology infrastructure, including wireless and mobile technology access, to equip the building for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. (Facility tour, classroom observations, teachers, school leadership, Endicott survey, budget)

Overall, the school has demonstrated that sufficient equipment is provided through a combination of funds. The school efficiently uses its square footage, allowing for a multitude of rooms dedicated to computer labs, CAD rooms, three art rooms, tutor rooms in the library, areas for family and consumer science, the music program, and separate rooms intended for departmental collaboration. Many teachers have ready access to a combination of LCD projectors, interactive whiteboards, science lab equipment, computers for both faculty and student use, TV's with DVD/VCR capabilities, overhead projectors, and copiers. There are also sufficient athletic facilities either surrounding the school or easily accessible to the school. The recently renovated gym has new equipment and rooms dedicated to sport teams and the wellness program in the school. Ninety-seven percent of staff agree that the community and district's governing body provide dependable funding for equipment. The funding of this equipment is integral to the effective continuation of school activities. (Facility tour, classroom observations, school support staff, Endicott survey, school leadership)

The school and community provides adequate and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. Department members purchase the instructional supplies they need for their curriculum. For the 2011-2012 fiscal year, \$123,435 was budgeted for textbooks, instructional equipment, instructional supplies, and instructional technology, with increases in every category over a three year period except for instructional technology. Recent improvements to the science department made through a 3-year renovation project to the building resulted in updated lab areas, new instructional materials, and more efficient classroom layouts. Grant monies from Invensys Foxborough and FACES provided additional resources for classroom instructional usage. The older equipment of the school is in good condition; however, improvements can be made to update certain areas such as the auditorium.

Sixty percent of students believe the school furniture and equipment is in good condition. As a result of the efforts of the district and concerted efforts of teachers and administrators to receive outside grants, Foxborough has instructional materials and supplies that would normally not be available given their budget restrictions. (Department leaders, teachers, budget, Endicott survey, facility tour, classroom observations, self-study)

Foxborough High School has developed sufficient plans to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant. Foxborough High

School fully funds programs that ensure the building and facilities plant is properly repaired and maintained, replacement equipment is properly maintained and catalogued, and they keep the school clean on a daily basis. The school has documented clear repair and maintenance plans and procedures for all of the facility's support equipment, and it has a supply of replacement components at the site. In addition, the school has received much of the documentation needed to perform preventive maintenance and repair on the building's newly installed physical plant systems, and any remaining items of documentation will be included in the new as-built drawings that will be provided by the architect. Training videos of all the systems have been provided by manufacturers on DVD, ensuring that replacement personnel will have a reliable source of instruction on these systems and equipment. Foxborough High School is in the final year of an approximately \$19 million 3-year improvement project for the conversion of the school's important structural components (such as roofing and windows), and the older facilities plant systems. This comprehensive upgrade addresses many of the school's recurring maintenance issues. (Facility tour, facilities plant manager, budget, school leadership)

The school maintains accurate and detailed budget line items to plan and account for the operation and maintenance of the building and school plant. A storage facility exists on site for the stocking and maintenance of key replacement components and is maintained by the facilities maintenance personnel. The maintenance staff consists of three full time qualified individual at the school during the day, one of which focuses on the athletic areas and fields. (Facility tour, facilities plant manager, school leadership)

The school is always kept in a clean state as a result of a collective effort. This has led to a sense of pride among the teachers and students to want to keep it that way. The custodial staff consists of six full-time employees, each covering approximately 35,000 square feet of building. Although the plant manager indicates that this quantity is higher than average for the position, the outcome of the work is favorable and does not warrant the addition of another individual. (Facility tour, facilities plant manager, teachers, school leadership, student shadowing, self-study, classroom observation)

Technologically, the school provides sufficient funds for the support of its wireless infrastructure in (and only in) the Library Media Center, nine computer and language labs, and data storage servers which are located off of the Library Media Center. The staff includes one full time technician stationed at the high



school, and support from five other technicians that float throughout the school district as needed. The system is reliable, with the exception of a delay which is observed by several science teachers when two or more computer labs are using the internet simultaneously. In addition, there are occasional delays of up to five seconds in system response on some of the school's interactive whiteboards. Whenever the system experiences a significant problem, it is always repaired in a timely manner. Foxborough high school has developed sufficient plans to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant. Foxborough high school fully funds programs that ensure the building and facilities plant is properly repaired and maintained, replacement equipment is properly maintained, and catalogued, and they keep the school clean on a daily basis. As a result of these efforts the high school environment is safe, comfortable, and conducive to learning; however, the lack of wireless accessibility throughout the school prevents students and staffs from accessing important information available through wireless devices as well as the Internet and decreasing opportunities to students and staff to be part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Teachers, school leadership, self-study, school support staff)

The community funds and the school implements long-term plans for improvements to the programs and services offered. As part of the School Improvement Plan, Foxborough developed a 3-year improvement plan, which would look to employ strategies to create additional curricular pathways. This includes the creation of a senior English elective program, additional Advanced Placement courses, new science offerings, and a greater emphasis on heterogeneously grouped classes. In addition, plans for improvements to facilities such as improvement of fields, locker rooms, and an addition of a disc golf course would provide additional wellness programs aimed to teach to the "whole student." Funding for curriculum development has increased over the past three years and there are plans for this trend to continue. The community group FACES (Foxborough: A Community Enriching Schools) provide annual grants to teachers to pay for "innovative programs and state-of-the-art technology to enrich the learning experience." This funding, and the anticipated future funding to accommodate the goals of the school, demonstrates the community's commitment to successfully delivering services to help all students succeed, both now and in the future. (School leadership, teachers, self-study, panel presentation, department leaders)

The community and school board maintain an adequate level of communication allowing for planning and adjustments to enrollment changes and staffing needs

when necessary. Significant fluctuations in enrollment are not anticipated over the five year period covered by the long range planning process, and staffing is projected to increase slightly. According to school board members, there exists a strong relationship built upon trust and openness with the town's governing body and regular communication around enrollment is common. (Self-study, teachers, panel presentation, school board, school leadership)

The community funds and the school implements the use of technology and has produced a limited long-term plan for technology. Spending on technology as part of the recent capital improvement project has been adequate. The Local Technology Plan addresses the needs and costs, and suggests strategic purchases of technology equipment and maintenance. The Technology Plan addresses hardware and personnel infrastructures, staff training, and descriptions of the current state of technology within the district. The plan serves as a vision and is focused on providing students with the necessary technology skills needed in order to meet 21st century learning expectations. The plan also lists the needs of the school moving forward, such as the need for a larger centralized computer lab to better support classroom teacher needs, the expansion of the wireless network, and the inclusion of more mobile technology to supplement teaching practices. However, the plan lacks specific and sufficient level of details to be executable, as it suggests no means to provide improvements in these areas. Neither the Local Technology Plan nor the DESE required Online Technology Plan are prominently displayed or linked online. (Classroom observation, students, teachers, panel presentation)

The community funds and the school has implemented a long-range plan that addresses capital improvement projects. Foxborough High School is in the final year of a three year building and grounds renovation project designed specifically to target improvement areas that directly impact building climate and student learning. The \$19 million Capital Improvement Project included renovations/repairs/upgrades: asbestos abatement above ceiling level and floor tiles; replacement of the entire roof to a higher R-value reflective (white) product; new energy efficient low emissivity windows; improvements to a more efficient lighting system, including the replacement of all interior lighting with higher efficiency reflective fluorescent recessed fixtures (money is bonded, and hallways will receive this lighting planned for summer 2012), and conversion of all lighting to occupancy sensors for energy improvement; replacement of heating boilers and conversion of site from underground oil storage to natural gas; installation of new Energy Management Computer System for automated control

of the site HVAC systems; replacement of a single chilled water cooling tower with staged AC compressors; inclusion of an above ground diesel storage tank for an emergency generator; connecting natural gas line to cafeteria in support of the longer term conversion from electric to natural gas for larger food preparation equipment; replacement of tiles in student bathrooms; several upgrades to the gymnasium including installation of a new floor, the addition of a new PA system, and construction of motorized bleachers, painting of the gymnasium ceiling, and the planned and bonded replacement of storage lockers in boy's and girl's locker room. (Facilities manager, facility tour, school leadership, self-study)

In addition, the science wing classrooms were all upgraded to include slate topped laboratory tables and storage areas, and the Library Media Center was renovated with new carpeting, painting of the concrete block walls, and installation of new book storage racks. Computer labs were also either installed or upgraded in the areas of English, math, science, history, technology, business, world language, art, and the Library Media Center bringing the total number of labs at the school to nine. An additional project undertaken in conjunction with the local YMCA was the renovation and construction of a fitness center (open to YMCA members after school hours) that the school utilizes during physical education classes and extracurricular sports training. The provision by the community of an updated school facility ensures a facility to meet the needs of current and future students of Foxborough. (Facilities manager, facility tour, school leadership, self-study, teachers, school support staff)

Future long-range capital improvement plans include replacement of the school's parking lots and walkways, installation of irrigated grass areas adjacent to the main building entrance, installation of one athletic field (to be used by a combination of football, soccer, lacrosse, and physical education), and construction of a new parking lot adjacent to the new field. The facilities and administrative team believe the building itself is adequate and includes the necessary technology to support their 21st century learning objectives. As a result of several capital improvement projects collectively funded by the town and the state of Massachusetts, Foxborough is able to provide facilities and services that provide a safe and meaningful learning environment at this time. However, the need exists for additional playing fields for the athletic and Physical Education programs of FHS; additionally, the school currently lacks a detailed technology integration plan, highlighted by the lack of wireless capability throughout the facility, which will ultimately result in a negative

impact on students to use 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. (Facilities manager, facility tour, self-study, school leadership)

Facility and building administrators are actively involved in the development of the budget at Foxborough High School. The budget is prepared from the bottom up, starting with a proposal from department heads and the district facilities manager, which is then reviewed by the administration. Individual budget requirements may be reviewed and prepared by teachers, who then present these plans to their department heads. The department heads submit their summarized budget proposals to the assistant principal, who in turn reviews all of proposals with the school principal. Review of detailed budget proposals are part of the planning and approval process. All inputs are consolidated with those of the larger district, and a summary is presented to the school committee for review. The school committee returns a baseline budget for each school. Foxborough has not had a “failed budget request” in the past 3 years. The operating budget process as designed has worked effectively for the school, and it has had a positive impact on student learning and faculty morale. (Facilities manager, budget proposals, school leadership, department heads, school board, self-study)

Facility and building administrators are actively involved in the implementation of the budget at Foxborough High School. The district facilities manager is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the facilities and building portion of the school budget. He personally monitors all of the line items in the budget that fall under these areas, and he makes the necessary adjustments throughout the year. The two assistant principals are charged with timely monitoring and implementation of that portion of the school budget. Teachers have the necessary supplies and equipment that they have requested as part of the budget process. The facilities manager, department heads, and the building principal work collaboratively to ensure that the budget is executed according to plan; the result is an operating budget that provides an enhanced learning experience for its students, and a safe and comfortable environment for all who enter the building. (Facilities manager, school leadership, facility tour, teachers)

The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services that complement the school’s core values and learning expectations. Foxborough High School’s recent renovations as a result of their three year CIP project provides for a safe, more comfortable, and more effective learning

environment. By eliminating asbestos from the ceilings, upgrading the ventilation, and improving the heating and cooling systems of the school, student's safety and comfort is ensured. In addition, future monies saved due to improved energy efficiency can be applied to other areas of need for the school. The renovations have also immediately impacted the quality of school programs, specifically in the wellness and science departments. Improvements to the school gymnasium, locker rooms, and the YMCA-sponsored fitness center serve as enhancements to the wellness curriculum and allow for the improved education of the "whole student." Additionally, this focus on student health and fitness is recognized in the athletics department, which also benefits from the structural improvements made through the renovation project. The upgrades to the science wing classrooms provide for a more dynamic and modern curriculum suitable for the 21st century learning. The renovations also included technological advances, specifically in the Library Media Center and departmental computer labs. This opens up opportunities for greater inclusion of digital responsibility and learning in Foxborough. (Facilities manager, facility tour, teachers, students, school leadership, school support staff)

Additional site services that are available at the high school include two computer labs attached to the Media Center, two instructional rooms for the Music program (as well as one room for storage of instruments), an auditorium (which is in need of technical and aesthetic upgrades), rooms for academic labs dedicated to the alternative program / special education, a kitchen and cafeteria sufficient to serve the student body in three shifts, a woodshop, Computer Aided Drafting and Design lab with 19 stations, a modern guidance suite, nurse's office, and sufficient office area for administration and support staff. These flexible areas enable Foxborough to provide the services essential for students and staff. (Facilities manager, facility tour, teachers, school leadership, self-study)

The site and grounds were neat, clean, and free of obstacles that could create a safety hazard. Appropriate and sufficient handicapped parking and access to the building was available, and the well-lighted parking areas were adequate for the number of students and employees at the school. The parking lots are beyond their useful lifespan, and evidence of bonded CIP was presented for a parking lot and driveway replacement project including granite curbing that is scheduled to occur during the summer of 2012. All snow plowing on site is performed by the Foxborough Highway Department including sidewalks leading to the school property. There is sufficient area to allow for pile up of parking area snow in order to maintain a safe environment. The school maintenance staff (two full

time staff members) are responsible for clearing the school's sidewalks. The loading docks and recycle / trash pickup areas are appropriately located behind the school away from mainstream traffic. In addition, Foxborough high school is now 100% connected to the town's waste treatment facility. (Facilities manager, facility tour, school leadership)

Additional site amenities include six new tennis courts, two baseball fields, and two practice fields (used for football, soccer, lacrosse or PE as needed). A stone dust walkway had been installed to provide handicap access to all of these fields. In addition there is an outdoor food court eating area for students, which is also handicap accessible. A plan for future site improvements (not yet funded) is under development and includes a practice field. Through a well-coordinated and organized effort on the part of the facilities manager, administrators, and building support personnel, the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services for students. (Facilities manager, facility tour, school leadership)

The school effectively 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. Reports from the cafeteria include updated Food Establishment Inspection Reports from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, permits from the town to operate a food establishment, and individual employee certifications from the National Restaurant Association's ServSafe program. In addition, the food services department has all federal Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), which lists the current chemicals in the cleaning supplies utilized within the cafeteria. Other documentation of chemical uses for maintenance, art, science, and family and consumer sciences are compiled in a collection of Material Safety Data Sheets for the building. There is an annual renewal of certification from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts granting use of the auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, library, and classrooms, indicating the school is in accordance with 780 CMR, Chapter 1 (The Eighth Edition of the Massachusetts State Building Code) and Chapter 304 of the Acts of 2004 (an act to further enhance fire and life safety), and also recommends a maximum occupancy load for combined classrooms at 1,100. Foxborough has also recently installed an upgraded elevator for general use, which is currently certified. A major component of the recent renovations made the school handicapped accessible, with the addition of the new elevator, a lift in the auditorium, ramps, bathroom railings, and handicapped lockers and tables. The school also provided the Fire Safety Inspection Report, which proves that the

school is compliant with all district and state fire safety laws. All violations listed on the report were immediately completed within a week of its filing. In addition, the facilities manager, in conjunction with the Foxborough Fire Department, is responsible for monitoring the maintenance of the fire equipment on a quarterly basis and conducting seasonal fire drills in accordance with state regulations (although only two drills are required by law, administrators have attempted to have four each year). Documentation has also been maintained for the on-going MSBA-assisted renovation projects by the project manager. The facilities manager and CMS project manager also provided evidence of all manuals and training for new equipment, including the PA system for the auditorium, the new heating system, and energy management system. There is a formal process for submitting maintenance requests through Purchase Orders, and these are handled with utmost immediacy and care by both the maintenance department and, when applicable, the administrative staff. Through a well-coordinated and organized effort of the facilities manager and administrators, the school emphasizes student and building safety. (Facilities manager, school leadership, teachers)

The professional staff consistently and actively engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and reaches out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. Foxborough staff regularly connects with parents and guardians of all students in the high school, making information readily available to district families. At the beginning of the year, the Media Center provides parents and students with a "Technology Night," which reviewed the new technological resources the school has to offer. The special education department holds a Special Education Curriculum night, providing an introduction to all Special Education and Alternative education services at the school. A major element of this presentation is an introduction to PAVE (Partnership in Academic and Vocational Excellence) and a review of the various academic and vocational trainings offered through the school. The Guidance Department also heavily invests time to inform students and parents of the college admission process, holding a seminar at the beginning of sophomore year. The staff provides a packet to students and parents which outlines the progress targets for each of the sophomore, junior, and senior years. It also provides steps for applying to educational institutions, as well as steps to transition to a college environment. In addition, the staff provides information on vocational, internship, and transitional programs, as well as information on community colleges throughout the state. By providing a plethora of panels and informational sessions, it is apparent that the school attempts to inform and

interact with the parents of the student body. (Teachers, panel presentation, self-study, school leadership, parents)

The school demonstrates efforts to reach out to parents of specific students who may be less engaged in the school. The school makes a concerted effort to reach parents and students who demonstrate academic, behavioral, or emotional struggles. The school conducts small group meetings with college advisors for struggling senior students, many of whom had GPAs under 2.0. Staff members outline potential post-secondary options, whether it is four-year college, the work force, military, or community college. They also present a variety of options for education depending on years and price, and survey the students to determine their possible destinations. The Special Education Department also sufficiently reaches out to parents, holding meetings to review Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), and discussing means to meet student needs with parents and educators. The school's Building Base Support Team (BBST) meets regularly to review the needs of underperforming students throughout the school, and provides outreach to parents and guardians when applicable. Significant and constant outreach is demonstrated by the school social worker. A Child Behavioral Initiative program through MassHealth works with parents and caseworkers for troubled students who do not attend school regularly. The school social worker also plays an integral role in the case of any CHINS (Child In Need of Services) that are filed, providing services to parents and guardians of troubled youths. In addition, the school's M.E.T.C.O. (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity) director provides teachers access to parents, and serves as a means of outreach to integrated and students. The school demonstrates compassion and a genuine sense of caring regarding student progress and achievement for students and families who are less engaged. (Self-study, panel presentation, teachers, school leadership, department leaders, parents)

Foxborough High School's parents can connect to school in a variety of ways, and the school views its open lines of communication as an element of pride. Parents can use mail or phone to request a parent meeting. All staff members are readily accessible. The school also views parents as partners, as demonstrated by the athletic booster club, FACES, PAC (Parent Advisory Council), and the Foxborough Music Association. Through this involvement, parents often respond favorably to teachers. Parents express willingness to fund programs as a result of the many services offered, and their ability to become involved with their child's education. The town has favorable and positive perception of the



school, as cited by the 900 members of the community who attended and voted in favor of the \$20 million bond issue, despite harsh economic times.

Foxborough High School's administrators and teachers believe parents and community are active members of the educational community, regularly engaging and welcoming parental involvement and leadership. (Parents, self-study, school leadership, teachers, department leaders, panel presentation)

Relationships with colleges and universities include Bridgewater State University; Universal Technical Institute; Framingham State University, which provides professional development of staff through the NCTA (Norfolk County Teaching Association). ASL (American Sign Language) Academy, which allows students to take courses for college and high school credits; the New England Institute of Technology, through which students can apply for college credit for their high school course; and various college fairs run by the guidance department at Foxborough High School. (Self-study, teachers, panel presentation, school leadership)

Relationships with the community include the SAFE (Substance Abuse Free Environment) program, the Tri-Town Partnership (which includes the districts of Norton, Mansfield, and Foxboro), the Foxborough Council on Aging Human Services, the Boyden Library, M.E.T.C.O., and the Wampanoag Road Runners. (Self-study, teachers, panel presentation, school leadership, parents)

Relationships between the parents and school include the Foxboro Music Association (a parent group which provides funding and support for music students, including monies for the opportunity to travel annually to the Lincoln Center to perform), The Foxboro Hockey Booster Club, School Council, Parents Access to the Community (PAC), and the Principal's Coffee. In addition, the school partners with parents through the use of parent access to Power School (an electronic grade book), Naviance (a college application program), as well as parent attendance to 8th Grade Orientation Night, Program of Studies Night, and Athletics Night. (Self-study, teachers, panel presentation, school leadership, parents)

High school students also reach out to the greater Foxborough community in the following ways: showcasing music students and their learning by providing several concerts for the community each year; having history students frequently speak at the town's Veterans Day event; and encouraging American Sign

Language students to perform at a variety of venues within the community throughout the school year, providing them with the motivation to improve their skills in the classroom. Through these productive relationships within the larger community, Foxborough High School is providing valuable growth opportunities that support learning for its students that might otherwise not be possible. (Self-study, teachers, panel presentation, school leadership, parents, students)

Commendations:

- 1 Sufficient and dependable funding in support of the school's 21st century goals and learning objectives
- 2 Well-functioning communication processes that leads to an understanding of the school throughout the community
- 3 Acceptable funding for professional development
- 4 The significant relationships with the local community, business base, and area post-secondary institutions that directly benefit Foxborough High School's student population in a positive way
- 5 The care taken to outline and implement successful preventive maintenance plans for critical equipment in support of an environment conducive to student learning
- 6 The sense of cleanliness and pride in the appearance of the high school, resulting in a positive impact on student learning
- 7 The community's demonstrated financial support for the students and school's 21st century learning objectives
- 8 The significant efforts to make the school more eco-friendly
- 9 The many facilities and resources available to students, including the computer labs, athletic fields, science laboratories, and fitness center

- 10 The engagement of parents and families in support of the educational process

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Develop and implement a more detailed and executable 3-year technology plan that will ensure availability of the technology required in support of achieving the school's 21st century learning objectives
- 2 Perform site work discussed to replace parking areas and walkways
- 3 Develop and implement a plan to improve and update outdated areas of the school, such as the auditorium
- 4 Develop and initiate a plan to enable student and staff use of wireless technology
- 5 Finish developing and implement the facilities plan to include additional field space as soon as reasonably possible

## FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This comprehensive evaluation report reflects the findings of the school's self-study and those of the visiting committee. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administration, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in Foxborough High School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days (60) of

occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on 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 in the Appendix on page 15. 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 committee thanks Mr. Theodoss, the members of the steering committee, and the entire faculty and staff of FHS for their hospitality throughout our visit. It was clear from the beginning that the entire Foxborough community feels a great deal of pride in their school and their students. Throughout our visit, our work was facilitated by the knowledge that FHS was a partner in our efforts.

**Foxborough High School  
NEASC Accreditation Visit  
March 25 - 28, 2012**

**Visiting Committee**

Bryan D. Luizzi, Ed. D. New Canaan Public Schools New Canaan, CT, 06840	Lisa Connery Algonquin Regional High School Northborough, MA 01532
Keith Pfeifer, Ed. D. SAU #75 Grantham, NH, 03753	John Harrison Reading Memorial High School Reading, MA 01867
Debra Heaton Marblehead Public Schools Marblehead, MA, 01945	Karen Bingham Quaboag Regional Middle/High School Warren, MA 01083
Robert Southerland Dartmouth Public Schools Dartmouth, MA, 02748	Dave Schroeter Barnstable Public Schools Hyannis, MA 02649
Jeff Gaglione Cambridge Ridge and Latin School Cambridge, MA 02138	Steven Ruscito Westerly Public Schools Westerly, RI 02891
Stacy Giggie Andover Public Schools Andover, MA, 01810	Tina Forsberg Hebron Public Schools Hebron, CT 06248
Elizabeth Burdelski Bristol Public Schools Bristol, CT 06010	James Charest Hopedale Public Schools Hopedale, MA 01747
Holly Loell Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School North Dighton, MA 02764	Kelly Rollo Cheshire Public Schools Cheshire, CT 06410

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES  
Commission on Public Secondary Schools  
SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- *elimination of fine arts, practical arts and student activities*
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding
- *cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing*
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- 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