

**New England Association of  
Schools and Colleges**

**Commission on Public Secondary Schools**

**Report of The Forest Hills Consolidated School  
Jackman, Maine**

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## **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 Forest Hills Consolidated 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 (60) days 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 Forest Hills Consolidated 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 team.

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## INTRODUCTION

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of 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

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

Leadership and Organization

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 show continued progress addressing identified needs.

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

A steering committee of the professional staff members was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Forest Hills Consolidated School, a committee of nine 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 seven students, five parents, and a retired teacher. The self-study of Forest Hills Consolidated School extended over sixteen months from September 2006 to January 2007.

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, Forest Hills Consolidated School also used questionnaires developed by The Global Institute at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation and surveys generated by self-study committees to focus on certain standards. 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 eleven evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Forest Hills Consolidated School. The Committee members spent four days in Jackman, Maine, 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, higher education, and vocational institutions, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Forest Hills Consolidated School. The visiting team built its professional judgment on evidence collected from the following sources:

- review of the school's self-study materials
  - thirty-seven hours of shadowing thirteen students
  - numerous hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
  - numerous informal observations in and around the school
- 
- tour of the facility
  - individual meetings with twenty-one teachers (all available faculty members) 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 on the report was agreed to by team 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 team'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 Commission on Public Secondary Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of Forest Hills Consolidated School.

## **Overview of Findings**

An involved and committed Forest Hills Consolidated School community, guided by the accreditation process, has built and sustained remarkable momentum over the past three years toward clarity of its mission and achievement of its expectations for student learning. The community-based leadership team has properly received state and national recognition for effectiveness. Most notable among these achievements are the safe, mutually respectful, and uplifting climate of the school, the personalization of the learning experience for students, the range of programs and support services, and community support. Crucial, however, for continued progress toward excellence will be documented curriculum aligned with expectations for student learning, wide use and understanding of schoolwide rubrics, and increased collaboration among the faculty members of the three wings: elementary, middle school, and high school.

A collaborative and inclusive process, characteristic of the school and community leadership, was employed to develop and adopt the statement of mission and expectations for student learning. The statement captures the dominant values of the community and has support among faculty members. The climate of the school truly reflects the mission and the social and civic expectations for student learning. In progress are the essential next steps to assess the degree to which the school is achieving its academic expectations for student learning.

The curriculum leadership of the principal is clearly present throughout the school, and the superintendent provides key knowledge, resources, and support. The Forest Hills Consolidated School administration, faculty members, and school board have been very successful in finding and funding creative ways to offer courses and programs typically unavailable to students in very small schools. With the use of technology and more collaboration time for faculty members, the school is committed to documenting all

curriculum in a standardized format, aligning curriculum with expectations for student learning, and assigning responsibility to grade levels, programs, and courses.

Instructional strategies are generally impressive and consistent with the mission and expectations for student learning. Small classes, the personalization of instruction, engaged students, and opportunities to apply learning are evident. However, meeting this important standard cannot be ensured over time unless the academic expectations for student learning are made central to the improvement of instruction. Collaboration among faculty members on instruction and assessment needs to be more frequent and effective in the middle school and high school wings, and faculty members need to integrate more effectively available technology into instruction.

The issue of school-wide assessment connected to the mission and expectations for student learning has become central to planning and deliberations on school improvement at Forest Hills School. A range of relevant data is being gathered on the school's social and civic expectations, and a plan is being developed for analysis and presentation of this data. The principal, faculty members, and staff at the Forest Hills School are committed to and challenged by the development of school-wide rubrics to measure the degree to which students in grades kindergarten to grade twelve are achieving the school's academic expectations. However, they are confident and are making progress through inservice professional development on rubrics and with a technology program that facilitates the alignment of curriculum and assessment with the school's academic expectations for student learning and with the Maine Learning Results. The communication of individual student progress to parents is accomplished effectively with the PowerSchool technology and by timely contacts and mailings as appropriate.

The principal clearly has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school. The relationships among the school board, superintendent, principal, and leadership team are highly effective in moving the school to full realization of its mission and expectations for student learning. The instructional leadership of the principal, who has a range of other responsibilities, is tireless and exceptional. In addition to small classes and the outstanding climate of the school, the celebration of student achievement and the enhancement of how students see themselves contribute significantly to the quality of the school program. The formalization of a program that includes the assignment of faculty advisor/mentor to every student would further personalize the school experience.

Forest Hills School provides strong and effective student support services, including guidance, library, and special education. While overall health services, including emergency response, are provided by qualified staff on site, the nurse is at the school only twelve days during the school year. The communication and cooperation are outstanding among support staff members, other school staff members, and providers of

community social services. A range of programs is in place for students with special needs. Guidance and social work services are comprehensive for a small school. The library and media center has recently been updated and is truly the intellectual hub of the school.

The appropriate involvement of the Jackman community in the program and life of the Forest Hills School has resulted in shared values, good communication, productive partnerships, and reliable financial support adequate to support the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The leadership team, representative of school and community, is active, widely supported, and successful in finding innovative ways to fund school programs. The business community is particularly involved. Relationships among the leadership team, school board, administration, staff members, and parent, student, and booster organizations are effective and serve the school's mission. The school facility is in good condition, is well maintained, and, with the exception of performing arts, supports the program. Planning is thoughtful and comprehensive but needs to be formalized into one integrated strategic plan.

## **School and Community Report**

### **The Community**

Forest Hills Consolidated School, located in Jackman, Maine, is nestled in the Moose River Valley, surrounded by mountains and lakes. The school serves the rural towns of Jackman, Moose River, Dennistown, West Forks, the Forks and the unorganized townships of Long Pond, Parlin Pond and Rockwood. Located 15 miles south of the Quebec border, 50 miles north of Bingham, and 50 miles west of Greenville, Jackman is a rural, geographically isolated community. Route 201, a major north/south artery, runs through Jackman. However, it is 95 miles from Interstate 95 and 75 miles north of Skowhegan, the nearest service center.

Incorporated in 1958, Jackman is a tourist destination for trout fishing in the spring, whitewater rafting, hiking, and all terrain vehicle (ATV) trail riding in the summer, hunting in the fall, and snowmobiling in the winter. The town hosts a number of motels, restaurants, and gas stations, as well as a health center, an assisted living center, five retail stores and the school. Moose River, incorporated in 1954, is the home of Moose River Lumber. The Forks and West Forks are the base for the Kennebec and Dead River rafting trips.

Together, Jackman and Moose River have a combined population of 985. The communities are racially, culturally, and ethnically similar: no identifiable minority comprises more than 1% of the population. English is the primary language of the student population; a few households speak French at home, primarily as a way to teach the language to their children. The median family income of the Jackman/Moose River area is \$30,328 (compared to the Maine median of \$37,240). Ten percent of the combined population of Jackman and Moose River has graduated from college compared to the national average of 25.1%.

The majority of the population in the two communities is employed in the woods industry, the school, the local healthcare system, or through Homeland Security. After the attack on the World Trade Center, both Customs/Border Protection and Border Patrol dramatically increased their presence in the area, resulting in an influx of families. In the fall of 2007, Homeland Security built a new Border Patrol station to expand its border operations and will complete, in 2010, a multi-million dollar expansion to the actual border station, resulting in another 25 permanent jobs. As a result, the student population has increased. In 2007, the unemployment rate in Jackman was 5.6% and in Moose River was 1.7%. In 2005-06, 32% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch, and 15% received Title I services.

Forest Hills Consolidated School expended an average of \$8,971 per pupil in 2004-05, \$9,592 per pupil in 2005-06, and \$9,698 per pupil in 2006-07. This compares to Maine per pupil expenditure averages of \$7,760 and \$8,230 for 2004-05 and 2005-06, respectively. Consistently, 50% of the school budget is from local resources and 50% is from federal, state and other resources. Seventy-seven percent of local property taxes are allocated to the school system. Sixteen elementary students paid the Maine non-resident tuition rate of \$6,945 and eight high school students paid the Maine non-resident rate of \$7,205 to attend Forest Hills Consolidated School. No Forest Hills Consolidated School students attend a regional technical school because of distance constraints.

Forest Hills Consolidated School was built in 1960 with substantial additions in 1984 and 1987. The school is located in one building with a common gym and cafeteria and with three wings that house the elementary, middle and high schools. All three schools share the library, guidance, and art facilities. The middle and high school share the industrial arts facilities.

The school serves students in grades kindergarten through grade twelve. The school population has remained stable at approximately 190 students. There are also several students in the district who are home schooled. The ethnic and racial composition of the student body is overwhelmingly white. The drop-out rate for the past three years has been consistently low at seven percent.

The Forest Hills Consolidated School is staffed as follows: nineteen full-time regular education teachers, two full-time special education teachers, one librarian, a part-time high school mathematics teacher, a part-time French teacher, and a part-time elementary music teacher. Four of these teachers have earned masters degrees, one is under a provisional certificate, and one is under a conditional certificate. The student to teacher ratio is approximately 8.6 to 1. Forest Hills Consolidated School also employs 19 others, including the following: administrators, office staff, guidance staff, educational technicians, speech technician, Live2Learn coordinators, custodians, and kitchen staff.

Elementary teachers have self-contained classrooms and receive 40 minutes of planning time per day. Middle school teachers instruct five 45 minute periods per day and share an 80 minute common planning period per day. High school teachers teach three 80-minute classes per day with a daily 80-minute planning period. In addition to the planning periods, all staff members participate in six common planning days per year and attend monthly faculty meetings. Minimum (release time) days are scheduled as needed (generally no more than six a year) and can be used for staff development and parent/teacher conferences. The focus of the staff development days vary year to year based upon staff members' needs. Students attend school for 175 days, a minimum of 1,050 hours. Teacher attendance is very good considering that many occasions arise where the isolation of the community necessitates taking a full day off to travel for services.

Classes at the high school level are organized on a semester schedule. While students are required to take three classes per semester, the majority enrolls in four. All students at the high school level are placed in college preparatory classes and junior and senior students may select from a variety of advanced placement courses. All students are required to complete summer reading assignments. Students must earn a total of 24 credits to graduate: four in English; three in mathematics to include Algebra I, geometry, and Algebra II; three in science; four in social science; one in computer science; two in physical education and one in art. The remaining credits are acquired through elective courses.

Forest Hills Consolidated School offers special education services, gifted and talented services, English language learner services, and Title I services to students in

kindergarten through twelfth grade. At Forest Hills Consolidated School, 14% receives special services, 16% receives Title I services, 9% is identified as gifted and talented, and 23% enrolls in advanced placement courses.

Forest Hills Consolidated School offers two formal parent/teacher conference days in the fall and spring. Parent participation at these conferences averages 90% at the elementary and middle school levels. Parent/teacher conference attendance at the high school level has not been formally aggregated; however the feeling is that less than 25% of parents attends these meetings. The Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) meets monthly with an average attendance of seven parents. The PTC organizes teacher appreciation activities and family events that include parent education, family movie nights, family fun days, and classroom volunteering.

Forest Hills Consolidated School offers co-curricular activities that include the following: six athletic programs for boys and girls, drama, math team, National Honor Society, yearbook, Close-Up, Jackman youth leadership for safe and drug-free socials, speech and debate, Tiger Paw Productions, and Destination Imagination. There is an active student government at both the middle and high school levels. Over 90% of students participate in at least one of these activities.

Prior to 2006, no student earned “exceeded” on the state standards using the Maine Education Assessment (MEA) scores. In recent years, a number of students exceeded the standards in both mathematics and reading at multiple grade levels. The percent exceeding standards follow by years and grades:

2005-06	Grade 3 Math (8%); Grade 4 Math (6%); Grade 5 Math (9%);
Grade 8	Math (15%); Grade 8 Reading (8%); Grade 8 Science (8%)
2006-07	Grade 3 Math (17%); Grade 5 Math (13%); Grade 6 Reading (13%);
	Grade 7 Math (13%); Grade 8 Math (6%)

Forest Hills Consolidated School students have made adequate yearly progress (AYP) according to the No Child Left Behind Act every year the law has been in existence.

In the class of 2006, 71% of Forest Hills Consolidated School graduates enrolled in four-year colleges, 7% enrolled in two-year colleges, 7% entered the military, and 14% went directly into the workforce. In the period 1996-2003, 74% of Forest Hills Consolidated School graduates pursued post-secondary education. In 2006, local scholarships totaled approximately \$26,000. Graduates in the area can take advantage of services offered through the University of Maine at Augusta's distance learning site located at Forest Hills Consolidated School and various adult education offerings at the school.

Forest Hills Consolidated School has partnerships with local businesses for various career aspiration opportunities. These include the following: a school-to-work program with a

local restaurant for special education students, a pre-apprenticeship program with a logging company and local carpenters for high school juniors and seniors, a ten-week health career program with a local nursing home for the third and sixth grade students, and visits to local businesses for kindergarten students.

There have been no expulsions in recent school history. There were suspensions during the school years 2005-06 and 2006-07. In the first semester of 2007-08, there were two suspensions. During each of these suspensions, students were placed in a community service role developed by mutual agreement with the parents and the principal.

In 2006-07, 25% of high school students (primarily students in grade 9) earned one or more failing grades in the first semester, and 14% earned one or more failing grades in the second semester. In the same year, 27% of middle school students earned one or more failing grades in first semester, and 42% earned one or more failing grades in the second semester.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments in a variety of ways. All three levels award various academic awards during end-of-year assemblies. The National Honor Society inducts new members yearly. Sports teams are recognized at an annual banquet in the spring. Area newspapers recognize student achievement through a variety of means. Forest Hills Consolidated School Consolidated School students have been featured in the *Morning Sentinel's* "Student of the Week" profiles. Of particular note is an annual night called "Night of Stars" at which students are recognized for meeting and exceeding their reading goals.

Every Forest Hills Consolidated School sophomore and junior takes the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test), and every junior takes the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) as part of the Maine Educational Assessment System (MEA). Students in grade one through grade eight take the Terra Nova test to measure national achievement in the academic areas. Over 98% of the eligible students take part in the Maine Education Assessments annually. ASVAB (Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery) testing is administered to all sophomores. The school has recently purchased the Northwest Educational Assessments and will begin administering this test this year. The guidance/social worker administers the Accuplacer to many students to measure college preparedness. The guidance/social worker meets with each student to review the results. The school reports to parents the progress of their children with all of these assessments.

Forest Hills Consolidated School is an active member of the Jackman community. The leadership team -- a group of approximately thirty members representing various businesses, school groups, and community groups -- meets to work on improvement of all aspects of the school and community. The Jackman Regional Community Association

(JRCA) a federally approved non-profit, has been instrumental in developing grant applications to benefit the school. Of particular note is a MELMAC (Maine Educational Loan Marketing Corporation) grant jointly awarded to the school and the JRCA to increase students' post-secondary aspirations.

## **Forest Hills Consolidated School Mission Statement**

The mission of Forest Hills Consolidated School, in partnership with staff, students, family and community, is to educate, empower and challenge students to realize their full potential, as individuals and as citizens of the world, and to develop a life-long thirst for knowledge.

### **Academic Expectations**

To assess the cultural, environmental, economic and political impacts of humans and their behavior on the world

To read and write effectively

To speak and listen effectively

To analyze and evaluate sources critically and objectively

To apply math skills in practical and theoretical situations

To use the scientific method to solve everyday problems

To be proficient in the use of information technology

To demonstrate artistic knowledge and techniques

To be physically fit and aware of healthy lifestyles

### **Social and Civic Expectations**

To make responsible personal choices and set appropriate goals

To demonstrate teamwork and leadership skills

To be an aware, contributing, and responsible citizen

To demonstrate respect and honor diversity

## **COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

# **TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS**

## **MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

## **CURRICULUM**

## **INSTRUCTION**

## **ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

## **MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

### **1**

The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and

drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that:
  - are measurable;
  - reflect the school's mission.
4. For each academic expectation in the mission, the school shall have a targeted of successful achievement identified in a rubric.
5. The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations.
6. The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.
7. The school shall review regularly the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.

## **Conclusions**

The mission and expectations for student learning of Forest Hills Consolidated School were developed by the school community, approved by the faculty, and adopted by the school board. The mission and expectations committee included faculty members, school board members, community volunteers, parents, and students. Under the direction of the administration, the committee began creating a new mission statement along with specific academic, social, and civic expectations to replace the existing document adopted in 2002. The first draft was submitted for review to the superintendent and a representative group of faculty members, students, parents and community members. Definitions of

expectations for academic learning and assessment indicators for achievement of the civic and social expectations were added and refined in second and third drafts. At the first leadership team meeting in September 2007, the mission statement was presented to parents, businesses, and community members. As a result of the inclusive and collaborative process, faculty members, staff members, students, parents, and community members demonstrate ownership and support of the mission statement. (self-study, teachers, administrators, community members, panel presentation)

The mission and expectations for student learning document of Forest Hills Consolidated School reflects the values and beliefs held by the school community. To determine these values and beliefs, the developers of the document surveyed staff members, faculty members, school board members, parents, and students. The inclusive nature of the process also contributed to feedback on values and beliefs. Consensus was reached as elements of the school community recognized and showed appreciation for the contributions of all individuals and groups. As a result, students, parents, and faculty members are committed to a learning environment where students are safe, challenged, empowered, and take an active role as citizens of the world. (self-study, administrators, community members, panel presentations, students, observations)

Forest Hill Consolidated School has defined measurable school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that reflect the school's mission. The academic expectations are consistent with the mission to challenge, to educate, to empower, and to prepare students for productive careers. Defined in a separate document, the nine academic expectations are clearly measurable. The civic and social learning expectations reflect the mission of the school related to community membership, personal choices, citizenship, and responsibility. Also defined in a separate document, the civic and social expectations are measurable in a variety of meaningful ways. As a consequence of thoughtfully defining school-wide academic, social, and civic expectations that are understandable and measurable, Forest Hills Consolidated School has increased awareness of its mission and taken an essential first step toward assessing the degree to which school-wide academic, social, civic expectations are being met. (self-study, standard subcommittee, observations, teachers, administrators)

Forest Hills Consolidated School has not identified a targeted level of successful achievement for each academic expectation in a rubric. After the adoption of the mission statement and academic expectations, teachers responded to a request to provide academic expectations for their grade levels and descriptions. As a result of this process, a draft document, "Measures of Achievement," was written and given to teachers for review. This document is not in rubric format. Teachers express concern about the challenge of developing a kindergarten to grade twelve school-wide rubric and clearly need information, support, and direction. The plan is to align curriculum with grade and subject areas during the 2008-2009 school year and to develop a school-wide rubric to measure academic expectations during the 2009-2010 school year. Thus far this process appears to focus on input from teachers related to academic expectations in their individual subjects and grade levels. The process needs to be more collaborative with an emphasis on the opportunity for students to practice and to demonstrate mastery of the

academic expectations in all grades and in multiple subjects. Until a school-wide rubric is developed, understood, and widely used, Forest Hills Consolidated School cannot ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve the school's mission and academic expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, standard subcommittee, administrators)

Forest Hills Consolidated School has developed a document that lists indicators by which progress on social and civic expectations is assessed. The indicators are organized by level: elementary, middle school, and high school; included are assessments related to participation in a range of programs and activities as well as data from PowerSchool and school records. There is currently no systematic process for the analysis of information to assess the level to which school-wide social and civic expectations are being met. The thoughtful design and implementation of such a process would contribute to a more accurate, comprehensive, and useful assessment of social and civic expectations. (self-study, administrators, panel, teachers, school documents)

The mission statement and social and civic expectations document guides the procedures, policies, and decisions and is clearly and continuously reflected in the culture of Forest Hills Consolidated School. The academic expectations for student learning guide procedures, policies, and decisions but are not yet embedded in the culture of the school. The school community is aware of and committed to the mission statement. The safe and mutually respectful climate, the examples of good citizenship, and the variety of community service projects demonstrate that the social and civic expectations have become crucial to life at school and in the community. However, professional discourse on school-wide academic expectations is still developing as major curriculum alignment and rubric projects gain momentum. Therefore, decisions related to the safe, uplifting climate of the school are guided by the mission and social and civic expectations while decisions related to teaching and learning are not largely driven by the academic expectations for student learning. (self-study, students, teachers, leadership team, parents, observation, administrators)

Forest Hills Consolidated Schools has a plan for the timely and continuous review of the mission statement and expectations for student learning. The plan includes using a variety of data to ensure that the statements reflect the needs of the students, community expectations, the mission of the district and state, and national standards. Faculty members and administrators are employing technology and the Northwest Educational Assessment to be more current on data relating to students needs. As a result, the mission and expectations for student learning will always be guided by accurate, current data on students in an environment subject to rapid change.

### **Commendations**

1. The collaborative and inclusive process employed to develop the mission statement and expectations for student learning
2. The positive effect on school climate of the values and beliefs in the mission statement

and social and civic expectations

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure the school develops a school-wide rubric with a targeted level of achievement for each of the academic expectations in the statement of mission and expectations for student learning
2. Ensure that academic expectations for student learning guide procedures, policies, and decisions

## **CURRICULUM**

### **2**

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the professional staff's commitment to and involvement in a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

1. Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.

2. The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations.
3. The written curriculum shall:
  - prescribe content;
  - integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations;
  - identify course specific learning goals;
  - suggest instructional strategies;
  - suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.
4. The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall:
  - be appropriately integrated;
  - emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and school campus.
7. There shall be effective curriculum coordination and articulation between and among all areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

## **Conclusions**

The Forest Hills Consolidated School has not formally assigned responsibility for school-wide academic expectations to the grade levels, programs, and curriculum areas . The academic expectations are aligned with Maine Learning Results in curriculum guides so there is some assumed responsibility for each. However, substantial work needs to be completed before the curriculum truly supports the mission and expectations. Clearly, until responsibility is assigned and widely understood, the school cannot ensure that all students have the opportunity to successfully achieve schoolwide academic expectations. (parents, standard subcommittee, teachers, self-study)

Documented curriculum is not aligned with academic expectations. Curriculum guides include specific course content, instructional strategies, and assessment appropriate to the subject area. The school has begun the alignment process by determining how it will measure student achievement and is drafting a preliminary list of instruments and assessment activities to assess academic learning expectations. Administration and faculty members point to evidence of alignment with school-wide learning goals in the character education curriculum, new courses in economics and environmental science, and the purchase of MyAccess software for improving student writing skills in grades five to twelve. Support systems are currently in place to help students achieve learning expectations and include speech and language services, the Live2Learn after-school program, mentoring, and pre-apprenticeships. Although the school has made some progress in the alignment of curriculum, it cannot yet ensure that all students have the

opportunity to practice and achieve schoolwide academic expectations. (self-study, teachers, curriculum documents, administrators, student work)

The documented curriculum at Forest Hills Consolidated School does not consistently accomplish the following: prescribe content, integrate schoolwide expectations, identify course goals, suggest instructional strategies, and suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics. Some faculty members in certain disciplines have made an effort to standardize their curriculum. Indeed, there are efforts to develop a standard format for curriculum documents which include learning objectives and suggestions for assessments. However, the documents are composed by individual teachers, and a schoolwide connection to the academic expectations is often not specified. A school-wide rubric to guide the implementation of the curriculum would enhance the mastery of the learning objectives by students. The documented curriculum does not consistently provide descriptions of acceptable and unacceptable work and exemplars of student work. As yet no standard format for documented curriculum is in place, but a standardized template for all curriculum documents is being generated using the Techpaths program. Once the information is generated on this template for each content area, the document will serve as a guide for students, parents, and faculty members. The achievement of the school's academic expectations cannot be assured without documented curriculum in a standard format that addresses content, expectations, instructional strategies, assessment techniques, and application of learning. (self-study, observation, standard subcommittee, teachers, administrators, student work, curriculum documents)

The rigor of the curriculum at Forest Hills Consolidated School -- including inquiry, problem-based learning, higher order thinking skills, and authentic application of knowledge and skills -- is not consistent schoolwide. This is a particular challenge in a small school that serves all thirteen grades. Promotion to the next grade and twenty-four credits required for high school graduation are believed to reflect rigor and high standards. Recently, students have earned the "exceeded" status on the state standards based the Maine Education Assessment (MEA) scores in both mathematics and reading at multiple grade levels. Seventy-one percent of graduates goes on to higher education. The school offers a variety of leveled and non-leveled core and elective courses. Several students participate in independent studies which allow them to work individually with teachers. Forest Hills Consolidated School is providing some outstanding opportunities for the authentic application of learning through grant programs and community partnerships, including pre-apprenticeships. It is clear that the entire school community has made great efforts to ensure that students are supported and assisted in meeting the school's expectations. However, it is also clear, based on observations, that not all students are exposed to a rigorous curriculum in all classes. Consequently, Forest Hills Consolidated School cannot guarantee that every student is challenged to learn and to perform at the highest possible level. (self-study, student work, observation, documents, subcommittee)

The documented curriculum does not formally include evidence of integrated curriculum and depth of coverage; however, faculty members clearly integrate instruction and emphasize depth of coverage in many ways, including essential questions. Curriculum

documents at Forest Hills Consolidated School do not focus on interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum and instruction. Teachers note various examples of integrated learning in several subject areas, particularly through service learning projects, but no formalized school-wide effort exists to develop lessons co-taught by teachers from different disciplines or to develop interdisciplinary units. The lack of common planning time is viewed as inhibiting the development of various integrated curriculum. Consequently, the curriculum lacks opportunities for students to realize connections across content areas and to benefit from the in-depth learning. (self-study, student work, observation, teachers)

Students have opportunities to practice and achieve the school's academic, civic, and social expectations for learning outside of the classroom in activities related to the curriculum. Opportunities for problem-solving are emphasized in such programs as Children's Stage Adventures, mathematics team, Destination Imagination, and the speech and debate club. Other opportunities to display their skills and knowledge to the community are provided in the pre-apprenticeship program, school-to-work, community projects, and the Tiger Paw Cafe.

Academ-e and Early College for ME provide opportunities for students to enroll in college level courses while still in high school. Thus, at Forest Hills Consolidated School multiple opportunities to extend learning beyond the school enhance the educational experiences of students. (self-study, teachers, standard subcommittee, students, observation)

Coordination and articulation of the K-12 curriculum has begun but is incomplete. Newly established K-12 meetings of teachers and staff members provide opportunities to address vertical alignment of the curriculum. Through Techpaths, teachers have begun to document curriculum K-12 and thus identify gaps and areas of duplication. The current school improvement process has been an impetus for teachers to begin and sustain these curriculum discussions. Time constraints and the relative isolation related to being the only teacher who teaches a particular discipline at a particular level has limited the extent of these discussions. The library/media services resources, programs, and services support the entire curriculum and are integrated throughout K-12 content areas. The school does not have a curriculum coordinator to oversee coordination and articulation efforts, and, as a result, the principal assumes this responsibility. It is essential to overcome constraints and to articulate and coordinate the curriculum to guide content and instruction so all students achieve schoolwide academic expectations. (standard subcommittee, self-study, curriculum documents teachers, administrators)

Forest Hills Consolidated School has sufficient supplies, materials, technology, space, and staffing to implement the current curriculum with two exceptions; there is no traditional foreign language program in the high school, and there is only a skeletal performing arts program. Students make frequent use of online and ATM (asynchronous transfer mode) courses in order to extend learning beyond the school building and to fulfill the college entrance requirement of two years of a foreign language. One-to-one

computing is available to all students in grades seven through twelve, and all other students share access to one computer lab with some supervision. There are two portable laptop labs for grades five and six. All classrooms have at least one computer available for use during instruction. The student/teacher ratio is 8.6 to 1. The community supports the school budget and current staffing levels and has, on occasion, raised money above that originally requested by the school. Faculty and staff members make good use of available space to ensure delivery of the curriculum and have sufficient current textbooks to implement the curriculum. At Forest Hills Consolidated School, teaching and learning are generally supported and enhanced by staffing levels, instructional resources, and facilities. (self-study, facility tour, teachers, observation, parents, students, administrators)

A formal procedure for the periodic review of the curriculum by professional staff members based on student performance data has not been established at this time. While the teachers review the results of assessments used in their classes, no formal process is in place for gathering student data related to student performance on school-wide academic expectations for learning. At present, teachers are entering lesson plans into Techpaths, which will eventually allow them to review and revise the curriculum and facilitate alignment with Maine Learning

Results and school-wide academic expectations for student learning. It will be necessary for the school to develop an annual review process as well and gather longitudinal data to ensure effective curriculum revision. Currently, the review of the curriculum is sporadic and reactive to discrete situations as teachers perceive needs from informal discourse about grade levels and disciplines. If Forest Hills Consolidated School is to ensure that students continue to have opportunities to meet the academic expectations and course learning goals, the school must develop and implement a formal curriculum review process based on student performance data. (central office, standard subcommittee, self-study, teachers, administrator)

Forest Hills Consolidated School has begun to allocate time, financial resources, and personnel to develop, review, and revise curriculum. The implementation of the Techpaths system will support this review process. Also, the school has provided teachers annually with six staff development days and several early release days. The staff development days have been earmarked for curriculum mapping and additional Techpaths training. It is clear, then, that the school is committed to developing, evaluating, and revising the curriculum. And yet, the current allocation of time and staffing for this task may not be enough to complete the work. The addition of a full-time building principal in 2007-08 has provided the school with essential leadership to coordinate faculty efforts and oversee curriculum review, but there are no other instructional leaders to support work related to curriculum. Teachers have stated that there is insufficient financial compensation for this work as well. As a result, the school must review this situation to ensure that it is allocating sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to curriculum assessment and revision; otherwise, the

curriculum will not provide all students with opportunities to practice and achieve the school's expectations for student learning. (administrators, self-study, curriculum documents, teachers)

Professional development activities support the development and implementation of many areas of the curriculum. Ongoing professional development focuses on the use and application of Techpaths software. Additional professional development on MyAccess supports the implementation of the writing curriculum. Training related to the Northwest Educational Assessment guides teachers in using data to inform curricular change; yet some teachers disagree on the importance of using assessment data in planning curriculum-related professional development. The continuation by Forest Hills Consolidated School of relevant professional development will result in the development and delivery of a rigorous curriculum consistent with school-wide learning expectations. (self-study, standard subcommittee, teachers, administrators)

### **Commendations**

1. Emphasis on character education curriculum throughout the school
2. The provision of technology to support and develop curriculum development such as the implementation of MyAccess and Techpaths
3. Opportunities for students to take online, ATM, and college-level courses
4. Outstanding opportunities provided for the authentic application of learning through grant programs and community partnerships
5. External learning opportunities such as pre-apprenticeships, school-to-work programs, and the Tiger Paw Cafe
6. Positive impact of small classes on the implementation of the curriculum
7. The effective leadership of the full-time principal in coordinating and overseeing curriculum development, evaluation, and revision

### **Recommendations**

1. Identify teacher and staff member responsibilities for school-wide academic expectations for student learning
2. Ensure that students have the opportunity to practice and to demonstrate mastery of academic expectations in all grades and in multiple subjects
3. Align curriculum with school-wide academic expectations for learning

4. Establish and implement a standardized format for documented curriculum that prescribes content, integrates schoolwide expectations, identifies course goals, suggests instructional strategies, and suggests assessment techniques
5. Ensure that curriculum in all areas consistently engages students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
6. Create and implement a comprehensive, K-12 curriculum plan that ensures that all students will have the opportunity to achieve and to practice academic expectations
7. Sustain a viable foreign language program consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning
8. Sustain a performing arts program consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning
9. Design and implement a process that ensures vertical and horizontal curriculum articulation and alignment

## **INSTRUCTION**

### **3**

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
  - personalize instruction;
  - make connections across disciplines;
  - engage students as active learners;
  - engage students as self-directed learners;
  - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
  - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
  - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection;
3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.

4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

## **Conclusions**

Observed instructional strategies at Forest Hills Consolidated School are generally consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. It is evident that the school works in partnership with the staff, students, and community, that it empowers students to realize their potential, and that it strives to help students develop a life-long thirst for knowledge. Also evident is that the values that underpin the school's instruction are the foundation of the school's mission. The school climate, academic performance of students, and the success of graduates support this conclusion. (panel, teachers, administrators, parents, students, standard subcommittee, self-study, observation)

Instruction is highly personalized and engages all students at Forest Hills Consolidated School. Some teachers utilize instructional strategies that make connections across disciplines, engage students as active and self-directed learners, involve students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding, and provide opportunities to apply knowledge and skills. Instructional strategies do not promote student self-assessment and self-reflection. The small size of the school and community allow teachers to personalize instruction for their students because staff members know the students and the students' families so well. Teachers give individual attention and extra help to students as needed, and students report that almost all teachers are frequently available before and after school to help students. Teachers also personalize instruction in several other ways at Forest Hills Consolidated School, including the utilization of differentiated instruction and of instructional support staff members. There is personalization in various courses offered to individuals and small groups of students on-line or via distance learning. At the high school level, teachers in several courses allow students to chose different means of learning

certain topics, and some teachers use pre-tests to determine the instructional level of the students in each class. On the elementary and middle school levels, the Live2Learn

program promotes collaboration with teachers to determine each student's current progress in reading, writing, and mathematics and then offers homework support and additional instruction after school to students who are in need of help. The Title I program supports high school students in a similar manner. As a result, most students feel more connected to the school experience by the personalization of instruction, are able to pursue individual interests, and are engaged as active and self-directed learners. (self-study, teachers, administrators, parents, students, standard subcommittee, observation, student work)

Teachers frequently make connections across disciplines in the elementary and middle schools; teachers at the high school do so less frequently. These connections are evident in student work and professional discourse among teachers. Many teachers in the middle school and some teachers in the high school regularly assign projects that require students to integrate content areas. Writing is taught across all disciplines and grade levels. Tiger Paw Productions allows students to apply skills learned in many disciplines to the creation of authentic products. The numerous service learning and community projects that are integrated into several courses and grade levels combine learning from several disciplines. The service learning and community projects also engage students as active and self-directed learners. Consequently, students see the connections among disciplines and courses, and teachers reinforce learning across grades and subjects. (teachers, administrators, parents, students, standard subcommittee, self-study, observation, student work)

In most grade levels and subject areas, teachers utilize instructional strategies that encourage students to use higher order thinking skills. To a lesser extent, students are asked to apply the knowledge and skills that they learn. Teachers report that students are engaged in political debates, in analytical thinking, and in the use of the scientific method. Service learning projects also require students to practice higher order thinking skills. High school students believe that teachers emphasize higher order thinking skills in all classes. There is an emphasis on analytical thinking in the kindergarten to grade five mathematics program and the creation of a classroom constitution. Service learning projects in many grades allow students to apply what they are learning in the community. Tiger Paw Productions and the Tiger Paws Cafe are examples where students apply learning in authentic situations. Students report that their classwork sometimes demands application of knowledge and skills. The emphasis on higher thinking skills prepares students to become self-directed learners, to think clearly, and to make wise decisions. Achieving the school's academic expectations would be enhanced by more opportunities to apply knowledge and skills. (teachers, administrators, parents, students, standard subcommittee, self-study, observation, student work)

Self-assessment and self-reflection by students are not widely encouraged in observed or documented instructional strategies. Teachers believe that students are often asked to assess their work and to reflect on their learning, including editing and revising papers -- especially in language arts classes -- and correcting their own papers. On the elementary level, some oral presentations are evaluated by peers. Providing students with more frequent opportunities to assess and to reflect on their learning will encourage them to

become more engaged, self-directed learners. (teachers, administrators, parents, students, standard subcommittee, self-study, observation, student work)

Teachers do not use feedback from other teachers, students, and parents -- in a formal or systematic way -- to improve instruction. Teachers do use feedback from a variety of sources to improve instructional practices. The small size of the school allows for many informal opportunities for the staff to gather feedback from students, parents, and the community. Elementary teachers have lunch together every day and often discuss instructional practices but with no formal structure or process on the use of feedback or follow-up. A common planning period for middle school teachers is utilized for some informal discussion of instructional techniques, but the focus is on logistical and managerial concerns. High school teachers have no formal structure for feedback on instruction from other teachers; teachers do have informal conversations about the improvement of instruction. The Live2Learn program regularly gathers feedback from elementary and middle school classroom teachers in order to provide targeted instruction for students in the program. Students report some cases of feedback being used to drive instructional decisions, including choosing topics in some high school and middle school classes, generating ideas for service learning projects, and suggesting activities for the humanities block in the middle school. Formal processes for collecting feedback from parents include the parent/teacher association, parent/teacher conferences, and IEP (individual educational plans) meetings for special education students. The leadership team is the primary means for collecting feedback from the community. To a limited degree, assessment data are used to inform instructional strategies to improve student learning. Accelerated Reader, Terra Nova, MEA, and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) results are shared with teachers, and the results are analyzed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of different classes. The recent efforts to implement more regular and systematic supervision and evaluation of teachers is providing teachers with useful feedback from the principal on how to improve instructional practices. The design and implementation of a formalized process for teachers to collect and use feedback from a variety of sources would improve instructional practices. (self-study, teachers, parents, students, standard subcommittee)

The teachers at Forest Hills Consolidated School are expert in their content areas and knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches. Some staff members frequently reflect about their own practices in both formal and informal ways. All teachers at the school are highly qualified and certified in the content area in which they teach. Additionally, several staff members have advanced degrees. Teachers remain current in their content areas and knowledgeable about best practice by taking courses and attending workshops and conferences, including the following: the Middle Level Institute, Maine Association of Middle Level Educators conference, advanced placement workshops, gifted and talented workshops, and special education workshops. Many teachers read professional literature, and several staff members, including the principal, share professional literature with other staff members at staff meetings. Teachers network with their colleagues at other schools around the state. These activities encourage self-reflection by teachers. The successful efforts of teachers to remain expert in their fields and current in their practice contribute to the continuous improvement of

instruction at Forest Hills Consolidated School. (self-study, teachers, school documents, administrator)

While the informal discussion of instructional strategies is commonplace at Forest Hills Consolidated School, formal discussion of instructional strategies, outside of staff meetings, is not a part of the professional culture of the school. Frequent informal conversations about instruction take place by chance and not by design. Because of the small, personalized nature of the school community, such informal discussions do allow teachers to share instructional strategies and practices about individual students, classes, and instructional approaches. The middle school teachers have common planning time incorporated into the daily schedule, but agendas are managerial in nature and rarely include professional discussion of instructional practices. The elementary school teachers have created their own informal common planning

time during lunch when they frequently collaborate to design curricular units and lessons, share and critique instructional practices, and examine student work. Monthly K-12 staff meetings, scheduled for the 2008-09 school year, are intended to provide a formal structure for teachers to share and discuss instructional strategies. A culture of professional discourse on instructional practice will be essential for Forest Hills Consolidated School to sustain its momentum toward realizing its mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, observation, teachers, standard subcommittee, administrators)

Technology is widely available at Forest Hills Consolidated School; however, the degree of integration and level of support for teaching and learning varies widely school-wide. Technology available to students includes the following: a computer lab, one-to-one laptop computing at the middle school and high school, several LCD projectors, an ATM room, and four laptops in the library. Teachers and students in the middle school and high school wings report easy access to technology; elementary teachers have fewer computers and often do not have access to the computer lab or library because of use by other classes. Technology is most often used in support of instruction in English language arts, and, to a lesser degree, in social studies but rarely in support of instruction in other content areas, such as mathematics and science. Technology is effectively utilized for distance learning and differentiated instruction. High school students take numerous courses via on-line or ATM courses offered by other institutions for both high school and college credit. Within the classroom, technology is often used for word-processing, note-taking, and research. Student work shows little evidence of technology use. Teachers and students report that most of the technology used in high school classrooms is by students and not the integration of technology into instruction. Graphing calculators are used by students in some high school mathematics courses. Technology use is more frequent and better integrated into the middle school's instructional practices. Teachers are attempting to use StudyWiz as a way to create a "paperless" classroom and to differentiate assignments for different students and also

integrate NoteShare and Journaler software into their classes. All fifth and sixth grade students take keyboarding classes so that they can learn typing skills early and apply them in later grades. The wide range of technology-based distance learning options provided by the school increases the learning opportunities available to Forest Hills students. Increased and more consistent school-wide utilization and integration of technology in support of classroom instruction at all levels is necessary for students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, students, standard subcommittee, observations, shadowing, student work)

The school's professional development program is beginning to be guided by identified instructional needs and is intended to provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies. In the past, professional development was not consistently informed by instructional needs. Recently, a more purposeful professional development program has been undertaken. Six professional workshop days are built into the school calendar. A focus on curriculum mapping has been adopted by the school for the next several years with linkage of specific instructional strategies to curricular units and the assessment of student learning for that assessment. Professional development opportunities for teachers outside of the six professional

workshop days focus mainly on curriculum and assessment. Other professional development opportunities for teachers are based on individual needs. The school has identified but not planned professional development for other school-wide instructional needs, including differentiation of instruction and addressing the high number of middle and high school students who fail at least one course. The Forest Hills Consolidated School has properly set curriculum and assessment as professional development priorities, but to realize its mission and expectations for student learning, the school must also provide effective professional development that addresses identified instructional needs. (self-study, standard subcommittee, school documents, administrators)

The current teacher supervision and evaluation processes are used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs. The formal supervision and evaluation of teachers had not been strong in the culture of Forest Hills Consolidated School. Last year, all teachers were formally evaluated by the principal. Continuing contract teachers were observed once, and all probationary teachers were observed twice. The instruments for teacher observations and evaluations are directly linked to several domains of instructional practice. Teachers report meaningful feedback that improves instruction. The current teacher supervision and evaluation process effectively contributes to the improvement of instruction. (self-study, administrators, teachers, standard subcommittee)

## **Commendations**

1. The high degree of personalization of instructional strategies
2. The formalization of a professional development plan that meets identified instructional needs
3. The effectiveness in improving instruction resulting from the evolving supervision and evaluation process
4. Professional discourse on instructional practice among elementary teachers

## **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that instructional strategies in all classes consistently engage all students as active and self-directed learners and promote student self-assessment and self-reflection
2. Develop and implement a formal process for the collection and use of feedback on instruction from a variety of sources, including students and parents
3. Provide the opportunity for all teachers to collaborate and encourage a culture of professional discourse on instructional practices
4. Increase the integration of technology into instruction to enhance student learning

## **ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

### **4**

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning and course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction.

1. The school shall have a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics.
2. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations.
3. For each learning activity, teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed.
4. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.
5. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
6. Teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies.

7. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of assessment strategies.
8. The school's professional staff shall communicate:
  - individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations and their families;
  - the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community.

## Conclusions

Although Forest Hills Consolidated School uses course-specific rubrics in most courses to measure student progress, it does not have school-wide rubrics. The course-specific rubrics used are not in a standard format. Some teachers use a simple checklist rubric for one type of assessment and a four-point holistic rubric for another. Some teachers use rubrics with school-wide learning goals clearly stated while others do not. The school uses the Maine Learning Results to assess student achievement of the academic expectations, and an elementary writing rubric is being used by all teachers. The accepted evidence of success and progress in a specific course is a passing grade. Without school-wide rubrics, Forest Hills Consolidated School cannot assess individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's academic expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, students, student work)

The professional staff uses a range of data to determine the school's success in achieving civic and social expectations. However, no formal process has been developed for the analysis of this data. Data sources include the Endicott Center for Research and Educational Advancement surveys, Quaglia Institute, Maine Center for Student Aspirations, and the department of education. The PowerSchool program is employed to track student attendance, suspensions, and tardiness. A recess chart at the elementary level is used to log bad choices by students and provides a long-term record of all student behavior as well as evolving patterns of behavior. The student council has a voice in assessing civic and social behavior and recommending changes in the school environment. Community service and service learning projects are also evidence of meeting civic expectations. A formal process for the systematic analysis and use of data would ensure more accurate and useful assessment of the degree to which the school is achieving its social and civic objectives. (self-study, teachers, standard committee, students, administrators)

Most teachers in grades five to twelve clarify to students many course-specific and school-wide learning expectations but not for every learning activity. Teachers at the early elementary level discuss shorter term goals and base the depth of information on the cognitive level of their students. Such clarifications are not based on school-wide rubrics. Parents are aware of promotion and graduation requirements but are not always aware of criteria to earn a certain grade or pass a course. Teachers are available to parents for face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, and e-mail messages. PowerSchool is

available at all times to parents. All classrooms have the mission statement posted, and students express knowledge and understanding of the learning objectives. Elementary teachers clarify learning objectives by using Local Assessment Development (LAD) and the Maine Assessment Portfolio (MAP) assessments and related rubrics. A few teachers provide models and exemplars to the students along with the rubrics.

Unless teachers more consistently clarify relevant school-wide academic expectations for learning activities, the mission and expectations for student learning will not become central to teaching and learning at Forest Hills Consolidated School. (parents, self-study, students, shadowing, observations)

There are no school-wide rubrics on which to base classroom assessments. Grade-, discipline-, or course-specific rubrics are widely employed throughout Forest Hills Consolidated School to assess student achievement. Rubrics aligned with the Maine Learning Results (MLR) are linked to the school's academic expectations for student learning. LAD and MAP rubrics are also frequently used. The biology teacher uses project-based learning that incorporates rubrics and differentiated instruction. Writing rubrics are used in high school social studies. Teachers of kindergarten to grade four classes use several discipline-specific rubrics that span the five grades.

In English language arts, writing rubrics are effectively employed to improve student work. Teachers are concerned about the feasibility of designing school-wide rubrics that effectively guide instruction in thirteen grades. Learning at Forest Hills Consolidated School is supported and enhanced by effective use of grade-, discipline-, and course-specific rubrics. Currently, however, the absence of school-wide rubrics is inhibiting assessment of the success of individual students and of the instructional program in achieving the school's academic expectations for learning. (self-study, student work, standard committee, shadowing, observation)

Teachers across the school use varied assessment strategies, including traditional paper and pencil tests of constructed response and objective questions, textbook tests, projects, performance, and some authentic assessments. In addition, other types of assessments are being used that include lab write-ups, research papers, oral presentations, and essays. Teachers describe authentic assessments that include trips to the market, role playing, and Friday Cafe for money and social skills. To learn personal budget development, students are required to construct a budget based on where they project themselves to be five years from now in career, location, and lifestyle. The school leadership and many teachers recognize that traditional tests inhibit some students from accurately demonstrating their knowledge and higher level skills. Conversations with teachers also indicated a lack of clarity on the distinction between formative and summative assessment. Consequently, teaching and learning at Forest Hills Consolidated School, while well served by a variety of traditional assessments, would be improved by more opportunities for students to apply learning and by assessments that measure longer term mastery. Indeed, some faculty members might appreciate as well professional development in the use and interpretation of varying assessment strategies. (standard committee, students, student work, shadowing, observation)

There are various levels of collaboration by teachers to discuss student work and to use assessment to inform curriculum revision and guide instruction. Kindergarten to grade four teachers combine lunch with professional discourse. Grades five to eight teachers have daily common planning time. High school teachers informally collaborate. Until recently, assessment to inform curriculum and instruction has not been the focus of discussions at lunch, common planning time, or informal meetings. It has, however, been part of collaboration on initiatives to improve instruction and to respond to the unique needs of students. Such initiatives by kindergarten to grade four teachers include Trailblazers, math sequence, writing prompts, and Accelerated Reader. In the past, all teachers collaborated on the alignment of curriculum with the Maine Learning Results. More recently some meetings have been held to review curricula across grade levels. These meetings allowed teachers to review upcoming units of study and to reflect on the student assessment elements of recently completed units. Meetings have been held that focused on the pace and sequence of instruction and strategies that enable all students to obtain a better understanding of the instructional objectives and concepts of the MLR. Often on the high school level, a teacher is the only one in the curriculum area; there is the reality that limits collaboration on content in a small school. The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) results and MEA writing results are used to revise the curriculum. High school English classes are now engaged in a new vocabulary program that mirrors the expectations of the SAT. The increasing commitment to the use of the Techpaths system for school-wide curriculum documentation and alignment is making assessment more central to school improvement. To succeed, this effort must include opportunities for teachers to meet regularly to review student work and the results of student assessments to inform decisions on curriculum and instruction. (self-study, standard committee, administrators, teachers)

The professional development program provides some formal opportunities for teachers to collaborate on the development of a variety of assessments. The six workshop days have been rescheduled to times considered more effective in having an impact on teaching and learning. The focus of the professional development plan is the full implementation of the TechPaths Curriculum Mapping System. The objective of the three-year plan is to connect curriculum, instruction, and assessments to the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. Teachers at the high school are given opportunities to visit other sites to collaborate with other professionals in their content area. The overall professional development plan has been set for the year, and a long-term plan to fully implement the TechPaths Curriculum Mapping System is in place. Middle school teachers have attended the Middle School Institute to explore diverse styles of assessments and to share and receive feedback from other middle school teachers. Secondary teachers have attended the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI) training on the use of the iBooks. Some teachers have attended Advanced Placement Summer Institutes and Wilson Reading Conferences. The school's commitment to professional development that provides opportunities for teachers to discuss assessment strategies with experts and teachers in other districts is resulting in improved curriculum and better instruction. (self-study, teachers, administrators, standard subcommittee)

The school's professional staff communicates individual student progress to parents using PowerSchool with 24-hour access and by e-mail, telephone, and school visits. Report cards and progress reports are distributed eight times per year at four -week intervals. Reporting individual and school-wide progress on the school's mission and expectations for student learning is limited by the absence of school-wide rubrics. At the start of the academic year, the school-wide expectations are published in the student handbook that is mailed to homes. The leadership team provides information and feedback about the schools' progress in achieving school-wide expectations. District-wide data are distributed through the local newspaper that publishes results of the Maine Educational Assessment for fourth and eighth grades, SAT results for eleventh grade, and annual yearly progress (AYP). Parent-teacher conferences in November and April and student-led conferences at the middle school allow parents to receive progress reports. The Terra Nova results are interpreted to parents of students in grades one through eight. The thoughtful and systematic reporting of individual student and of school-wide progress in achieving the school's mission and expectations are essential to school improvement efforts and to sustaining strong community support for school programs. (self-study, observations, panel, students, parents, administrators)

## **Commendations**

1. The effective use of technology to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment
2. The productive collaboration on assessment of kindergarten to grade four teachers
3. The effective communication by teachers with parents through PowerSchool and other means

## **Recommendations**

1. Develop and implement a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics
2. Design and implement a system for analysis and reporting of assessment data on social and civic expectations for student learning
3. Ensure that teachers consistently and across all classes clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations for each learning activity
4. Base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide rubrics
5. Increase the level of collaboration among teachers to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies

6. Develop and implement a system for reporting individual student progress in achieving school-wide expectations for student learning
7. Develop and implement a system for reporting to the community the school's progress in achieving school-wide expectations for student learning

## **COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

### **SUPPORT STANDARDS**

#### **LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

#### **SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

#### **COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

## **LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

### **5**

The way in which a school organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices, which supports student learning and well-being.

1. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
3. Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school.
4. The organization of the school and its educational programs shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
7. Meaningful roles in decision-making shall be accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.

8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.
11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

## **Conclusions**

The principal of the Forest Hills Consolidated School has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving its mission and expectations for student learning. The focus of the school board is on policy and support so that the superintendent and principal function as operational leaders on the district and school levels. The school board is instrumental in gaining community support for the funds that enable the superintendent and principal to achieve the school district's mission and expectations for student learning. The principal has led initiatives to add curriculum and programs, including a second foreign language, music, art, and a gifted and talented program. These actions have contributed to moving graduating students enrolling in a post-high school programs from 60% in 2001 to 86 % in 2006. The appropriate authority and autonomy by the principal to lead Forest Hills Consolidated School into the future is enabling the school to make continuous and marked progress toward achieving its mission and expectations for student learning. (school board, administration, panel, leadership standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

The principal of Forest Hills Consolidated School is providing consistent and fair leadership that increases and sustains faculty morale. Faculty and staff members repeatedly praise the principal's focus on student learning, willingness to provide direction, and openness to their ideas. The principal has been able to communicate and support strongly the mission of the district in concert with the school board and superintendent. The principal effectively uses her participation on the MSAD #12 leadership team, with broad community representation, to articulate and gain support for her vision and the school's mission. The leadership and vision of the principal are key factors in the recent progress of school community toward achieving its mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, school board, administrators, standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

The teachers assume active leadership roles in improving the programs of the school. High school teachers initiated block scheduling at the high school to increase flexibility for differentiated instruction and for additional programs. Middle school teachers initiated modified- block and self-contained classrooms to improve instruction. Elementary teachers are utilizing mini- blocks to enhance learning. Teachers actively participate in the budgeting process and follow deliberations to final adoption by the school board. As a result of leadership by teachers, many effective school improvements are contributing to the quality of teaching and learning at Forest Hills Consolidated School. (self-study, administrators, panel, leadership standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

The school's mission and expectations for students is promoted by the school's range of course offerings and the structure of the educational program. Small class sizes allow students to receive individual attention by teachers, leading to increased personalization and support. The increasing use of technology to expand course offerings and programs is overcoming previous limitations of a very small school. The organization of the school into three wings and the challenges of managing thirteen grades as a cohesive unit are being addressed. Common meeting and planning time are built into the middle school schedule. Kindergarten to grade twelve collaboration on the school-wide curriculum and program is improving. The organization of Forest Hills Consolidated School, the range of programs and support structures, and the individual attention to students increasingly promote the educational program. However, a more formal structure for school-wide collaboration will be necessary to maintain school improvement efforts. (self- study, administrators, panel, leadership standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

Grouping patterns at Forest Hills Consolidated School are largely influenced by single classes for each grade level and for each course; all are grouped heterogeneously except for high school English. Instruction reflects current research and best practices that respond to the unique needs of teaching and learning in this context, including differentiated instruction and technology. About 50 % of professional development activities are in the area of best practices and current research. The diversity of the student body is limited in this geographically remote part of the state of Maine. Distance learning and other programs are utilized to bring a wider learning environment to the school. Special education students are mainstreamed with support. The lives and educations of students in this remote community are being well served by instruction that reflects current research and best practices and by programs that expose them to a more diverse community of learners. (self- study, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

The schedule of the Forest Hills Consolidated School is increasingly driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and is viewed as supporting the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The schedule, however, is a continuing challenge in a small school that refuses to accept size as a limitation. Current scheduling in the three wings is providing improved opportunities for teachers to be creative and to individualize instruction. Block scheduling on the high school level allows teachers the opportunity for speakers, team teaching, peer interaction, and other student-centered activities.

The construction of schedules schoolwide that are driven by and support the school's mission and expectations for student learning will require annual review and innovative solutions. (self- study, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

Providing meaningful roles in decision-making to students, parents, and all members of the school staff is clearly a strength and part of the culture at Forest Hills Consolidated School. The school board is a leader in this effort. The process for hiring the principal involved students, parents and the leadership team. The student council is empowered by decisions such as ruling on application by student groups for

activities. The parent teacher committee holds monthly meetings designed to provide support for school programs. Several surveys have been used to determine the needs and views of alumni, athletes, and community members. The appropriate involvement of students, parents, teachers, and the community has created and sustained an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership by the school community. (self- study, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

The student load at Forest Hills Consolidated School enables each teacher to meet or exceed the learning needs of individual students. Class sizes average between eight and eleven students with an average student to teacher ratio of 8.6 to 1. Parents, students, teachers, and school board members point to class size as a great strength of the school. Teachers consider the low student/teacher ratio as a major reason for staying at Forest Hills Consolidated School. Small class sizes allow students to receive individual attention by teachers, leading to increased personalization and support. (self- study, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

An institutionalized program where each student has an adult member of the school community who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning is not in place. Such a program would formalize successful efforts that currently support the existing climate of the school. Student are not able to disappear or become anonymous and are able to discuss problems with teachers and the principal. Currently, the school employs a guidance counselor/social worker for the personal support of students. The MSAD #12 Leadership Team can also be an important partner by providing business people as mentors. However, only with a formal program involving a faculty member other than a counselor assigned to every student can the school ensure that every student is benefiting from a personalized school experience.

(self-study, support staff, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, teachers, parents)

Collaboration within and across grades and courses has begun but is increasing. Recently established kindergarten to twelve meetings of teachers and staff members have provided opportunities to collaborate within and across grades and courses. Through Techpaths, teachers have begun to collaborate on curriculum kindergarten to twelve and on the reinforcement of school-wide academic expectations. The isolation related to being the only teacher who teaches a particular grade or discipline at a particular level limits the extent of discussions within grades or courses. The professional development program does encourage interaction with teachers and consultants who are expert in grade level or discipline. Collaboration has led to the integration of library/media services resources, programs, and services throughout K-12 content areas. While informal collaboration is commonplace at Forest Hills Consolidated School, formal collaboration outside of staff meetings is not part of the professional culture of the school. Collaboration within and across grades and courses must increase to ensure that all students have the maximum

opportunity to achieve the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, observation, teachers, standard subcommittee, administrators)

All school staff members at Forest Hills Consolidated School promote the well-being and learning of the students. Teachers and the principal are committed to the welfare and education of all students. Staff members in guidance, special education, library/media, and health services

regularly communicate and work together to serve students. Kitchen staff members and the custodian demonstrate concern for students. All staff members have direct influence on the students at Forest Hills Consolidated School. The result is a small school community where issues of student welfare and learning are quickly identified and promptly addressed. (self-study, support staff, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, students, teachers, parents)

Student success at Forest Hills Consolidated School is regularly acknowledged and celebrated in imaginative ways that lift the spirits of students and parents. The business community is a key partner in this effort. Typical is the Night of Stars program that celebrates achievement in reading by kindergarten to grade eight students. The students and their parents are picked up by a limousine and given star treatment at an awards ceremony. The Kids as Planners Service Learning Award is presented annually by the KIDS Consortium. The eighth grade received the award for its year-long World War II prisoner of war study and the placement of a permanent monument at the site. High school students are honored for accomplishments at academic and sports recognition nights and banquets. Articles published in regional newspapers provide additional positive comments about the achievements of students. Recognition of these accomplishments clearly instills a sense of pride in students with a wide range of abilities. (self-study, support staff, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, students, teachers, parents)

The climate of the Forest Hills Consolidated School is safe, positive, and welcoming. Every morning before school, many students play a game of pick-up basketball in the gym. What is unusual and informative is that the participants may be in grades nine to twelve but play together with great fairness and sensitivity. Theft, bullying, and physical or emotional violence are rare and clearly not part of the culture at Forest Hills Consolidated School. In the first semester of 2007-08, there were two suspensions. During each of these suspensions, students were placed in a community service role developed by mutual agreement with the parents and the principal. The Mr. and Miss Forest Hills program recognizes students who display a high degree of school spirit, are supportive and actively involved in school activities, and are helpful to staff members and fellow students. Students and parents view the school as orderly and safe. The positive climate at Forest Hills Consolidated School supports the school's mission and is an appropriate setting for the achievement of expectations for student learning. (self-

study, support staff, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, students, teachers, parents)

The school board strongly supports the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning as central to efforts by the superintendent, principal, and staff members to improve Forest Hills Consolidated School. Very much part of the mission development process, the school board contributed its best thinking and beliefs while the document was evolving. Once adopted, the school board has been instrumental in gaining adequate financial support for the implementation of the mission and expectations for student learning. The school board also mounted a successful effort to gain the support and involvement of the business community. The energy and support of the school board have been major factors in progress toward the full implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, school board, administrators, leadership standard subcommittee, students, teachers, parents)

## **Commendations**

1. The exceptional leadership and influence of the MSAD #12 Leadership Team
2. The overall leadership of the principal
3. The level of autonomy and support provided by the school board to the administrative team
4. The meaningful and effective involvement of students, teachers, and parents in school decisions
5. The low teacher/student ratio that enables individual attention to students
6. A school climate that is safe and positive
7. The high level of school board support for the mission and expectations for student learning

## **Recommendations**

1. Ensure the schedule is driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and supports the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment
2. Provide a formal program through which an adult member of the school community personalizes each student's educational experience and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning

3. Provide a formal structure to encourage and facilitate collaboration by teachers across grades and courses in support of learning for all students

## **SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

### **6**

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

#### **All Student Support Services**

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve stated civic and social expectations.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.
6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.
7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

### **Guidance Services**

8. The school shall provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:
- individual and group meetings with counseling personnel;
  - personal, career, and college counseling;
  - student course selection assistance;
  - collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social services providers;
  - appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

### **Health Services**

9. The school's health services shall provide:
- preventive health services and direct intervention services;
  - appropriate referrals;
  - mandated services;
  - emergency response mechanisms;
  - ongoing student health assessment.

### **Library Information Services**

10. The library/information services program and materials shall be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program.

11. Library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation.

12. A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population shall be available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.

13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.

14. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.

15. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

### **Special Education Services**

16. The school shall provide special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws.

## Conclusions

Student support services at Forest Hills Consolidated School are largely consistent with the school's mission and expectations for learning. The support services of guidance, special education, the gifted and talented program, library/media services, and the Live2Learn program enhance student learning at Forest Hills Consolidated School. These services and programs support the expectations of the mission statement. There are productive collaboration and partnerships among students, staff members, and the community. The special education department has a variety of programs to meet the needs of students, including a life skills program, Wilson Reading Program, and supported study halls. The gifted and talented program offers opportunities for students to enhance their learning through completing many courses online and via the ATM system. The library makes a variety of resources and media available to all students. The comprehensive guidance program and curriculum offer needed services to kindergarten to grade six students in the classroom through a formal curriculum and by individual meetings with the school counselor. The Live2Learn program encourages students to reach their full social and academic potential. The Title I program supports the mission and expectations by offering programming throughout the day and after school in coordination with the Live 2 Learn program. To a lesser degree, health services support the school's mission by meeting the minimum requirements. Consequently, the combined efforts of support services ensure that students have the support necessary for them to meet the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, school resources standard subcommittee, support staff)

Forest Hills Consolidated School effectively allocates resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. The resources support guidance, special education, library and media services, and some health services. The guidance counselor works with all students by providing support as follows: by classroom instruction, in course selection, choosing post-high school career paths, taking SATs, and applying to college. Personal counseling is provided as needed. Special education provides a variety of programs, including a self-contained life skills program, structured study support, and consultation with and about students. The library program provides extensive support to all classroom teachers and students and provides direct instruction on library use. Some regular classes are scheduled in the library. The school nurse is contracted through the local health center. She provides the minimum requirements which include screening, maintaining health records, and support to classroom teachers and guidance in the development of preventive health programs. The health services are inhibited by limited office space. The school also has a certified emergency medical technician (EMT) and first aid instructor on site. The impact of a full-time principal on the opportunity of students to achieve social and civic expectations is profound. As a result of the level and wise distribution of resources, students at Forest Hills Consolidated School have a safe environment and an equal opportunity to achieve the school's social, civic, and academic expectations. (school resources standard subcommittee, support staff, self-study, teachers, parents, observation)

Student support personnel at Forest Hills Consolidated School enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff members and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. The special education department is in constant communication with teachers and staff members about the needs of students. Staff members work collaboratively to meet the needs of students. Partnerships with community members provide opportunities for students to participate in pre-apprenticeships and the school-to-work program. The guidance counselor finds appropriate and effective counseling services for students and collaborates with staff members to meet students' needs. Counseling services are available seventy miles away and through the Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) system at the health center so that families do not have to travel. A combined effort of the guidance counselor, school nurse, and the community resulted in the Wake-Up Call Program for students in grades eight to twelve to prevent underage drinking and raise awareness of the effects of drinking and driving. The library has developed an advisory board made up of staff members, community members, and the public librarian to administer a recently donated trust. The school nurse, who is present in the school only twelve days throughout the year, maintains communication with staff members through telephone calls and e-mails. The school nurse is also employed at the town health center where the only physician in town is also located, thus facilitating communication concerning the needs of students. The Live2Learn program utilizes the numerous resources in the community. Communication and cooperation among school personnel and resource people in the community have enabled Forest Hills Consolidated School to respond effectively to the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. (standard subcommittee, support staff, teachers, self-study, administrator)

Student support services are consistently evaluated and revised on an informal basis; however, no formalized process is in place for evaluating some student support services. Special education services and the gifted and talented program are formally evaluated. Special education is evaluated every five years, as required by federal and state laws, but is not checked for effectiveness in meeting the school's objectives. The gifted and talented program is evaluated by an outside consultant. Assessments of the guidance, library, and health services are done on an informal basis. Currently, the guidance counselor utilizes surveys to identify needs at the school and contacts alumni to track success after high school. The guidance counselor is collecting data to set long range-goals for career and academic planning. The library personnel attend faculty meetings to solicit input on library use and the needs of the classroom teachers. The library staff members gather data on the utilization of library resources. The school nurse keeps current on services by communicating frequently with guidance, the office staff, and teachers. The Maine School Nurse List is consulted for current information on health issues. The Live2Learn program is evaluated three times a year with assessment outcomes documented. Student progress in the Title I program that addresses needs in reading and mathematics is measured by the principal and superintendent. The continual improvement of student support services cannot be ensured without a formal evaluation and revision process connected to program objectives and goals. (standard subcommittee, support staff, self-study, teachers, parents, administrator)

Communication with students and parents or guardians and among school personnel at Forest Hills Consolidated School effectively keeps all parties informed about identified student needs and the types of available student support services. Special education personnel communicate in multiple ways including e-mails to teachers and telephone calls to parents. Ed-techs, working with students, are rich sources of information about student needs. Modification and accommodation plans are distributed and explained to classroom teachers. Individual education plan (IEP) meetings are scheduled annually for each student, and communication with parents and faculty members is a crucial part of this procedure. The referral process for special education is documented in the student handbook which is available to all parents. The guidance/social worker communicates with the principal, teachers, and students on a daily basis. If appropriate, the counselor makes telephone calls home or sends e-mails concerning students needs. The guidance/social worker has observed that communicating with the different age groups on a daily basis can be a challenge. Library staff members communicate with faculty and staff members concerning curriculum. The Destiny program facilitates communication between the librarian and teaching staff. Continuous communication takes place between the librarians and teachers about instructional resources available in the library. The nurse communicates regularly with parents about health services including screenings, immunizations, and referrals. The nurse works in the medical center with the only physician in town so communication is outstanding. Descriptions of support services are publicized in the student handbook, at open meetings, on the school website, in newsletters, and in brochures. Consequently, appropriate teachers, parents, and students are aware of identified student needs and available services that respond to these needs. (self-study, parents, standard subcommittee, support staff, teachers)

Student records at Forest Hills Consolidated School are always maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state laws. Health, cumulative, and special education records are locked in fire-proof filing cabinets in the main office. The secretary in the main office holds the key to these cabinets. A list of names and a log are attached to the cabinets indicating who may have access and a record of who has reviewed them. Therefore, school records are secure and kept confidential. (standard subcommittee, support staff, school secretary, self-study, school tour, observation)

The staffing levels of certified, licensed personnel and support staff members in guidance, special education and library media services at Forest Hills Community School are adequate to provide effective services. The nurse is at school only twelve days a year so immediate emergency response is by EMTs who are staff members. Other health services requirements are being met by the nurse and contracted services. The school counselor is also certified as a social worker and appears to have adequate time to provide effective services to the students. Guidance services, however, are somewhat inhibited by the absence of secretarial support. The special education department is staffed by two licensed special education teachers and five educational technicians. All educational technicians have either a bachelor's or associate's degree. The special

education department has adequate staffing for the resource room and a life skills self-contained program.

Approximately 30 students are enrolled in the two programs. The library is adequately staffed by one full-time, certified teacher and one part-time certified librarian/media specialist. The nurse conducts hearing, vision, and scoliosis screenings and maintains immunization records. The school secretary, who is a licensed EMT and a certified instructor of CPR and first aid, dispenses medication and first aid to students. The adequate staffing level of fully certified personnel enables Forest Hills Community School to provide effective student services that support students in achieving the schools mission and expectations for student learning.

(self-study, facility tour, observation, standard subcommittee, support staff, parents)

The Forest Hills Guidance Department provides a wide range of comprehensive services to assist students in meeting the expectations expressed in the mission statement. The guidance/social worker works with students on an informal and formal basis. Students stop by his office to share good news or ask quick questions as well as to schedule appointments to discuss social problems, college planning, and academic issues. The counselor spends approximately three hours per week in grades kindergarten through six classrooms, teaching a formal curriculum. The school counseling office also works closely with staff members in overseeing the mentoring and school to work program available at Forest Hills Consolidated School. The frequency of

personal counseling provided by the guidance/social worker reflects the absence of mental health services in the community. Some serious cases are referred as appropriate. The school counselor does not conduct group counseling. The effective collaboration among the guidance/social worker, faculty and staff members, and the community is widely recognized. The comprehensive guidance program is an essential part of life at Forest Hills Consolidated School because it so effectively responds to a range of students needs with thoughtful and timely programs and direct interventions. (self-study, standard subcommittee, panel, support staff, teachers, students, parents)

Health services at Forest Hills Consolidated School provide limited preventive health services and direct intervention services to certain grade levels. Parents and faculty members express general satisfaction with the level of health services. Appropriate referrals, mandated services, emergency response mechanisms, and ongoing student health assessments are in place. Mandated services include screenings for scoliosis, hearing and vision tests, and physical exams. Follow-up reports are provided to parents after tests and screenings. Immunization records are completed for each student upon enrollment. A database has been established to keep track of screenings and immunizations. The school nurse meets with guidance, office staff members, and teachers. The school nurse supports the guidance counselor in providing hygiene and puberty programs to students in grades four to six. The Wake Up Call program for the grades eight to

twelve is coordinated by the school nurse. These responsibilities are accomplished during the twelve days that the nurse is present at school. The health services at Forest Hills Community School are adequate to support students in achieving the school's mission and expectations for student learning. However, the very limited onsite availability of the school nurse makes it essential that the school continue to employ another qualified staff member for emergency response. (self-study, facility tour, observation, school resources standard subcommittee, support staff, parents)

Library/Information services at Forest Hills Consolidated School are fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. The size of the school enables the librarian to be involved in many informal discussions about support for instruction. The librarian attends staff meetings to keep aware of needs and developments. The donation of a trust for additional funding has been a huge asset to library services. The electronic cataloging of material in the library allows immediate access. The renovation of the library to include more user-friendly materials has been positive. The integration of library services into the kindergarten to grade twelve instruction is ongoing in the areas of language arts, social studies, and science. Students feel the library is accessible to them and has the resources they need. The integration of library services into the school's curriculum and instruction strongly supports and enhances teaching and learning at Forest Hills Consolidated School. (self-study , students, standard subcommittee, teachers, support staff)

Library/information personnel at Forest Hills Consolidated School are very knowledgeable about the school's curriculum and instruction. The library is staffed by a full-time librarian and a half-time certified school media specialist. The addition of the certified media specialist has contributed to the support of instruction. Knowledge of the curriculum is gathered through staff meetings and conversations with staff members. Examples of the application of knowledge about curriculum and instruction include the following: development of a curriculum for the library catalog training class, the research process for social studies instruction, the accelerated reader

program, introduction to research and writing for all courses, author studies, and how to foster independent inquiry. Library staff members at Forest Hills Consolidated School are able to use their knowledge about the school's curriculum and instruction to provide more effective support of teaching in the classroom and of library use by students. (self-study, school resources standard subcommittee, support staff, teachers, observation)

The library/media center has a range of materials, technology, and other library/information resources that are readily available. Recent renovations of the library include online cataloging of resources, labeling of books based on lexile level, and the implementation of the Accelerated Reader (AR) program. Students and teachers regularly take advantage of library resources and technology. Access to the Destiny program has made library resources more available to students, staff members, and parents. Students believe that the library is available to them and that they benefit from

its many resources. The range of materials, technology, and other library/information resources has recently been increased and is already improving teaching and learning at Forest Hills Consolidated School. (students, school resources standard subcommittee, support staff, self-study, teachers, facility tour, observation)

Students, teachers, and support staff members have regular and frequent access to library/information services. The library is usually available to students between the hours of 7:20 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The librarian, who is also responsible for adult education and distance learning, keeps the center open in the evening. Twice a week the library is used by kindergarten to grade six classes. Teachers are able to arrange special class visits in advance, and students are able to sign out of study hall. The regular and frequent access of teachers and students to library/information services at Forest Hills Consolidated School is contributing significantly to the quality of instruction. (self-study, students, standard subcommittee, support staff, teachers, observation)

The library/information services at Forest Hills Consolidated School foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty members to use various school and community information resources and technologies. The library/information services encourage independent inquiry by targeting students at a young age. Beginning in kindergarten, students are exposed to a variety of resources in the library and how to use them. Collaboration between elementary teachers and the library has resulted in making independent inquiry central to an interdisciplinary curriculum. Independent use of library resources and technology increases in middle school and high school. The current program to document and align curriculum and instruction with the school's academic expectations for student learning includes an emphasis on independent inquiry. The library/informational services at Forest Hills Consolidated School are effectively encouraging and supporting independent inquiry by students as an essential way to achieve the school's academic expectations for learning. (self-study materials, school resources standard subcommittee, teachers, support staff, student work, observation)

Policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and for the use of technologies and the Internet. These policies are posted on Forest Hills Consolidated School website. Staff members and students sign contracts as documentation of knowledge of and compliance with computer and Internet use policies. Students, staff members, and community members have a clear understanding of these policies and how to find them. (standard school resources subcommittee, self-study, support staff, teachers, students, parents)

The Forest Hills Consolidated School provides a full range of special education services appropriate to meet the needs of students. The special education department offers resource room support, speech services, study hall support, life skills programming, and ed techs in classrooms. Testing to identify special needs is contracted to an outside evaluator. Special education services show a commitment by the school to ensure that all

students meet the required expectations. There is unequivocal support by the parents for the special education department.

Special education students are able to participate in job shadowing opportunities in the community. The life skills program includes mentoring by kitchen staff members and gives students exposure to real life situations, including working in the Tiger Paw Cafe. The life skills program is implemented by numerous teachers, across grade levels and the curriculum, to meet the needs of the students. All special education staff members have been trained in the Wilson Reading Program that involves students receiving special education services. A speech aide works directly with a speech pathologist via the ATM system to make services available to students. Committed teachers offering the full range of services at Forest Hills Consolidated School are providing special education students the support necessary for them to meet the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, shadowing, parents, support staff, students, observation)

## **Commendations**

1. The range of student support services that provide all students an equal opportunity to achieve stated civic and social expectations.
2. The commitment of student support staff members
3. Effective cooperation among student support personnel, faculty members, and staff members to support academic success
4. The system of effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel that keeps them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.
5. The variety of library/media center resources available to support student needs and attract student interest
6. The library/information services that are fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program.
7. The comprehensive guidance services offered by the school counselor/social worker
8. The variety of individualized programs for students with special needs
9. The effective use of community resources and partnerships to respond to students' needs

## **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that health services include onsite emergency response mechanisms
2. Provide clerical support to support guidance services
3. Develop and implement a formal process for the regular evaluation of all student support services

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

### 7

Active community and parent participation, facilities which support school programs and services, and dependable and adequate funding are necessary for the school to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning.

1. The school shall engage parents and families as partners in each student's education participation in school programs and parent support groups.
2. The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.
3. The school site and plant shall support and enhance all aspect of the educational program and support services for student learning.
4. The physical plant and facilities shall meet all applicable federal and state laws and shall be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
5. Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.
6. A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management shall ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant.
7. There shall be ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, technology needs as well as capital improvements.
8. The community and the district's governing body shall ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support materials, and supplies for student learning.
9. Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.

## Conclusions

Forest Hills Consolidated School engages parents and families in each student's education and encourages participation in school programs and parent support groups. The school makes a strong effort to communicate with parents through numerous mediums including PowerSchool, the district web site, and mailings. These sources provide parents with access to a range of information including school events and activities, student academic progress, attendance data, and school lunch account balances. Parents are invited to participate in school activities across the grade levels, such as potluck dinners and graduation activities in kindergarten, Night of Stars celebrations for students in grades kindergarten to grade six and their parents, and college visits and attending the prom for high school students and their parents. Outreach activities, like Family Movie Night, are designed to appeal to parents as well. Parents have opportunities to get involved in the school through the Forest Hill Parent Teacher Committee, sports boosters club, and the nationally recognized MSAD #12 Leadership Team that was created to increase parental involvement in the school. Parents also serve on renovations and library planning committees. As a result of successful and ongoing efforts to involve parents and families by Forest Hills Consolidated School, the education of students is benefiting from parents and families that have effective communication with the school and are participants and partners in the educational experience of their children. (teachers, self-study, school board, observations, parents)

The school fosters exemplary productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning. The development of the MSAD #12 Leadership Team is indicative of the school's desire to make connections with local businesses and community members that support, enhance, and extend student learning beyond the school walls. Unique learning experiences like the hurricane Katrina relief lumber trip to Bogalusa, Louisiana and subsequent exchange experiences demonstrate the outstanding commitment of local business people and community members to the school and students. Local businesses also partner with the school to offer students pre-apprenticeship opportunities and career exploration activities. Students are encouraged to give back to the community and to develop relationships with businesses through classroom activities and various service projects, including documentary and computer work done to support the historical society. Forest Hills Consolidated School also has strong relationships with higher education institutions and is not inhibited by its remote location. For example, the University of Maine at Farmington conducts visits to the high school. Thomas College sponsors trips to its campus to give Forest Hills Consolidated School students direct opportunities to learn about Thomas programs. Through collaborative efforts between the school and the Jackman Region Community Association, a substantial MELMAC grant was secured. Funds from this grant have financed numerous trips to colleges and universities and outreach events to help students and parents with college and career planning. In addition, the school offers a plethora of distance learning opportunities for both high school and college credit. As a result of

these rich and robust partnerships with the community and post-secondary institutions, Forest Hills Consolidated School supports student learning and introduces students to many and varied options for careers and further education. (school board, teachers, community resources standard subcommittee, self-study, administrators, students)

The present school facilities generally support every aspect of the educational program and the support services for learning. Maine revolving renovations funds in 1999 and 2006 were used for over \$800,000 in facility improvements, including updating the chemistry laboratory. A bequest of \$480,000 from an alumna funded major improvements to the library, including replacement of flooring, shelving, furniture, and cataloging software. The library and media center and all classrooms have adequate space to accommodate the school's average class of fifteen. The facility has no designated space for music however, and the program must be offered in regular classrooms. Expansion of the music program to a performing arts program is being considered. The school does not provide an appropriate area where the school nurse can offer health services. Students are scheduled to one of three lunch periods with supervision by paraprofessionals. The space for lunch is safe and comfortable. The food service program offers a varied menu that is posted on the school's website along with detailed nutritional values for all menu items. Parents can access student lunch account balances through Power School. Students at Forest Hills Consolidated School are served homemade breads, rolls, and a weekly dessert baked from scratch by one of the cooks. The decision to place the art kiln in the industrial arts facility demonstrates a commitment to maintain a safe environment. At present, storage space is adequate for the school's minimal surplus of furniture and equipment and of maintenance supplies. While the present facility supports the educational program, the lack of designated spaces for health services and for performing arts inhibit the current programs and limits options for growth. (board members, facility tour, teachers, self-study, administrators, support staff)

The physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire health and safety regulations. The revolving renovations fund was used for the installation of a new fire alarm system, magnetic doors, and improvements recommended in an indoor air quality evaluation report. The school passed a fire inspection conducted in August, 2008 by Maine Fire Protection Systems and is in compliance with state fire codes. Inspections of the boiler system and the kitchen's steamer are up-to-date. The kitchen also passed the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services inspection in August, 2008. Most handicapped accessibility issues have been addressed. At this time, special accommodations are made for handicapped access to gymnasium seating and to the stage. Chemical inventory forms are maintained in the chemistry laboratory. The school's adherence to federal and state laws and local fire, health, and safety regulations ensures a safe environment for students. (facility tour, support staff, school documents, community resources standard subcommittee, administrators)

Equipment is adequate, well maintained, and replaced in a timely fashion. No formal plan for replacement of equipment is in place. The replacement of the hood in the chemistry laboratory, and the proper storage and documentation of chemicals are examples of recent actions to ensure student safety and support instruction. Teachers are responsible for submitting inventory reports to the principal who maintains a file. Teachers observe that budget requests are generally supported and that needed educational equipment is available. Teaching and learning at Forest Hills Consolidated School are supported by the efforts of highly dedicated maintenance personnel and of the timely replacement of equipment. (facility tour, support staff, teachers, self-study, administrators)

The committed maintenance personnel at Forest Hills Consolidated School work diligently on an established routine to maintain a clean and safe environment for the students and staff members. The staff members and parents agree that the school is clean and well-maintained. Funding is adequate to ensure that supplies, grounds maintenance, and repair expenses are available as needed. The lack of custodial coverage between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. is not a strong concern at this time because of availability, if needed, of other staff members. The current level of building and site maintenance, repair, and cleanliness must be maintained to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment. (facility tour, support staff, teachers, self-study, administrators, observation)

There is ongoing planning to address the following: future programs, enrollment changes, staffing levels, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. An enrollment study conducted in October, 2006 projects an increase from the current 190 to 250 students by 2016. A committee is being formed to revise the current comprehensive three-year district technology plan that was last updated in January, 2006. Plans to pursue additional revolving renovations funds for further capital improvements are in progress. A comprehensive facility assessment was developed and issued in February, 2008. Thoughtful and timely planning is providing Forest Hills Consolidated School some control over the future in achieving its mission and expectations for student learning. What is also needed, however, is a strategic plan that combines assessment of current programs, projected enrollments, staffing, technology, and the facility needs in one document. (planning documents, self-study, facility tour, school board, administrators)

The community and the school board ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and sustain the following: appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning. The per pupil expenditure is consistently above the state average. Additionally, students benefit from numerous programs and educational experiences that are funded by grants secured by various individuals and groups. The community and school board demonstrate an outstanding sense of pride and ownership in the school and are currently highly supportive of school needs. A majority of the faculty members believes the budget is adequate to meet professional and instructional needs. The uncertainty of

depending on grants for future funding of outstanding programs, such as Live2Learn, is a concern. The students at Forest Hills Consolidated School are making significant progress toward the achievement of expectations for learning because the school board and community provide adequate and reliable funding for the school program. (school board, community resources standard subcommittee, teachers, self-study, administrators)

Faculty members and principal are actively involved in the the budgetary process from development to implementation. Teachers submit budget requests to the principal in October. Requests are sometimes reviewed by staff members at the respective levels: elementary, middle school, and high school. The principal and superintendent are, of course, key participants who involve the school board and appropriate staff members as issues arise. Staff members agree that involvement in budgetary process has recently improved. The school board ensures that the building administrator has autonomy in developing and implementing the budget. The faculty members, administrators, community and business members and the school board demonstrate a optimistic and pragmatic approach to securing adequate resources to support the educational program. The active involvement in the budget process of key and appropriate members of the school community has increased communication about, understanding of, and support for the budget when adopted. (teachers, support staff, school board, administrators, community resources standard subcommittee, self-study)

## **Commendations**

1. The outstanding success of Forest Hills Consolidated School in involving parents and families of students as partners in the school experience
2. The highly productive businesses partnerships that serve students and build community support
3. The community service experiences offered to the students
4. The success of various groups and individuals in securing substantial grants that fund essential programs
5. The maintenance of buildings, grounds, and equipment and the cleanliness of the facility
6. The determination and effectiveness of the community and the school board in providing reliable funding adequate for a school program that allows students to achieve the school's mission and expectations for learning
7. The increased involvement of stakeholders in the budget development process

## **Recommendations**

1. Provide appropriate space for performing arts
2. Provide appropriate space for health services
3. Develop a strategic plan that combines assessment of current programs, projected enrollments, staffing, technology, and the facility needs in one document

## **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, administrators, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in Forest Hills Consolidated School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administrators 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 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 Forest Hills Consolidated 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 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 CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 91. 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 visiting committee 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 is grateful for the professionalism, openness, and hospitality of the Forest Hills Consolidated School community.

New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc.  
Commission on Public Secondary Schools  
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### School Visiting Team Roster

#### Forest Hills Consolidated School Visit

School	Sharon Connally Rangely Lakes Regional School Rangely, ME 04970	Shawn Lambert Livermore Falls High Livermore Falls, ME 04254
	Lisa Cronin Dexter Regional High School Dexter, ME 04930	Sue Smithson MSAD # 31 Howland, ME 04448
School 04853	James Demchak Madison Area Memorial High School Madison, ME 04950	Carolyn Taylor North Haven Community North Haven, ME
School	Hope High Ellsworth High School Ellsworth, ME 04605	Todd West Deer Isle-Stonington High Deer Isle, ME 04627
	William Hoyt Salem State College Salem, MA 01970	Jerry White MSAD #31 Howland, ME 04448
	Cathi Howell Livermore Falls High School	

**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
- 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
- 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 with limited English proficiency

- identification by the state as an underperforming school
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees