

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Visiting Committee Report

September 21 – 24, 2008

Major Commendations and Recommendations

Mission and Expectations

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

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

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

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

Leadership and Organization

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

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

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.