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

Commission on Public Schools

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Report of the Visiting Team for Sunapee Middle High School

Sunapee, NH

10-24-2021 - 10-27-2021

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School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Sunapee Middle High School is located in the town of Sunapee, situated in the west-central region of New Hampshire. Sunapee, which includes the villages of Wendell and Georges Mills, is a rural, lake, and mountain community. The population is 3,487. The community's population increases to approximately 7,000 during the summer months. Both the year-round and seasonal populations have shown steady growth over the past ten years. Sunapee residents benefit from the proximity of pristine Lake Sunapee and the neighboring Mt. Sunapee Ski Resort. Sunapee is a tourist attraction, bringing visitors and summer residents from great distances to enjoy the lake, mountain, town forests, and public parks' land. During the summer months, Lake Sunapee and Sunapee Harbor are vibrant, with activities enjoyed by young and old. Musicians and artists are drawn to the area and add to the cultural experience for all. In 2018, Sunapee marked its Sestercentennial with many celebrations of its rich history. The students of the Sunapee schools were a big part of this celebration, learning about the history and becoming a part of the Sunapee story.

Sunapee's average household size is 2.3. Race distribution is 95 percent White, 1.2 percent Hispanic, 1.5 percent Asian, .2 percent Native American, and .2 percent Black. Forty-six percent of residents are married. Forty-two percent of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher.

The median household income is $73,682. Main sources of employment are machine shops, building construction, municipalities, healthcare, retail businesses, tourism, and sole proprietorships. Twenty-three percent of Sunapee residents work within the community, 71 percent commute to another New Hampshire region for employment, and 6 percent commute out of state to work. The unemployment rate is 2.6 percent. As of 2016, approximately 8.3 percent of families in the community had incomes below the poverty level.

The Sunapee School District consists of two schools: Sunapee Central Elementary School, which serves grades PreK-5 with a student population of 192 pupils, and Sunapee Middle High School, which serves grades 6-12 with a student population of 216 pupils. In addition, Mount Royal Academy, an independent grades K-12 school located within the community, educates 184 students. Enrollment in the district over the past five years has ranged from 216 students to 260 students.

The expenditure per pupil in the Sunapee School District is $30,582 for the middle school and $26,962 for the high school, compared to the state average of $16,823. The 2020-2021 budget is $12,682,206. Ninety-one percent of the budget is from local property taxes.

Sunapee Middle High School employs 32 classroom teachers and 10 support personnel. The individual student-to-teacher ratio is 11:1. The staff attendance rate for the 2019-20 school year was 97 percent, and for the 2020-21 school year, the student attendance rate was 97 percent. The dropout rate was 1 percent, and the most recently reported graduation rate was 100 percent. After the 2020-2021 academic year, 67 percent of graduates attended a four-year college, 20 percent attended community or junior college, 10 percent entered the workforce, and 3 percent joined the military.

Sunapee Middle High School offers many opportunities for its students to participate in school-business partnership programs. As part of the senior project requirement, students must job shadow in a profession of their choice. Project Sunapee and the Sunapee Historical Society assist school programs by providing resources to enhance instruction. Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, St. Paul's High School, and Dartmouth College provide school/college partnerships with Sunapee Middle High School by allowing students to attend on-campus advanced placement classes and training programs. In addition, local educational opportunities are available to students through the Kearsarge Night Program, Sugar River Valley Technical Center, and the Hypertherm Summer Institute.

Sunapee takes pride in its students, as shown by its many award programs. Students are singled out monthly and quarterly for their academic and civic performance. Honor roll students for each quarter are published in the

local paper and rewarded with a field trip. Seasonal sports awards recognize Sunapee's athletes. The annual talent show and multiple art shows, and band/chorus concerts allow students to demonstrate their creativity. Students can qualify and compete in the spelling and geography bees at the middle school level. Finally, each Senior showcases their Senior Project with a presentation at the end of the school year.

Sunapee Middle High School is fortunate to be an active part of a dynamic and culturally rich community that supports the education of its young members.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

Core Values and Beliefs Statement

Sunapee Middle-High School is committed to preparing students to be positive, caring, and contributing members of society by maintaining high academic, social, and civic expectations within a secure environment.

As a community of learners, we value:

- Tolerance, courtesy, and respect
- Rigor and challenge
- Connections between caring adults and students

As a community of learners, we believe:

- Students should have the opportunity to develop their individual interests and talents through comprehensive course and co-curricular offerings.
- Students should have opportunities to collaborate to become effective problem solvers, designers, and creators.
- Students learn best when instruction is engaging, relevant, and applicable to the real world.
- Students learn best when assessments are challenging and varied.
- Students achieve the greatest success when they take responsibility for their education.
- Technology is a useful tool in instruction and learning.
- Communication between staff, students, and community is important to student success and growth.
- Students should make connections with the local community and appreciate that they are part of a broader global community.

Vision of the Graduate

Sunapee Middle-High School is committed to preparing students to be positive, caring, and contributing members of society by maintaining high academic, social, and civic expectations within a secure environment. The graduate will be able to:

- Problem solve effectively
- Read effectively
- Write effectively
- Speak well
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills

The graduate will:

- Act with courtesy, respect, integrity, and compassion
- Demonstrate responsibility and initiative, both as an independent learner and as a team member
- Be helpful and contribute to the school and community

LEARNING CULTURE

Learning Culture

The school provides a safe learning culture that ensures equity and fosters shared values among learners, educators, families, and members of the school community. These shared values drive student learning as well as policy, practice, and decision-making while promoting a spirit of collaboration, shared ownership, pride, leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement. The school community sets high standards for student learning, fosters a growth mindset, and facilitates continuous school improvement to realize the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

1. The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought.
1a. The school community provides a safe environment.
2. The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.
2a. The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
3. The school community takes collective responsibility for the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.
4. The school community's professional culture demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.
5. The school's culture promotes intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth.
6. The school has an inclusive definition of leadership and provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning.
7. The school culture fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility.

STUDENT LEARNING

The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary to prepare learners for their future. Students are assured consistent learning outcomes through a defined curricular experience and have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a variety of creative ways. Students actively participate in authentic learning experiences while practicing the skills and habits of mind to regularly reflect upon, and take ownership of, their learning.

1. The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success and provides feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress in achieving this vision.
2. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate.
2a. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments.
3. Curriculum ensures that learners demonstrate a depth of understanding over a breadth of knowledge.
4. Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
5. Students are active learners who have opportunities to lead their own learning.
6. Learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.
7. Learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum.
8. Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.
9. Learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Professional Practices

The school maintains and implements a school improvement/growth plan, organizational practices, and productive community relationships to meet and support student learning needs. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional development to improve their practice and examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, programs, and services.

1. The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
1a. The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.
2. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being.
3. Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.
4. Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum.
5. School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
6. Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support

The school has timely, directed, and coordinated interventions for all students. The school provides targeted supports to meet each student's individual needs, including counseling services, health services, library/information services, and other appropriate support services to assist each student in meeting the school's vision of the graduate.

1. All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success.
1a. The school has intervention strategies designed to support students.
2. All students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
3. All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
4. All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
5. Identified English Language Learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

LEARNING RESOURCES

The school has adequate and appropriate time, funding, and facilities to support the realization of its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. The school and school community provide time, funding, and facilities for student learning and support; teacher collaboration and professional growth; and full implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs in the school. The school has appropriate plans, protocols, and infrastructure in place to ensure consistent delivery of its curriculum, programs, and services.

1. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.
1a. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.
2. The school/district provides time and financial resources to enable researched-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services.
3. The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable funding to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
4. The school/district has short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of its building and facilities.
5. The school has infrastructure and protocols in place to ensure effective responses in crisis situations.

Introduction

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 three Commissions: the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS); the Commission on Public Schools (CPS), which is comprised of the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools (CPEMHS), and the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI); and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

As the responsible agency for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public school member institutions, CPS requires visiting teams to assess the degree to which schools align with the qualitative Standards for Accreditation. The Standards are *Learning Culture, Student Learning, Professional Practices, Learning Support, and Learning Resources.*

The accreditation program for public schools involves a five-step process: the self-reflection conducted by stakeholders at the school; the Collaborative Conference visit, conducted by a team of peer educators and NEASC representatives; the school's development and implementation of a growth/improvement plan; the Decennial Accreditation visit conducted by a team of peer educators and NEASC representatives; and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-reflection, the recommendations of the visiting team, and those identified by the Committee in the follow-up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school participate in the accreditation process over the ten-year cycle and that it shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit

Accreditation coordinators and a steering committee comprised of the professional staff were appointed to supervise the school's Accreditation process which includes the self-reflection, the Collaborative Conference visit, the development and implementation of a growth plan, and the Decennial Accreditation Visit. At Sunapee Middle-High School, a committee of seven members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the Accreditation process.

Public schools seeking Accreditation through the Commission on Public Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's core values, beliefs, vision of the graduate, and unique student population. In preparation for the decennial visit, schools are required to complete a Decennial Summary Report to inform the team about their progress since the time of the Collaborative Conference visit.

In addition, the professional staff was required to read and come to a consensus on the summary report to ensure that all voices were heard related to the school's progress on their priority areas for growth.

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of six members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Decennial Accreditation visit to Sunapee Middle-High in Sunapee, New Hampshire. The visiting team members spent four days conducting an on-site visit to the school; reviewed the self-reflection, Collaborative Conference report, and Decennial Summary Report documents; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, and students; and visited classes to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools' Standards for Accreditation and the degree to which the school is making progress toward their identified priority areas for growth as indicated in the school's improvement/growth

plan.

Each conclusion in the report was agreed to by visiting team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting team are included within each section of the report. The report includes commendations and recommendations that, in the visiting team's judgment, will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and implement its plan for growth and improvement. The report also includes an analysis of the conceptual understanding, commitment, competency, and capacity (4Cs), which is a framework used to evaluate the school's ability for continuous growth and improvement as a learning organization.

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Schools, which will make a decision on the Accreditation of Sunapee Middle-High School.

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.1a

The school community provides a safe environment. The school deliberately builds and maintains several procedural practices and policies to provide for the physical safety of students and adults. The school maintains policies that promote the safety of all learners and adults, including for students' social-emotional well-being.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.2a

The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and the vision of the graduate. The core values and beliefs about learning were developed in 2015 in a collaborative process involving teachers, students, and parents. In 2018, teachers voted to adopt these learning expectations as Sunapee Middle High School's Vision of the Graduate.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Foundational Element 2.2a

There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school. The curriculum is housed online in the Rubicon Atlas web-based software. Overall, course maps for each class follow the *Understanding by Design* model and include standards, big ideas, essential questions, content, and skills in building core maps. Assessments and lesson plans are detailed in corresponding course maps.

Rating
Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Foundational Element 3.1a

The school has a current school improvement/growth plan. The plan, entitled the strategic plan, was created in 2017 by a committee comprised of faculty members, administrators, school board members, parents, and community members. The strategic plan is aligned with district-level goals and the SMHS vision of the graduate.

Rating
Meets the Standard

Foundational Elements 4.1a - Learning Support

Foundational Elements 4.1a

The school provides a range of intervention strategies designed to support learners. Academic interventions include English skills courses, math essentials courses, math support, one-on-one specially designed instruction, applied math, and applied English. Individual academic interventions are available. Supported and assisted study halls staffed by a teacher or paraprofessional are open to all students. Various professionals are available to help students academically, behaviorally, emotionally, and socially.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Foundational Element 5.1a

The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services. The facility is well maintained and cleaned regularly to ensure the health and safety of students. Recent upgrades in the spring of 2018, including a more secure entry system, cameras, and remote alarms, ensure the school is safe. The community and district provide facilities that meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with state and local guidance on fire, health, and safety regulations.

Rating
Meets the Standard

Foundational Elements Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Elements	Collaborative Conference School's Rating	Collaborative Conference Visitors' Rating	Decennial School's Rating	Decennial Visitors' Rating
1.1a - Learning Culture	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
1.2a - Learning Culture	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
2.2a - Student Learning	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
3.1a - Professional Practices	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
4.1a - Learning Support	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
5.1a - Learning Resources	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard

Priority Area 1

Priority Area

Research, implement, and evaluate creative ways or alternative times for achieving increased opportunities for faculty collaboration (Standard 1, Principle 1.4, Standard 3, Principle 3.2, and Standard 5, Principle 5.2)

Action, Impact, and Growth

In the summer of 2019, to facilitate professional collaboration, administrators designed a schedule allowing each middle and high school team to have one two-hour block of time during the school day once a semester and one two-hour block of time after school. The district hired substitute teachers to cover classes and created a template to take notes during meetings and share after. Collaborative teams consist of grade-level teams at the middle school level and subject matter teams at the high school level, including but not limited to grades 6-8, world languages, STEAM, language arts, and spring electives. Each team had ownership and responsibility for setting their agendas, action items, and next steps. It is not uncommon for teachers to be on multiple collaborative teams because they teach various grades and subject areas. The sixth-grade team planned an interdisciplinary learning unit focused on climate change, while the middle school/high school science team explored adopting the Amplified Science program across grades 6-12.

Some committees need additional time to carry out their action items from their agendas; however, there have been several positive impacts due to this action step. Collaborative teams in some areas see positive effects on student growth. Due to the interdisciplinary unit in the sixth grade, a teacher spends less time distinguishing between weather and climate as seventh-grade students demonstrated that content knowledge. Another teacher noted that the lower grades' collaborative work done with students using technology results in fewer questions. Students are becoming increasingly independent and adept at using Photoshop and podcast technology programs. Students in an English class, who practiced a World Cafe dialogue, were more confident and proficient in those skills during a presentation night where they hosted conversations around a table with adults.

Another impact is the initiation of conversations among teachers about best-measuring growth and incorporating professional development on open-ended tasks into their collaborative work. The Spring Stretch Committee considered building from the sixth grade's interdisciplinary project on climate change as a call to action in the form of plays with sets made of recycled materials.

The schedule was implemented in the 2019-2020 school year. In March of 2020, the schedule was no longer used due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of remote learning. Therefore, the primary action step is still in progress. The collaborative plan is in its initial stages, with some collaborative teams needing more time to follow through with their agendas and action items. Currently, teachers frequently gather informally across the school for collaboration. Most of the collaborations are due to a highly committed staff dedicated to continuously improving student learning opportunities. The collaboration is often driven by the teachers meeting at lunch, in the hall, and through email. An English Skills teacher needed a way to encourage a disengaged student in reading and writing, so she asked for the help of the Integrated Tech (IT) teacher to do a Spotify podcast that will stem from the student's writing. A U.S. History teacher, an English teacher, and the library media specialist teacher worked together to generate research papers on student-driven topics based on their reading of *The Jungle*, their knowledge of Progressivism, and their skill in searching databases and using Noodle Tools for notetaking.

Because of the limited collaboration time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some school community members are thinking about how to best measure growth in this priority area.

Recommended Next Steps

Implement the plan to evaluate which teams need more collaboration time and how to structure teams and support the faculty so that the collaborative time results in gains in student learning

Engage faculty as co-creators in the development of the formal collaborative process

Develop measures using ongoing and relevant assessment data to evaluate the impact of increased collaboration on student learning

Sources of Evidence
- department leaders
- priority area meetings
- priority area observations
- school leadership
- school summary report
- teachers

Priority Area 2

Priority Area

Expand knowledge and understanding of the vision of the graduate and embed it in the curriculum and culture of the school (Standard 2, Principle 2.1)

Action, Impact, and Growth

The school has taken a variety of steps to expand knowledge and understanding of the vision of the graduate (VoG) and embed it in the curriculum and culture of the school. Their work began by revising, as an entire faculty, existing core values and beliefs about learning, originally developed through a collaborative process involving teachers, students, and parents in 2015. In 2018, teachers voted these learning expectations as Sunapee Middle High School's (SMHS) Vision of the Graduate. It is a school-wide expectation that teachers link some assessments to the skills and dispositions measured by the VoG rubrics. To that end, 96 percent of teachers identified that they employed specific instructional practices tied to specific core values, beliefs, and/or the vision of the graduate. The school created a single and consistent visual representation of the VoG. This visual is found on posters throughout the school with an embedded QR code that links to the rubrics on the school's website. Students at every grade level are exposed to the VoG throughout the day in every class. Lastly, teachers completed academic and social/civic rubrics for each student, and they were sent home to parents in the winter of 2021.

The results of these action steps can be seen in each learner's instruction and whole-student assessment. For instance, larger assignments are almost always assessed through content-specific and VoG lenses. A large research-based paper project shared between high school English and social studies classes is assessed for subject skills, content, and VoG skills. Students are assessed on the VoG civic competencies regularly. For instance, the civic competency skills required for the junior year job shadow are assessed using the VoG civic competencies rubric based on student advisor and job mentor input. Students have frequent opportunities to self-assess using the VoG rubrics for the academic and civic expectations. In an Advanced Math Topics class, students self-assess at the end of each quarter to reflect on how well they use the skills measured by the academic expectations embedded in the VoG and how well they engage in those skills as learners, as measured by the civic expectations. An additional impact is how the commitment to adopting the revised VoG informs and clarifies instruction and helps to identify and inform interventions. For example, if a student has not made progress in the VoG problem-solving skill between grades 7 and 10, an eleventh-grade teacher can work explicitly on that skill to increase competency in that area.

After adopting the VoG rubrics, all faculty engaged in ongoing reflection about their practices and content. For example, VoG skills such as problem-solving and reading can be explicitly connected to the curriculum in a formal and measurable way instead of informally addressing that skill. Applicable skills and competencies identified in the VoG rubric are found throughout courses and departments. They are reflected in course mapping through the VoG's alignment to the skills listed for each course and/or unit. There is consistency between the same content areas if split into multiple sections with different teachers and across various content areas. In other words, what makes good argumentative writing in one tenth-grade English class is the same for a different tenth-grade English class taught by another teacher. Further, good argumentative writing in Statistics is the same in any English class. The VoG rubric data is stored and dynamic so that a student can see growth from teacher and self-assessments over a given time, and the student and/or their teachers can identify areas for growth and targeted intervention/instruction as they progress through their educational experience.

Parents were surveyed on aspects of the pilot model for the VoG progress report to obtain feedback on the school's reporting of student achievement of the VoG. For the academic rubric, 70 percent of the parents said that they found the rubrics helpful or somewhat helpful, and a smaller number, 61 percent found the social/civic rubric helpful or somewhat helpful. The data received will be evaluated, and the process of reporting student

progress in attaining the vision of the graduate will be appropriately modified to ensure that it provides the information students and parents need for students to be successful.

Growth from these actions is demonstrated because almost all students know the explicit connection between their academic courses, their class assignments, and the VoG assessments. All seniors are aware of the relationship between learning and the VoG through their senior projects and can articulate how their specific projects demonstrate their proficiency in meeting the transferrable skills incorporated in the VoG. Students and teachers can now refer to the common language and expectations of the VoG Academic and Civic Expectations rubrics. As a result, students, teachers, and administrators can clearly understand what drives and focuses on student learning and the learning and assessment process in each content area.

The school acknowledges that there is room for staff and students to continue to become more familiar with the vision of the graduate. In the future, the school plans to continue to assess students with the school-wide rubrics, refer to the vision more often, and bring it to the forefront in the school whenever possible to generate more impact. The best method for communicating progress with the vision of the graduate still needs to be determined.

Recommended Next Steps

Implement the future plan to make the term vision of the graduate ubiquitous across all curricula and grade levels to increase familiarity with the term among students and parents

Integrate the vision of the graduate's academic and civic expectations across the curriculum throughout grades 6-12

Assess the vision of the graduate's implementation and use that data to inform instruction and interventions as appropriate

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- priority area meetings
- priority area observations
- school summary report
- student work
- student-led conferences
- teachers

Priority Area 3

Priority Area

Develop and implement new learning experiences in which all students have increased opportunities to demonstrate independence, flexibility, and persistence on open-ended tasks (Standard 2, Principles 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)

Action, Impact, and Growth

Sunapee Middle-High School (SMHS) hosted a one-day professional development session in January 2020, allowing participants to create lesson plans that provided opportunities for students to demonstrate independence, flexibility, and persistence in open-ended tasks. Teachers were asked to bring ideas for the lesson and/or unit plans suited for implementing these learning experiences. Teachers expect to begin to incorporate these personalized, relevant, and authentic learning experiences within their curriculum.

Since the January 2020 workshop, the school has made admirable strides through various steps. Specifically, students in social studies self-select research topics. In Advanced Placement U.S. history, students can select the direction of their research while designing an end-of-the-year collaborative digital history project that focuses on the presentation of data and trends. In English, three open-ended electives have been added to the studies program to provide students with a choice to pursue an area of interest: *Small-town New Hampshire*, *Film and Photography*, and *Short Story*. The course, *Small-town New Hampshire,* provides students with a platform to select a topic of their interest and conduct research and primary interviews.

Students have the flexibility to design individual stained glass windows in a math class. In *Personal Fitness,* students are active learners who can lead their learning. At the outset, each student is charged with setting short- and long-term individual goals, and they must create individual plans to achieve those goals. In some instances, students collaborate with teachers to develop assessments in various classes, but this is not incorporated across the curriculum.

In computer science, students consistently demonstrate their persistence skills when troubleshooting. Science classes incorporate at least one open-ended inquiry lab experiment each term. The senior project is one of the best examples of students demonstrating independence, flexibility, and persistence in open-ended tasks. Every student selects and designs a specific project, creates a timetable and a budget, locates and uses the advice and guidance from a mentor, completes the project, and shares it with an audience in a presentation at the end of the year.

The results of these action steps can be seen in the school curricula, wherein instructional practices are designed to meet the individual learning needs of each student. Dispositions such as independence, flexible thinking, and persistence are present within each content area. In new courses, such as Applied Math, students have access to increased opportunities for differentiated learning. The library media center/media lab was expanded and enhanced for classes and/or individual work; therefore, students are afforded the resources of space and technology to create videos and other projects that reflect a wide range of assessment practices.

The faculty, staff, and administrators at Sunapee Middle-High School are committed to school improvement and sincerely care about the student body. The school is committed to developing and implementing new learning experiences in which all students have increased opportunities to demonstrate independence, flexibility, and persistence on open-ended tasks.

Recommended Next Steps

Provide planned additional professional development, curriculum development opportunities, and time for collaboration

Develop and implement new learning experiences in which all learners have increased opportunities to demonstrate independence, flexibility, and persistence on open-ended tasks

Empower and enable learners to contribute to the development of assessment criteria and learning outcomes across the curriculum

Evaluate how the effort to increase students' independence, flexibility, and persistence on open-ended tasks impacts student learning

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- school summary report
- student-led conferences
- students
- teachers

Priority Area 4

Priority Area

Implement the goals of the strategic plan (Standard 3, Principle 3.1)

Action, Impact, and Growth

Over the last two and one-half years, the school worked on focus areas based on the school district's strategic plan, including competencies, Response to Intervention, advisory, feedback, science technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM), the school's master schedule, and leveled diploma. The specific strategic plan groups created included staff members and administrators. Staff meetings and professional development days provided time for the planning groups to work. Despite the distraction and obstacles presented by the pandemic, the work in some areas was substantial.

With more than two years of dedicated, collaborative efforts by administrators and the faculty, several areas of progress can be highlighted, including the completion of the competencies, the integration of STEAM throughout the school, the strengthening of the advisory program, the creation and implementation of a way to elicit student feedback, and the expansion of Response to Intervention. In developing competencies for grades 6-8, staff used Rubicon Atlas, a robust curriculum mapping software. The software was adopted and implemented as an accessible place for staff, students, and stakeholders to see what students are expected to know and whether they can demonstrate the skills expected to be successful in the future. The curriculum can be readily accessed through the school's website for all stakeholders to view, and accountability results from its transparency. Embedded in the written curriculum are essential questions, big ideas, skills, and the competencies necessary to demonstrate learning.

The school made significant progress on the STEAM initiative. The STEAM committee defined STEAM, shared this definition with the staff, and highlighted how the engineering design process could be applied across the curriculum. The committee gathered data about the level of STEAM lessons or assignments integrated throughout the day. STEAM is prevalent in many senior project presentations and several course offerings. Many of the STEAM projects are implemented and tied to community service. Often, a need by a local business is developed into a project that students complete at Sunapee.

Response to Intervention is another notable area of success. In response to a perceived need to support struggling students in math and English, two new classes were created to shore up basic skills and help ensure student success. Math Essentials and English Skills courses were added, so students encountering difficulty get the specific attention and assistance needed to succeed in regular math and English classes. Teachers collaborate to ensure that no student falls behind, and grading for these classes is pass/fail for middle and high school students.

The advisory committee developed a calendar for the school year with prompts for check-ins with students at various points in the year and a bank of ideas for the meaningful use of advisory time. High school students believe they can make a true connection with their advisor for four years and feel that their advisors genuinely care about them and their home lives, grades, and future.

Creating a feedback loop allows students to provide feedback to teachers at the semester and year-end on curriculum and instruction in all taught courses. Many teachers reviewed the student feedback and used it to reflect on their instructional practices to improve student learning. Also, the surveys helped staff recognize student interests. Routinely, teachers go above and beyond to design after-school activities and clubs to fit the needs of all students.

There is a need for continued growth in school scheduling and the leveled diploma priority areas. Staff would like more time collaborating with others in school scheduling because they have difficulty "fitting it all in." A committee of teachers and administrators reviewed current research. It generated several ideas, including creating a flex

block, but all met significant obstacles such as time constraints and collective bargaining issues. No action has been taken yet, but there is a commitment to examine further providing collaboration time for teachers. A committee was formed to investigate the leveled diploma. The committee looked at other schools' criteria and statistics, such as the 100 percent graduation rate. On average, over 80 percent of the school's graduates attain New Hampshire Scholar status. Ultimately, the committee completed its work and recommended that the leveled diploma not be pursued. However, to increase student recognition, reduce competition, and encourage students to pursue a broader educational experience, the school adopted and implemented a Latin Honors system for graduation.

As a result of the staff's hard work and commitment to students, gains were made. The successful use of Atlas created competencies for all courses in grades 6-8 and a review of competencies in grades 9-12. More STEAM courses are offered, and classroom teachers implement the design process. The committee tasked with expanding the use of STEAM across the curriculum identifies the need for more collaboration time, citing it as a significant obstacle to fully accomplishing this goal. Creatively, the school designs instruction to reach all students at their level/ability through Response to Intervention. More collaboration time is needed to achieve this goal entirely. Teachers receive data from student surveys, which provides them with curriculum and classroom instruction information, enabling them to reflect on their teaching practices. Students engage in a structured advisory. Teachers genuinely care about students' well-being and their overall success in and out of the classroom and want to improve social-emotional learning for all students. This work is still in progress.

The school shows a great sense of pride in its students, staff, and curricular and co-curricular programs. The school has a natural way of creatively making things work for students and values every student's input. Progress was made in defining competencies, integrating STEAM across the curriculum, strengthening advisories, introducing a feedback loop to help improve teaching and learning, and finding solutions to support students under the umbrella of Response to Intervention. Time is one of the most valuable resources available to educators and students, and providing it can provide crucial support for positive change. Growth is facilitated by allowing staff time to work on competency writing, creating a common definition of STEAM, creating an environment for students to feel connected to a staff member, providing opportunities for student feedback, and creatively adding a late bus enabling students to receive after-school academic support. All of these contribute to improving teaching and learning. The staff and administrators acknowledge there are continued opportunities for growth, particularly with the creation and implementation of both STEAM and advisory goals and outcomes.

Recommended Next Steps

Evaluate the modification of the bell schedule to provide greater opportunities for formal collaboration among staff

Develop opportunities for all staff to collaborate to achieve the goals of the strategic plan and improve teaching and learning

Develop and implement a process to measure and evaluate the school's progress in achieving its identified goals to ensure continued growth and improvement

Sources of Evidence
- department leaders
- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- school summary report
- teachers

Part 3 - Reflection on Student Learning

Reflection on Student Learning

Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student in most classes. Students participate in various learning experiences designed to meet their individual learning needs. Structures and supports provide all students with access to learning opportunities and tiered intervention strategies. Specific options for support exist in life skills classes and subject-specific skills classes. The life skills classes introduce students to the life and executive functioning skills they need to succeed in school and after graduation. For example, in a unit on oral communication, students focus on applying employability and job readiness skills to internship, mentoring, shadowing, and other world-of-work-related experiences. The life skills curriculum, based on small or individualized instruction, and constant assessment of the student, can be constantly individualized to meet the needs of each student. Skill-based classes can be responsive to the needs of individual students. In the English Skills 8 class, students participate in a skill-based review of specific grammar and writing topics. For example, a ten-minute lesson and review on direct objects can be extended into an entire class period depending on the feedback provided by the students when they practice the content. Conversely, it may be shortened if students can demonstrate an understanding of the topic. Students use programs such as NoRedInk, which provides real-time formative data allowing for the customization of lessons and instruction. In a chemistry class, students complete study guides before assessments. The study guides enable each student to focus on self-identified needs and cover the assessment content. As individual questions arise, answers are shared with the whole class for the benefit and review of all. The senior project begins with a job shadow during junior year. All students can explore their interests and consider possible plans. Senior project advisors reconcile the job shadow results and student interests to help guide the students toward meaningful senior projects. However, differentiation of instruction has yet to be pervasive across the school.

Students are active learners who have frequent opportunities to lead their own learning. Students decide how to spend the class time immersed in conversation on fluency in a Spanish class. The teacher sets aside the lesson for the day, tells students to incorporate the grammatical structures learned in the previous lesson, and then lets students drive the topics and nature of the conversation. Students explain the layout component of a rubric for an art assignment; the teacher allows the students to incorporate different interpretations of art and decide what to include. In a Community science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) class, the teacher presents the students with challenges and helps them understand the design process. Then the students choose the best way to solve the challenges by testing their designs and seeking peer and teacher feedback to improve their solutions. Students have opportunities for creative expression, which are integrated into their learning experiences. Students learn programming by selecting skills to teach their rovers in an Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus class for a talent show. One rover is programmed to play the Jurassic Park theme. The student programs the rover to tell it how to recognize the notes, how long to play the song, and what color association triggers it. Another student programs a rover to parallel park. In an interdisciplinary project on climate change, students have creative options and choices to lead their learning. In science, students design their ideal sustainable houses using recycled materials. In IT, students choose various ways to use the telecaster to present weather-related news. For example, some students opt for weather reports of climate events, and others do news segments or opinion shows. Opportunities exist across grade levels and disciplines and persist at all levels. Students frequently apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks that keep learning relevant and personalized. The senior capstone project is the epitome of student-driven learning. Each senior spends at least 40 hours dedicated to learning a new skill. Seniors choose their topic, when to complete it, and who to work with as their mentor. For example, one student decides to get certified in scuba diving during the summer and travel to St. Croix in the winter to paint antibiotic paste onto coral reefs with a volunteer group. Another senior wants to learn woodturning with lathes and wood carving with chisels. The student attends a woodworking convention and takes a spoon carving class to enhance her skills.

Learners consistently engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills. Students explore topics that are meaningful and relevant to their everyday life. In Civics class, students create their redistricting maps for

a theoretical election. They account for demographic and political variables within their new maps. This scaffolded project leads to a more significant question/debate for the class: "Is redistricting and gerrymandering what the original framers of the Constitution had in mind when they first wrote it?" Students problem-solve when working on projects, including learning from their mistakes and participating in the design process to support their learning. In the Introduction to Design class, learners design and build gliders. Students create their designs and determine the best materials to use. During this trial and error activity, students learn to make improvements. A science teacher crafts open-ended labs for opportunities to explore multiple solutions to a problem. Students receive cars that are marketed as constant velocity cars. The educator asks students to prove it by creating models to test and validate the claim. In a biology class, students take a quiz on photosynthesis with challenge questions such as "If a plant could only use one of the three pigments in the graph for photosynthesis, which do you think would be best? Explain your choice." In an AP Language class, a teacher displays a sentence with multiple grammar errors ranging from simple to complex mistakes. A student responds with nonrestrictive information, and the teacher challenges the student to receive credit by noting the difference between parentheses and dashes. The student explains the subtleties of tone and notes that parentheses are unspoken, but the dash is spoken and emphasizes the phrase, changing the speaker's intent. Students develop critical and creative thinking skills, create a deep understanding, and make connections. A senior volunteers in a World War II museum and catalogs artifacts as part of his capstone project. The student realizes this interacting with history outside of a textbook and that the artifacts cataloged are beyond guns and other war-related paraphernalia. This project allows learners to develop an inquiry, gather data about the topic, analyze the research, and defend their findings to an audience.

Learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum. Teachers use the school-wide vision of the graduate (VoG) rubrics to provide specific and measurable criteria for success to students before and after completing the assessment. Many teachers use traditional assessments, including presentations, formative assessments, performance tasks, and summative assessments. Teachers regularly use innovative and student-centered assessment strategies to gauge student learning and further inform instruction. Students in social studies class learn about the aging population of Europe by reading, writing essays on the impact of the population on the economy, and then working with peers to research and prepare for a debate about a growing population being positive or negative. A sample of student work is projected before the class in another social studies class. Everyone comments and corrects the work, so the class collaborates and learns to write correctly and effectively together. An economics class's instruction, activities, and assessments are designed to support a final, personalized project. Students demonstrate their learning through traditional work and research, debate, peer sharing, and conferences with local business owners. Their final project is an elevator pitch of their business idea to a panel of outside investors. Students often demonstrate learning through open-ended conversations about topics of their choice in a Spanish class. Before the assessment, students could practice conversing about their chosen topics with partners. The topics selected for their assessments did not have to be followed because students have complete control over the direction and subject matter of the conversational assessment.

Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use it in meaningful ways to support their learning. In Math Essentials class, three students work on three different reassessment assignments to improve their grades based on individual needs. In another Math Essentials class, self-assess every day. The instructor discusses their self-assessments with their daily accomplishments to help build self-awareness and connect productivity, attention, and effort. In a band class, students site read music. The instructor encourages students to point out unfamiliar terms and symbols and explains or demonstrates their meaning to use this new understanding in playing. When the ensemble begins to play again, the instructor urges all players to make confident mistakes! In an AP Language class, learners self-score their essays, peer score essays, then calibrate their remarks and scores to the teacher's to identify problems in their writing and improve in their following essay. A student in an English class delivers a memorized speech to practice the concept of powerful speaking. Classmates give the student feedback on strengths and improvements. Students note the power of emphasizing certain words and pauses and critique the pace and volume of the student's speech as a place for improvement. In an advanced science class, the teacher moves from group to group during lab time to ask probing questions and push students to consider the data from different perspectives. In design classes, teachers use peer and teacher feedback as part of the iterative process, so students refine their designs. In a beginning language class, the instructor gives continuous feedback to students for pronunciation and definitions.

However, the teacher lets students work through possible answers before leading them to the solution, supporting independence, perseverance, and problem-solving.

The result of the school's commitment to increased technology and teacher professional learning is that learners consistently use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their knowledge. In the fall of 2020, the school purchased Chromebooks for all students. In March 2020, all teachers transitioned fully to Google Classroom to facilitate online communication and collaboration within the classroom. When the school went fully remote with the onset of COVID-19, the school provided in-home WiFi access if families did not have such, and for other students who struggled with work from home, offered in-school access to WIFI and technology, with all masking and social distancing requirements met. The school administrative unit (SAU) and the technology department offered classes and incentivized teachers to become Google Certified. As a result, 25 percent of the faculty participated in the district's first summer cohort and have become Level 2 certified. Over 60 percent of the staff have a Level 1 or Level 2 certification. Technology includes 1-1 Chromebooks for all students, interactive classroom display boards, a media lab with a green screen, a teleprompter around the lab, a computer lab, and a design/engineering space. Students use iPads for video projects and access other equipment when needed. Educators use Kahoot, Google Classroom, Kami, Geogebra, Moviemaker, Audacity, and the suite of tools in Google Workspace to foster creativity, collaboration, communication, and productivity. GoGuardian and Lanschool are used to ensure student safety online. Teachers use PowerSchool for tracking grades and competencies. Counselors recently transitioned from Naviance to Xello to support college and career preparations. Students model with Autocad to print on the three-dimensional (3D) printer or computer numerical control (CNC) laser cutter in the STEAM lab. Students can use a poster printer. In a social studies class, students use SmartBoard technology to manipulate voting district lines to illustrate the effects of gerrymandering. Following this, the teacher displays a TEDTalk video to reinforce their understanding of the concept. IStudentsuse a computer-aided design (CAD) program to design airplanes. in the Community STEAM class, After the design is fed into the laser cutter, the resulting foam board plane is tested and re-designed as appropriate. Students design other elements of the plane and use the 3D printer as needed. The result is a student-driven, student-designed, and created airplane. Students use dataBASIC.io to compare language patterns in inaugural speeches during different presidential eras in a US History class. The program leads students to notice patterns and discrepancies to help draw conclusions about speeches given at specific historical points. A student in an English skills class demonstrates his understanding of a text by turning it into a podcast aired on Spotify. Computer science class students create digital drawings that they then code and export to a laser cutter or 3D printer. The library media lab plays a central role in the learning life of the school. Students access online resources like Gale in context, Gale ebooks, EBSCO, Britannica, and the library media specialist works with students to select accurate and reliable online resources for projects. Students use Noodletools to help with the accurate citation of resources. This year, science classes have the initiative to include research in their curriculum, and the librarian supports them in these efforts. The library media lab is used extensively by individual students and whole classes to create video projects that support and demonstrate their learning. In an English class, students use the green screen to re-enact scenes from Romeo and Juliet. In science class, students record climate newscasts and public service messages. Students create mock cooking shows in world cultures to demonstrate their research about foods from other countries and then share these videos with the class.

Part 4 - Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization

Conceptual Understanding

Sunapee Middle High School's (SMHS) beliefs about learning are clearly stated in the core values statement, resulting from a collaborative and inclusionary process in 2015. After researching the characteristics and beliefs of highly effective schools, teachers, parents, and students crafted a shared definition of optimal learning. The core values were adopted and were widely accepted and practiced by members of the school community, and, last year, they were reviewed and determined to be still relevant. The core values and beliefs describe students as problem-solvers capable of taking responsibility for their learning, the importance of real-world applications, using technology to enhance learning, the value of challenging and varied assessments, and making local and global connections. Active learning and student engagement are at the heart of teaching and learning.

Currently, the faculty is actively involved in integrating the school's vision of the graduate, created in the 2016-2017 school year.The document includes five transferable skills and three dispositions that students should successfully demonstrate upon graduation. The staff worked diligently to craft school-wide rubrics to measure each students' achievement of the various components of the vision of the graduate and are in the process of integrating them into the school's culture and manifesting them into curriculum and instruction.Several examples of the school community's shared vision of learning demonstrate its commitment to relevant curriculum, effective instruction, and meaningful assessment. The senior project is the school's capstone experience for all students and incorporates all elements of the vision of the graduate. It is a final measure of whether students can demonstrate proficiency in the transferable skills and dispositions, which the school community believes each student should possess upon graduating.

Two of the school's Priority Areas for Growth suggest a significant focus on improving teaching and learning. Currently a work in progress, one goal is to create formal time for teachers to collaborate on various levels to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. A second goal is to increase opportunities for all students to demonstrate independence, flexibility, and persistence on open-ended tasks. Guided by a presentation from a consultant, the faculty spent the last year developing and implementing lessons and open-ended assessments and encouraging student independence, critical thinking, and creativity. The school's teacher evaluation system is uniquely tied to the highly detailed and consistently written curriculum, published and available to view. Administrators can access the curriculum document during a classroom observation, clearly understand what is taking place, and make specific judgments about the degree to which a teacher has planned and prepared for the lesson. As a result, administrators have reasonable assurance that the school's written curriculum is aligned with the taught curriculum.

Commitment

The members of the SMHS community are strongly committed to the school's understanding of effective learning, Priority Areas, and the vision of the graduate. The comprehensive and inclusive process used by the district to create the most recent strategic plan involved all of the major stakeholders. The seven major goals of the plan are incorporated into the school's Priority Areas for Growth, all of which focus on improving various aspects of teaching and learning at SMHS. One of the school's other Priority Areas for Growth focuses on ensuring widespread understanding of the vision of the graduate. Within the school community, that goal has been largely achieved. The faculty, student body, superintendent, and members of the school board speak in a knowledgeable and highly supportive way about the importance of the vision of the graduate. They can connect all of the transferable skills and dispositions within the document to the school's very successful senior project.

The school community demonstrates its commitment to a growth mindset for all. Students are encouraged to take risks in the classroom and beyond to extend their learning. The concerted effort to expand opportunities for students to think critically, be creative, and take responsibility for their learning through the assignment of open-ended tasks has contributed to substantial growth in student independence. Students are routinely encouraged to

apply themselves, work hard and do well. At the same time, they are encouraged to focus on learning and not just the acquisition of the grade. They are encouraged to take active-learning classes in the arts, technology, and engineering to grow in other ways. The school implemented a Latin Honor System to measure attainment. It supplants the strict class ranking system and valedictorian/salutatorian with a three-tiered system of academic achievement usingcum laude,magna cum laude, andsumma cum laude. The school implemented this program to move away from a grade-conscious culture and focus more on personal growth.

The school has a robust program to recognize and celebrate student achievement and success, emphasizing that hard work, persistence, and dedication have their intrinsic rewards, not the least of which is the personal growth that derives from success. Every student has multiple opportunities to extend personal learning beyond the school walls through several extended field trips such as Nature's Classroom, the Close-Up trip to Washington, DC, and a trip to Gettysburg for American history students, and shorter day trips such as the Freedom Trail in Boston. The trip to the Freedom Trail is connected to the English curriculum. Every experiential field trip requires several school personnel, including administrators and many teachers who lead and chaperone the students, and the financial support from the community to fund each.

Teachers are committed to the growth mindset for both their students and themselves. Every teacher in the school allows students to edit or revise their work or retake some assessments to demonstrate their learning or mastery. To achieve their personal growth, many teachers avail themselves of professional development opportunities by attending conferences and workshops to improve their professional practice. The school's teacher goal-setting teacher supervision model promotes individual professional growth as teachers set annual goals and evaluate their progress in achieving them. They pursue higher education, which is made more accessible by the reimbursement funds provided by the district. Teachers engage students via a student survey to improve curriculum and instructional practice for all courses. All of this takes place in a school environment that values growth evidenced by the hard work of everyone to make the school a better place to teach and learn. The school subscribes to the adage that "Good is the enemy of great." Those in the school are not satisfied with being good and are working hard to become great.

The school community is committed to ongoing school improvement and alignment with the Standards for Accreditation. SMHS was one of the first schools to adopt the new 2020 NEASC standards, develop a Self-Reflection report and host a Collaborative Conference. The schoolmet all six of the Association's Foundational Elements at the Collaborative Conference, a distinction they still retain at the time of the Decennial visit. The school valued the feedback from the Collaborative Conference report and spent the last few years addressing, to varying degrees, four significant priority Areas for Growth leading to the improvement of teaching and learning, the understanding and integration of the vision of the graduate, and several other goals embedded in the district's strategic plan.

There is substantial commitment and support of professional learning and growth for all staff. Teachers are provided with time, resources, professional development opportunities, and financial support to further their education and improve their teaching practice. The commitment to school improvement is through the encouragement of teachers to share their expertise and successful practices with their colleagues, leading to overall school improvement. Educators are encouraged and empowered by administrators to take risks and suggest improvements or modifications, which lead to policy and practice changes for the better. One of the best examples of the collaborative effort to further school improvement is in the Priority Area goal to increase the use of open-ended projects and assessments, leading to greater student independence and growth over a relatively short time.

Commitment is embedded firmly in the school culture. First and foremost, the administrators and staff are fiercely committed to their students. They are dedicated to ensuring that no student falls between the cracks and are willing to do whatever it takes to help them succeed. That commitment is supported further by little to no annual turnover of staff. That stability ensures consistency in whatever initiatives are undertaken, increasing the likelihood of ultimate success. The school staff consistently goes above and beyond to meet each student's needs and ensure success, and that spirit extends throughout the system. The universal commitment to provide challenging opportunities to all students and meet their needs results in one of the highest per-pupil costs in the state. Still, it is a burden that the district and the community are willing to bear.

Competency

Members of the school community have the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to implement effective learning, the Priority Areas, and the vision of the graduate. The goal-setting teacher supervision system in place is an excellent example. Each teacher creates annual professional growth and learning goals. Throughout the year, teachers are evaluated on the progress toward achieving the goals, which become part of their annual evaluation. The supervision system includes classroom observations tied into the specific teacher's curriculum, which is readily available to the administrator during the visit, providing insight into the degree of planning and preparation of the given lesson and ensuring that the written curriculum is the taught curriculum.

The growing understanding of and support for the vision of the graduate is further evidence of the competency of the entire school community. Teachers incorporate the vision of the graduate elements in their curriculum and instruction and measure student attainment using revised school-wide rubrics. Similarly, another set of rubrics has been used to measure the social and civic expectations included in the document, which are essentially the dispositions the school community deems critical for its students to possess upon graduation. The remodeling of the school's long-standing, highly respected senior project to include the skills and dispositions embedded in the vision of the graduate resulted in the creation of a highly relevant capstone assessment of a student's high school career. Students understand the vision of the graduate and why the skills and dispositions which comprise it are so important. Seniors currently engaged in completing their senior project can articulate how various aspects of their project demonstrate their attainment of the specific skills and dispositions in the vision of the graduate.

There are numerous examples of staff leadership, initiative, and empowerment. Teachers feel supported and are encouraged to take risks and initiate change. Teachers go far beyond their classroom roles. All are involved in various co-curricular endeavors, often undertaking multiple positions to fulfill student needs. Programmatically, the school initiated an effort to ensure the academic success of all students by creating support classes in mathematics and English, coupled with their counterparts in the regular schedule. Students who need curricular or instructional support in an English class are assigned to the English Skills class. Students struggling with math are assigned to the Math Essentials class where, in both cases, the teachers can collaborate to help students succeed. The school staff demonstrates competency in addressing the Priority Areas for Growth. Despite the pandemic's impact on teaching and learning, the staff made significant progress in achieving many of the goals they created and the recommendations of the visiting team.

A highly-skilled, competent, and caring veteran staff is committed to school improvement. They are comfortable with self-reflection and are willing to grow individually and as a school community. Not content with resting on their apparent successes, they possess a strong desire to collaborate with their colleagues, assume leadership roles, and move forward. Indicative of this attitude is their participation in a student survey about teaching and learning in the school. Many educators take the feedback seriously and use it to improve their curriculum and instruction. The school community is secure in knowing what is needed to enhance teaching and learning and what specific steps are necessary to align with the Standards of Accreditation. Two and a half years ago, the school met all six Foundational Elements and worked hard to strengthen further the alignment with those critical elements of the Standards of Accreditation.

Capacity

Sunapee Middle High School has the time, resources, and support needed to implement effective learning, make progress on Priority Areas, and successfully implement the vision of the graduate. Staff members routinely collaborate informally during the school day and before and after school. However, there is no formal time for them to meet in like-groups and collaborate on some agreed-upon aspect of curriculum, instruction, or assessment. There are several significant obstacles to creating an opportunity for collaboration. For example, the tight schedule is typical of most small schools. Most staff members are stretched to capacity leaving little time to devote to a collaborative meeting without negatively impacting teaching and learning. Last year, administrators created an alternative plan to provide collaborative time to specific teachers, which involved hiring substitutes to cover their classes for a half-day. Many found this opportunity very beneficial, but the pandemic halted the

practice. One successful effort created time for teachers in the skills classes to meet and collaborate with the respective math and English teachers with whom they work. Despite the obstacles and setbacks, the administration is committed to providing all staff members with a formal time within the school day to collaborate.

The support for professional learning for educators is sufficient. The school district annually budgets $26,000 for professional development, including hiring educational and other consultants to work with staff to improve their practice or improve the school's culture. Additionally, the district allots $22,000 for course reimbursement, which is more than adequate in that many years teachers taking graduate courses can receive a reimbursement for the total cost of their tuition. The district incorporates five professional development days into the school calendar. Sometimes consultants work with teachers. For example, one consultant addressed instructional strategies that increase students' ability to demonstrate independence, flexibility, and persistence on open-ended tasks. That program was generally seen as favorable by the staff; however, most staff members are much more supportive of professional development days that allow them to collaborate and share expertise with their colleagues. For example, in the "App Slap Down" session, attendees shared practical applications to enhance classroom instruction and assessment.

Other learning opportunities such as sessions on mathematics instruction and integrating technology and innovation have been provided. Author Jon Wortmann presented a session on wellness/mindfulness, and there are plans to engage Phillip Fogelman of the Anti-Defamation League to present on diversity issues. All professional staff are encouraged and supported in attending conferences and workshops to expand their learning outside the district and are expected to share recently gained knowledge or strategies with colleagues. Lastly, staff members are encouraged to visit other schools to observe best practices and share them when relevant and appropriate.

It is universally agreed upon that teachers have the resources necessary to succeed. From the superintendent and school board members to the teachers in the classroom, all attest that everyone has all of the resources they need to teach effectively and meet the needs of their students. School administrators ensure that all staff members are provided with whatever they need and rarely reject any request for supplies or teaching materials. When issues arise, they work hard to find solutions to overcome obstacles. At the heart of everything successful is a mutual trust between administrators and teachers. Administrators trust that teachers will request materials and create learning opportunities that support and challenge the students and result in enhanced learning opportunities. Ultimately, they will always do what is in the best interest of their students. Conversely, teachers trust that it is safe to take risks and propose initiatives that might appear unconventional and that they can always count on support from administrators. That mutual trust creates an environment where change is welcomed.

Additional Information

Additional Information

School's status on the Principles of Effective Practice

After two focused assessments of the school's status on the Principles of Effective Learning, that staff determined that no changes in the initial ratings of the Principles of Effective Practice are warranted. Many of the Principles are being implemented very well, and the staff plans to support and sustain practices that align with the Standards. The staff feels a rating of *Transforming* is a very high bar to reach. However, the consensus is that the school is close to meeting this higher level for many of the Principles. Having this as a goal will effectively provide the incentive and motivation to sustain school improvement efforts over the next several years. The visiting team concurs with the school's determination that there have been no changes in its ratings since the Collaborative Conference report.

Commendations

Commendation

The extra classes taught, consistent collaboration with colleagues, and advising multiple clubs and activities for the betterment of the students through teachers' willingness to take on multiple responsibilities to ensure that student needs are met

The strength of the school culture and the positive reinforcement of social norms that are largely upheld and reinforced by staff and students every day

Theengagement of students through the pervasive use of discussion, problem-solving, open-ended questions, and active learning

Commendation

The opportunities created for students that promote flexibility, independence, and perseverance from a dedicated staff

The use of the senior project as a capstone assessment of the skills and dispositions included in the vision of the graduate

The use of Atlas Rubicon during classroom observations to ensure that the taught and written curriculum are aligned

Commendation

The safe and clean facility that is conducive to learning through student respect for their school and the dedicated work and pride of the custodial staff

The creation and implementation of a student survey to elicit feedback on teaching and learning and teachers' use of that data to improve practice

The commitment to organizing, funding, and leading extended field trips to enhance student learning beyond the walls of the school

Commendation

The commitment to, and use of, school-wide rubrics to assess student attainment of the expectations expressed in the school's vision of the graduate

The commitment to ensuring the success of each student as a whole person

The outstanding, positive, and growth-focused culture of the school maintained and nurtured by students and staff

Commendation

The myriad opportunities created for students to develop deep and authentic learning experiences

The multiple ways in which the community engages and supports the students in their learning

The friendly and familial rapport between staff and students

Commendation

The school pride demonstrated through framed photos, trophies, and student work prominently displayed throughout the school

The innovative opportunities crafted for staff collaboration on their own time

The high learning expectations set for every student

Commendation

The deliberate and purposeful creation of co-curricular activities to create learning opportunities and build connections within the school community

The commitment to the social-emotional health of the entire SMHS community

The commitment to professional learning to support and further student learning

Commendation

The creative way students are able to access interventions

The connections between staff and students through the advisory program

The integration of STEAM across the curriculum

Commendation

The growth mindset focused goal-setting supervision model used to improve teaching and learning

The adoption of the Latin Honor System to replace class rank

The creation of a Math Essentials and an English Skills classes to support struggling students

Commendation

The budgetary support for professional learning and the availability of ample funding for teacher course reimbursement

The commitment to find solutions and overcome obstacles to support teachers' needs

The degree of mutual trust that exists between teachers and administrators

Additional Recommendations

Recommendation

Provide greater professional development opportunities for teachers to share expertise with colleagues

Recommendation

Expand the use of strategic differentiation of instruction across the curriculum to better meet the learning needs of each student

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This Initial/Decennial Accreditation Report of the Visiting Team reflects the findings of the school's Summary Report and those of the visiting team. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administrators, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administrators yearly of progress made in aligning with the Standards for Accreditation.

A school's initial/continued Accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing the school's improvement/growth plan based on the Priority Areas validated by the visiting team and recommendations 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, the Commission requires that the principal submit a First Report of Progress and Planning and routine Three- and Six-Year Reports of Progress and Planning describing the school's progress implementing the Priority Areas as well as submitting an updated improvement/growth plan. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards or Priority Areas for Growth are not being met in a satisfactory manner, if additional information is needed on matters relating to the school's alignment with the Standards for Accreditation, or substantive changes occur in the school.

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

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed a Self-Reflection that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need, hosted a Collaborative Conference, developed an improvement/growth plan, and completed a Summary Report. The time and effort dedicated to the Accreditation process, school improvement/growth, the Summary Report, and the preparation for the visit ensured a successful Initial/Decennial Accreditation visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES
Commission on Public Schools

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Mr. Paul Mangelinkx - New England Association of Schools & Colleges

Assistant Chair: Ms. Amy White - Hudson School District

Team Members

Kevin Beaudoin - Sanborn Regional High School

David Miller - Merrimack Valley High School

Gardner Case Newberry - Milton High School

Anne-Marie Osheyack - Conant High School