

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

Commission on Public Schools



Committee on Public Secondary Schools

**Report of the Visiting Team for
Agawam High School**

Agawam, MA

September 29, 2019 - October 02, 2019

Laurie Farkas, Chair
Leanne Soulard, Assistant Chair
Thomas Schnepf, Principal

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

The Committee on Public Secondary School's Standards for Accreditation serve as the foundation for the accreditation process and by which accreditation decisions are made. The seven Standards are qualitative, challenging, and reflect current research and best practice. The Standards, written and approved by the membership, establish the components of schools to ensure an effective and appropriate focus on teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Teaching and Learning Standard

Effective schools identify core values and beliefs about learning that function as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community. Decision-making remains focused on and aligned with these critical commitments. Core values and beliefs manifest themselves in research-based, school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Every component of the school is driven by the core values and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations.

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.
2. The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social and civic competencies. Each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
3. The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions and resource allocations.
4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Standard

The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes the school's 21st century learning expectations. The curriculum includes a purposefully designed set of course offerings, co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities. The curriculum reflects the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The curriculum is collaboratively developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on analysis of student performance and current research.

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
 - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
 - the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - instructional strategies
 - assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
 - inquiry and problem-solving
 - higher order thinking
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
 - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

INSTRUCTION

Teaching and Learning Standard

The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Instruction is responsive to student needs, deliberate in its design and delivery, and grounded in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Instruction is supported by research in best practices. Teachers are reflective and collaborative about their instructional strategies and collaborative with their colleagues to improve student learning.

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:
 - personalizing instruction
 - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
 - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
 - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
 - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
 - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
 - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
 - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
 - strategically differentiating
 - purposefully organizing group learning activities
 - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
 - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
 - examining student work
 - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
 - examining current research
 - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. Assessment results are shared and discussed on a regular basis to improve student learning. Assessment results inform teachers about student achievement in order to adjust curriculum and instruction.

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
 - student work
 - common course and common grade-level assessments
 - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - standardized assessments
 - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
 - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's

core values and beliefs about learning.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Support Standard

The school culture is equitable and inclusive, and it embodies the school's foundational core values and beliefs about student learning. It is characterized by reflective, collaborative, and constructive dialogue about research-based practices that support high expectations for the learning of all students. The leadership of the school fosters a safe, positive culture by promoting learning, cultivating shared leadership, and engaging all members of the school community in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
 - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
 - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
 - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
 - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of coordinated programs and services. These resources enhance and improve student learning and well-being and support the school's core values and beliefs. Student support services enable each student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - deliver a written, developmental program
 - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
 - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
 - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
 - use an appropriate referral process
 - conduct ongoing student health assessments
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
 - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
 - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
 - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
 - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students

- perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

The achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
 - a wide range of school programs and services
 - sufficient professional and support staff
 - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
 - a full range of technology support
 - sufficient equipment
 - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
2. The school community develops, plans, and funds programs:
 - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
 - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
 - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
 - programs and services
 - enrollment changes and staffing needs
 - facility needs
 - technology
 - capital improvements.
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Agawam High School, located in Agawam, Massachusetts, serves the communities of Agawam and Feeding Hills. Despite having a separate postal code and office, Feeding Hills is joined to Agawam in all forms of local government. Located just outside of Springfield, Massachusetts and bordering northern Connecticut, approximately 30 minutes from Hartford, the towns, which are traditional agricultural communities, have embraced manufacturing as well.

There are over 2,500 acres of farmland in Agawam, and the community's many farms and farm stands give the community a rural feeling. Agawam has nearly 1,000 acres of commercial and industrial land and approximately 400 of those acres are located in the primary industrial park. It takes less than 30 minutes to travel to Bradley International Airport from Agawam; Air Freight service is also available at nearby Barnes Airport and Westover Air Force Base.

There are four golf courses: Agawam Municipal Golf Course, Crestview Country Club, St. Anne's Country Club, and Oak Ridge Country Club. Agawam is home to Six Flags New England, the largest amusement park in the area, and one of North America's largest fairs, the Eastern States Exposition, "The Big E", is minutes away from the center of Agawam.

With a combined population of 28,718, the communities of Agawam and Feeding Hills are economically, racially, culturally, and ethnically similar. The majority of the population in the community is employed in health care and social assistance, retail, manufacturing, and educational services. The community possesses a varied and skilled workforce including professionals, those with manufacturing experience, as well as workers in service and high-tech industries. The unemployment rate for Agawam and Feeding Hills was 4.3 percent as of February 2018. In 2018-2019, 29 percent of the school population were considered economically disadvantaged. The major employers in Agawam and Feeding Hills are OMG Inc. (a construction materials manufacturer), the Town of Agawam School Department, Six Flags Amusement Park, Country Estates-Kindred (a nursing and rehabilitation home), Berkshire Power, and HP Hood (the dairy company).

In addition to Agawam High School with an enrollment of 1,113, Agawam Junior High School includes 591 students in grades seven and eight, the Roberta G. Doering School includes 594 students in grades five and six, four elementary schools (one in Feeding Hills and three in Agawam) house 348, 258, 316, and 365 students, and an early childhood center supports 162 students for a total of 3,747 students in the Agawam School District. Eighty-seven high school-aged students (7.8 percent) attend non-public schools.

The Agawam School District is ranked 135 out of 312 in the state in terms of per-pupil expenditures and expended \$16,755.92 per pupil in FY18 compared to a state average expenditure of \$16,464.74 per pupil in FY18. In FY 2018 state, federal, and other resources accounted for 72 percent of all funds received in the district, leaving 28 percent of funding to be obtained through local resources. Fifty-five percent of local property taxes are allocated to the public schools. Thirty-one students paid nonresident tuition fees of \$5,000 each to attend Agawam High School in FY18.

Agawam High School includes students in grades 9-12 with the total enrollment of 1,113 students of which 558 are males and 555 are females. The school population has slowly declined over the past ten years, following a population trend also seen in nearby communities. The current ethnic, racial, and cultural composition is 1.6 percent African-American students, 2.0 percent Asian students, 6.4 percent Hispanic students, and 87.7 percent white students during the 2018-2019 school year. The average dropout rate is 1.1 percent; the average daily student attendance rate is 95 percent, and the average daily teacher attendance rate is 91.5 percent.

There are 94 teachers at Agawam High School, creating a student-to-teacher ratio of 11.9:1 in comparison to the state average of 12.9:1. An average class size of 18 students exists across all classes while core academic classes in English, mathematics, science and history have an average class size of 16.8 students. Students

attend school for 180 days and for a minimum of 990 hours.

Courses are offered in three levels: college preparatory, honors, or Advanced Placement where offered. In the 2018-2019 school year, 14 AP courses (including online) and 25 honors courses were offered with 235 students taking 466 AP exams. Agawam High School students also have the opportunity to attend the Lower Pioneer Valley Career and Technical Education Center which offers partial day, work-based learning tied to career pathways. Approximately 13.7 percent of students receive special education services in comparison to the state average of 18.1 percent. All students are required to take four years of English and mathematics, three years of lab sciences and social studies including two years of US History, two years of the same world language, three semesters of physical education, one semester of health, one course in visual or performing arts, and one technology course with the remainder of students' programs filled from a variety of elective courses. Agawam High School offers a variety of co-curricular activities for its students such as 25 varsity sports teams and 29 clubs.

In the class of 2019, 50 percent of graduates attended four-year colleges, with 30 percent enrolling in two-year colleges, 2 percent enrolling in business and technical schools, 12 percent entering the workforce, and 1.5 percent entering the military. Graduates take advantage of the considerable educational opportunities available as they choose from such New England colleges and universities as American International College, Bay Path University, Elms College, Roger Williams University, UMASS Amherst, University of Hartford, Western New England University, and Westfield State University.

Agawam High School's implementation of the DESE Career Clusters has resulted in monthly career presentations each highlighting a particular career cluster. Members of the community speak about their careers and the education/training needed to follow that particular career path. Tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders have the opportunity to shadow for a day at a local business. Upperclassmen can participate in a year-long community-based internship in a career area of interest to them. The Agawam High School Career Center partners with the Chamber of Commerce to host an annual job fair attended by over 40 local companies in need of employees.

Agawam High School has also established effective partnerships with four of the local institutions of higher education enabling juniors and seniors to enroll in college courses for credit. Springfield Technical Community College offers up to eight college courses free of charge. Also, students who have taken Audio/Visual Production at the high school may receive college credit from Holyoke Community College as part of an articulation agreement; both parties are working to build these agreements for additional courses. Over the past few years, a significant number of intern teachers from Westfield State University, Western New England University, Springfield College, and Elms College have completed practicum experiences as well as observations at the high school.

Agawam High School uses the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model to recognize student accomplishments through monthly raffles. Students are also recognized when they attain high honors: seniors receive a certificate at an Academic A's celebration and juniors receive book awards. In addition to many locally sponsored scholarships, local newspapers sponsor academic and athletic achievement awards and speech and poetry contests. Each spring the school honors students from all spectra in awards assemblies recognizing individual student achievement in academics, music, drama, athletics, and community service.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Mission Statement

The Agawam High School community strives to provide a safe, diverse, and advanced learning environment for all students. We offer challenging learning opportunities and extensive extracurricular activities which encourage our students to become productive, respectful, and responsible citizens

Learning Expectations

Academic Expectations

Agawam High School students will be able to:

1. listen and read for understanding.
2. speak and write to communicate effectively.
3. research information using appropriate methods.
4. use critical thinking skills to solve problems.
5. use technology competently.

Social and Civic Expectations

Agawam High School students will demonstrate:

1. universal respect.
2. integrity and honesty.
3. compassion and understanding.
4. behaviors that reflect accountability, reliability and trustworthiness.
5. active citizenship in the community.

Core Values

Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Compassion, Achievement, Safety

Core Value Descriptions

Respect

The Agawam High School community will demonstrate an unqualified high regard for itself, for others, and an appreciation for everyone's differences.

Responsibility

The Agawam High School community will demonstrate personal behaviors that reflect accountability, reliability and trustworthiness.

Integrity

The Agawam High school community will demonstrate moral strength and consistency in all matters personal, academic, social, and athletic. This includes honesty in word and deed and a sense of right and wrong.

Compassion

The Agawam High School community will demonstrate empathy and understanding toward others regardless of any differences.

Achievement

The Agawam High School community will demonstrate a commitment to success and excellence in all matters academic, social and civic.

Safety

The Agawam High School community will provide a physically secure and emotionally supportive learning environment.

Dictionary Definitions:

Respect: a high or special regard (esteem); to consider worthy of high regard

Responsibility: able to answer for one's conduct and obligations

Integrity: firm adherence to a code of moral or artistic values

Compassion: sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it

Achievement: the act of achieving, the quality and quantity of a student's work

Safety: the condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injury or loss.

Introduction

Introduction

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Agawam High School, a committee of 9 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned 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 students, parents, school committee members, and building administrators.

The self-study of Agawam High School extended over a period of fourteen school months from April 2018 to June 2019. The visiting team was pleased to note that student citizens, parents, building administrators, and school committee members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's core values, beliefs, and 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 Committee, Agawam High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of fifteen members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Agawam High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Agawam, 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 aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Agawam High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 38 hours shadowing 15 students for a half day
- a total of 18 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 30 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning

- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

Each conclusion in the report was agreed to by visiting team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting team are included with each Indicator in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the visiting team's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better align with Committee Standards.

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

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community previously engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process minimally informed by research-based practices at the time, to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

Although Agawam High School clearly identifies and emphasizes its core values and beliefs about learning, because the work was done ten years ago, the core values have not been aligned with current research-based practices. Teachers incorporate the value of academic integrity, not only to address issues of plagiarism but to help students starting as passive learners, move to independent learners through persevering through challenges. The creation of the core values and beliefs about learning came from multiple stakeholders in the 2009-2010 school year, including school faculty, students, parents, and administration. The Endicott survey indicates that 82 percent of students and 72 percent of faculty understand the worth and feel they “live by” the core values and abide by those principles of Agawam High School. While 75 percent of parents agree the values are worthwhile and aligned with community values, just 68 percent understand how teachers are implementing these values in the classroom.

When the Agawam High School core values are revised through a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process and are informed by current research-based practices, Agawam High School will be able to ensure every member of the school community has a deepened understanding of the values and can implement them regularly across curricula, units and lessons.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school has learning expectations for all students which address academic, social and civic competencies. Only academic expectations are defined by a school-wide analytic rubric, which defines targeted levels of achievement.

In the Endicott survey, 59.3 percent of the students think Agawam High School's academic, social, and civic learning expectations are challenging. Teachers express concern that the academic expectations rarely generate conversations with students and parents in the same way that letter grades do. Each department chooses two academic expectations annually and rates students quarterly on report cards, from a drop-down menu of options. Some teachers believe that, unlike term grades or effort marks, academic expectation ratings have no effect on academic incentives or extracurricular eligibility. There is a school-wide rubric for the academic expectations. There is no rubric for the social and civic expectations, which are combined. Teachers report that these skills are implied or embedded in the culture of the school and believe this makes the social and civic expectations difficult to measure.

When the learning expectations as well as the social and civic competencies are further defined and include criteria for success, the school will be able to effectively measure academic, social, and civic progress in supporting students to reach high levels of achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The school's core values and beliefs are often reflected in the culture of the school, whereas the learning expectations are passively embedded in the culture of the school. The core values infrequently drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in classrooms, and they informally guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

Agawam High School's core values play a major role in the culture not only of the school, but also the culture of the greater community. There are banners and posters throughout the building listing core values. Students are able to clearly articulate the role that the core values have in their lives. However, the learning expectations are insufficiently defined and thus are not used to effectively guide student work expectations and competencies. Common Core facilitators and teachers minimally use the school's core values and learning expectations to shape the curriculum and lessons. However, Agawam High School has current initiatives based on the core values and learning expectations. A Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports team was assembled in the summer of 2011, which reflects upon the core values and learning expectations. There have also been initiatives to acquire and implement newer, more advanced technology. Soon there will be one-to-one technology for students, touching upon the learning expectations for competent use of technology. A spiral curriculum is being created along with "job-swapping" opportunities offered to eighth and ninth grade teachers but used infrequently. This involves teachers switching classes for a day, where students are informed of learning expectations proactively. This not only holds students accountable in the ninth grade, but also begins to set a clear framework for what students are expected to know by the time they get to high school. Another effort recently taken on by Agawam High School to incorporate the learning expectations and core values is the professional development training on creating culturally-relevant lessons and units.

When Agawam High School creates core values and learning expectations that are clearly defined, it can implement them to drive purposeful curriculum, instruction and assessment in every classroom as well as to serve as a guide to reflect on the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and allocations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The school has reviewed but not revised its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Learning expectations are aligned with district and school community priorities.

During the 2016-2017 school year, Common Core facilitators worked with departments to gather and report faculty feedback to administration regarding the mission statement, core values, and learning expectations, however, no changes were made at that time. Although recent efforts have been made in the spring of 2018 through collaboration between the school principal and the instructional technology department to gather data from Rediker PlusPortal regarding learning expectation indicators on student report cards, the school does not examine data about student achievement of school-wide learning expectations and the data gathered has not been analyzed. Analysis of student performance on standardized tests takes place informally and is conducted by individual teachers and some departments. The integration of technology in classrooms, such as Cloud Books, SMARTBoards, PlusPortal, and J-Touch monitors supports the district strategic plan focused on technology. School leadership has solicited feedback from the local business community regarding needed workplace skills and responded by creating a Manufacturing Innovations Pathway, which prepares students for specific skills in available community jobs.

When Agawam High School creates and implements a process to regularly review and revise core values, beliefs, and learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities, it will ensure a growth mindset that guides all decisions impacting students, faculty, and parents in the school community.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- parents
- school leadership
- school website

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The core values that are embedded into the culture of the school, including student involvement in extracurricular activities, mutual respect among students, faculty, and parents, recognition of positive behavior among students, and student leadership roles

Commendation

The initiatives that have been taken with respect to the core values and academic learning expectations have contributed to the success of the school, staff, and students

Commendation

The district's introduction of one-to-one technology and the hiring of a social/emotional director reflect the school's core values and learning expectations in the allocation of resources

Commendation

The display of banners, posters, murals, and floor mats throughout the building reinforce the value of the school's core values and their ability to shape a positive school culture

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Identify and document the school's core beliefs about learning

Recommendation

Create and implement a rubric to establish specific and measurable criteria for Agawam High School's social and civic expectations

Recommendation

Organize curriculum and assessment to align and reflect the core values and learning expectations

Recommendation

Update the school's core values and learning expectations based on current research practices and then communicate with stakeholders about core values and learning expectations to ensure they align with both the district's goals as well as with the community's values

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process for continued review and revision of the core values and learning expectations using multiple data sources

Recommendation

NA

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The curriculum at Agawam High School is purposefully designed in some areas which creates learning opportunities that help ensure students can practice and achieve the school's academic learning expectations.

The curriculum in some areas, notably math and science, has portions that are purposefully designed and ensure students can regularly practice and achieve the school's academic learning expectations. With the exception of some specific areas in math and science, the written and taught curricula lacks purposeful portions intended to provide direct or embedded instruction on the school's learning expectations. Most departments are still in the process of creating formal curriculum that includes the learning expectations in curriculum templates either explicitly or implicitly in lesson objectives.

When Agawam High School develops and fully implements a comprehensive curriculum that is purposefully designed to ensure that all students have opportunities to regularly and consistently practice and achieve the the school's academic learning expectations, students will have more consistent opportunities for academic success.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

A written curriculum has not yet been produced in a common format across departments. There are isolated units of study in some departments with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. While the majority of departments identify Agawam High School's academic learning expectations in instruction, even when not included in a common written form, there is an inconsistent use of instructional strategies and assessment practices with specific and measurable criteria for success.

A few years ago a written curriculum was created on the Atlas Rubicon software platform that was not broadly shared with teaching staff or Common Core facilitators. The written curriculum on Atlas Rubicon was recently transferred to a Google Docs software format with highly inconsistent translation results that left many departments with fragmentary data transfer while other academic departments experienced unreadable data transfer. In addition, while some summer curriculum development has taken place in the last few years, the work was episodic and not documented in a common format. All of the previous curricular work has recently been assessed in order to create a timeline and process of creating usable and consistent written curricula. All departments still require the creation of a coherent written curriculum that includes assessment practices that are specific and measurable, exists in a common format, includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, and clear instructional practices. This work is geared toward meeting the school's academic learning expectations.

When a comprehensive curriculum is written across all disciplines that is aligned with the school's learning expectations, contains units of study that address essential questions, concepts, content, skills, and assessments practices which include specific and measurable criteria for success, Agawam High School students will have access to a curriculum that supports achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The taught curriculum implicitly emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking, demonstrates limited opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning, incorporates a limited but growing number of authentic learning opportunities both inside and outside of school, and is making progress to ensure students' informed and ethical use of technology.

Endicott survey data indicate that 84.3 percent of faculty believes the curriculum in their department/content area emphasizes depth of understanding. Concurrently, 76.0 percent of students report that the content of their courses challenges them to think critically and solve problems, and 76.4 percent of parents indicate that their children use higher order thinking skills. While the course of studies shows limited opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning, the Endicott survey responses indicate 56.9 percent of students have taken courses that include topics related to other subject areas, and 51.9 percent of teachers indicate that cross-disciplinary learning is occurring. Teachers broadly report that cross-curricular work is a matter of chance alignments of teachers with the same prep period and topic interest and not through any designed or systematic process. Authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school are limited but increasing. Many student clubs and activities incorporate travel opportunities and chances to engage in activities related to policy formation at the school or community level, and to mentor and support other students. A career center is in place that includes student guidance, a regularly updated jobs board, career exploration and internship opportunities and resume writing support. The Endicott survey data shows 61.6 percent of students agree that Agawam High School provides learning opportunities off campus, 83.3 percent of faculty respond that students experience authentic opportunities to apply knowledge, and 57.6 percent of parents indicate that their students have a number of opportunities to apply learning to real-world situations. Students at Agawam High School are informed and ethical users of technology. In addition, the Endicott survey data shows that students at Agawam High School are informed and ethical users of technology with 84.6 percent of students, 78.7 percent of staff members and 79.3 percent of parents indicating as such. However, policies, procedures, and faculty training for the implementation of a 1:1 device plan is not in place although the devices have been purchased.

When all curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology then Agawam High School students will be well prepared for future success.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

There is minimal alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

While the district purchased and used Atlas Rubicon a number of years ago, the license was not maintained and access to the content was no longer available. Only recently was the curriculum retrieved and placed into a format that is available to faculty. During each summer, various faculty secure permission to write portions of curriculum for different departments. This has now been gathered and is in the same location as the curriculum materials from Atlas Rubicon. The assistant superintendent for curriculum and human resources spent the previous year gathering documents and determining what portions of curriculum have been written, although none of it is currently in a unified format. At this time she is creating a prioritized plan to move forward with the development of a curriculum that is in a consistent format and easily accessible to faculty for regular use.

When there is full alignment between the written and taught curriculum, all students will be guaranteed access to a consistent curricular experience.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Minimal effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among only a few academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

At this time the minimal vertical articulation with Agawam Junior High includes the areas of specific electives, and math to a minimal level, where the Common Core facilitator is responsible for meeting with faculty from grades six through twelve. There is also an eighth and ninth grade teacher swap option, that has been used infrequently, through which teachers are able to give students both a preview of what is to come and review benchmarks that should be met. Within the school, although departments are given regularly scheduled after-school meeting blocks on a monthly basis and professional development time, teachers indicate that there is insufficient time to accomplish instructional planning and data analysis, leaving little to no time for curricular coordination and vertical articulation with the junior high school. Teachers currently co-teaching or conducting interdisciplinary units meet on their own time before or after school hours, although a few co-teaching pairs share some prep time. Without vertical articulation, students feel the impact of the transition from the junior high school into ninth grade through the increased work load and a reported lack of connection with adults.

Effective curriculum coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with Agawam Junior High School will ensure an aligned curriculum, a more successful transition from the junior high, and more success for students.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, and the library/media center resources are sufficient to implement the curriculum; however, the facilities do not support the implementation of curriculum or instruction and are seriously lacking in supporting the school's academic learning expectations.

The average class size at Agawam High School is 18 students. Most teachers report that instructional materials are sufficient across learning areas but, in some cases, teachers and students do not agree. For example, textbook shortages prevent teachers in some content areas from assigning homework to students, and limited lab equipment requires science teachers to coordinate with one another about when they will conduct certain labs. Some teachers do not have their own classrooms. One science class is housed in a temporary space located within the library/media center, and the teacher must coordinate with others in the department to schedule lab experiments that support student learning. There are concerns about a lack of safety equipment and electrical issues that prevent some lab equipment from running properly. Climate control in the building is unpredictable and unreliable, causing drastic fluctuations in temperature that impact the learning environment. According to the Endicott survey, only 50.9 percent of teachers believe that the current facilities support the implementation of a 21st century education.

The library/media center is adequately funded and able to support the curriculum. The library was recently renovated to reflect a more modern space modeled on the learning commons design found in newer high schools and in colleges. The library/media specialist has ample funding to purchase digital resources with input from teachers. Library/media services are fully embedded into the English curriculum, but not consistently in other content areas. The library/media specialist tracks changes to curriculum in all subjects and regularly compiles reference materials that are shared with teachers. While some parents believe that the library is outdated, the Endicott survey reveals that the vast majority of parents and students believe that the resources of the library/media center adequately support teaching and learning.

Agawam High School offers a wide variety of co-curricular offerings, but a majority of the staff think that these programs are not adequately funded. Many clubs and organizations must raise their own funds to attend events and purchase supplies. Stipends for faculty advisors are minimal. Athletics is a district priority so students who participate in sports do not have to pay a fee.

When all school resources are in place to fully implement the curriculum, co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities, students will be able to achieve success and will meet the academic learning expectations at Agawam High School.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The district provides the school's professional staff with limited personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

The Endicott survey indicates that only 35.2 percent of teachers feel they have sufficient time to be engaged in the evaluation and revision of curriculum. While opportunities to develop, evaluate, and revise curriculum are offered to teachers on a voluntary basis during the summer vacation, teachers expressed a desire for formal collaboration through organized professional development during the school day. While data from common assessments and standardized tests sometimes inform curriculum revision, there is no formal process or review cycle implemented by the district. Most departments have a Common Core facilitator who has oversight in the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum, although many teachers report that the Common Core facilitators do not have sufficient time to properly complete this task in addition to their teaching responsibilities. The district provides two full-day and four half-day professional development days annually. Topics include pedagogy, technology, and content but are lacking in the area of curriculum review and revision. Per the teacher contract, teachers are allotted a \$600 stipend to pursue professional development outside of the district, and teachers across all content areas report that building administration supports the majority of requests.

When sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources are provided for collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, students at Agawam High School will be able to meet the school's academic learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills acquired outside of the classroom as well as participation in job shadowing, internships, and co-curricular activities

Commendation

The opportunities available in the curriculum for advanced learning, such as the variety of honors and Advanced Placement offerings

Commendation

The multiple authentic learning experiences that exist, such as vocational education, career center, and STEM classes

Commendation

The several supplemental co-curricular activities that support and provide authentic learning opportunities

Commendation

The provision of Internet access, In-Focus or J-Touch screens in classrooms and the plan for one-to-one computer devices for students to use

Commendation

The demonstration of the ethical use of technology by students

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop a standard written curriculum across all departments using a common format

Recommendation

Develop a plan for regular curriculum revision, coordination, and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school, as well as with the sending school in the district

Recommendation

Ensure that the taught curriculum is aligned with the written curriculum as it is developed

Recommendation

Implement formal opportunities for cross-curricular learning and supported co-teaching in the written curriculum and schedules

Recommendation

Provide time to develop and revise existing curricula within the professional development calendar

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Instructional practices of teachers are sporadically examined to ensure some consistency in the integration of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

The core values of the school are listed on most syllabi. Although core values, academic, social and civic skills are identified within the school, they are not specifically addressed in daily instruction. The school uses its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program to recognize students who exemplify the core values. While core values are integrated into instruction, it is not done in an explicit manner. Specific elements of the school's academic learning expectations are chosen by each academic department to be areas of focus. The incorporation of these skills is not designed to alter assessment or instruction but rather to provide a metric, where applicable, to specific content areas; then mastery ratings of these skills are presented on the quarterly report card. The assessment of these indicators is typically subjective in nature although school-wide rubrics do exist. Specific courses may promote appropriate research or responsibility, however, the connection to the overarching skills indicated is not made available to students in the classroom as self-assessments to measure achievement or to assess their growth. The school's beliefs are not directly pinpointed as foundational elements for instruction. School-wide rubrics for each of the academic skills exist, however they are utilized in limited ways. There is evidence that some skills are embedded into instructional strategy, however, they do not appear to be a driving force within the process of instructional development. While there are evaluative structures in place that are intended, in part, to examine instruction through walk-throughs, observation, review of daily lesson plans, and meetings with administrators, it does not appear that there is feedback that has strengthened the instructional consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. In addition, while teachers do peer observations, they have little time to meet which limits their opportunities to examine/reflect upon instruction.

When, through consistent examination and feedback, the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are consistently integrated into daily instructional practices across the curriculum, students will be better prepared to master these skills.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Teachers at Agawam High School regularly use instructional practices including personalizing instruction; engaging students as active and self-directed learners; emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking; applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; and engaging students in self-assessment and reflection to support the achievement of the school's academic learning expectations. Teachers at Agawam High School sporadically engage students in cross-disciplinary learning and integrate technology to support the achievement of the school's academic learning expectations.

Teachers provide opportunities for personalized learning to support student achievement in a wide range of courses and ways including the ALEKS program in math; student choice of topics for persuasive writing in French; supplemental resources posted on Google Classroom to allow for self-paced review in history; and activity choice in physical education. The addition of independent learning time to the schedule has allowed students to seek personalized support during the school day twice weekly. According to the Endicott survey, 71 percent of students report taking advantage of after-school help to receive personalized instruction beyond regular school hours.

Teachers engage students in cross-disciplinary learning in some courses, including a visual arts and business and instructional technology collaboration in which students created portraits in different mediums. Teachers engage students as active self-directed learners by emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, and application of knowledge to authentic tasks in a variety of ways including video public service announcements in Spanish; "Outrageous Celebrities" analysis in psychology; online banking and budgeting assignments in consumer math; performing arts lessons delivered for students at the junior high school; "Life After High School;" and the creation of nutrition plans given different dietary and lifestyle considerations in health. In a science class, students swabbed surfaces around the school building and analyzed them for the presence of germs. In an English course, the teacher coordinated an opportunity through the career center for students to complete job shadows and then reflect on their experiences to choose what position would be the best fit for their skills and interests. Teachers often engage students in self-assessment by providing opportunities to reflect on what they have learned as part of summative assessments. Sixty-five percent of students report that their teachers give them the chance to assess their own work.

Some teachers integrate technology in their lessons to support achievement of the school's academic learning expectations. Many teachers use Google Classroom to post assignments, share resources, and collect student submissions, both written and recorded. The textbooks used in some subjects are available online. A digital language lab has recently been added to the learning commons. Agawam High School has acquired computers for all students and plans to distribute them by the end of the academic year to become a one-to-one school. Teachers use Kahoot and Poll Everywhere as formative assessment tools in class.

When teachers in all subjects and classes include personalization of instruction, engage students in cross-disciplinary learning, engage students as active and self-directed learners, emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engage students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrate technology, students are more likely to achieve the school's academic learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour

- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- school board
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of most students by using formative assessment, strategic differentiation, and purposeful organization of group activities; teachers provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.

Teachers use a variety of formative assessments including writing prompts, word problems, lesson activators, and summarizers. Students also use their personal mobile devices in order to convey an instantaneous check for understanding to their teachers. These assessments are employed as a metric to assess the understanding of individual students and the class as a whole in order to inform possible changes in instructional strategy. Formative assessments are used to adjust the learning plan in particular classes when it is clear that students are missing key components of a lesson. Following formative assessments, teachers are prepared with alternative instructional strategies through which students can still achieve learning objectives. The dominant style of instruction is teacher-directed, inclusive of alternative approaches. In some areas students have input in the generation of alternative methods to further test for understanding.

Fifty-eight percent of students report on the Endicott survey that teachers adjust teaching strategy to meet the needs of the diverse student body. Some teachers alter their approach in order to simplify problems so that students have the ability to address the core of their misinterpretation and realize their own mistakes. For example, students in a band class were asked to remove the mouthpieces from their instruments but still “play” in order to focus their attention on a particular problem area of a piece. Student-directed differentiation is more prevalent in advanced courses and less visible in the college prep level or freshman-specific courses. There are teachers in various subjects who work collaboratively with content-specific special education teachers in order to differentiate appropriately for their students with special needs and 504 plans. Specific professional development for this co-teaching model of instruction was provided to the entire Agawam High School faculty. Co-taught courses have been especially successful when teachers have been given common planning time and when teacher teams have been allowed to work collaboratively for a number of years. Assessments are modified and accommodations are provided where appropriate. The English department provides several versions of course materials based on the reading ability and skills of their students. Physical education provides students three ways to meet their daily learning objectives in each class session. The world languages and business departments have expressed a need for assistance with differentiating their subject matter appropriately for struggling students as they do not often interact with the special education department.

Agawam High School uses the collaborative group model within many areas of study; this is indicated by 100 percent of teachers and 82 percent of students in the Endicott survey. Students in English classrooms generally experience “fishbowl” discussions or literature circles in order to deepen their understanding of a text or passage. Students work in pairs in order to solve a set of advanced physics problems designed to address a particular deficiency within the class. Collaborative groups are used to address the demands of multimedia research projects in both world languages and English coursework. The social studies department uses collaborative efforts and student choice to design a more engaging presentation from a particular section of their textbook. Group learning incorporates choice and problem-solving strategies within the school, however, these groups are infrequently provided the opportunity to choose the direction of their learning outside of assignment guidelines.

Students are provided with varied strategies in order to support their learning. The school's alternative education program called Connections uses frequent and immediate social-emotional learning supports and strategies in their small group settings to support students. Connections employs vertically aligned programs in an effort to return students to the general education classroom with the strategies they need to be successful. English courses employ a variety of strategic instruction methods in order to meet students' attempts to correctly cite textual evidence from a source within a piece of their own writing. Teachers employed mnemonic devices to aid students in remembering all necessary steps; this was provided on a handout with specific directions, written on the board, reviewed verbally, and students were provided with two exemplars. Students worked individually on assignments but were asked to consult the members of their small groups as they had issues. Teachers used guided notes and graphic organizers in order to help students to better focus their attention to key components of a lesson. Teachers use scaffolding techniques to assist students in building upon their own

knowledge in order to achieve a particular task. Teachers also employ Socratic questioning approaches to help guide a student from content that was familiar previously and to lead them back to the problem at hand. Teachers use Google Classroom to provide students with video and podcast versions of the content to support student learning. Teachers provided and asked students to provide examples from their lives outside of school in order to enhance comprehension of particular concepts. Teachers give additional support both on an individual and classroom basis as needed by students; teachers facilitate not by simply waiting for questions but by presenting probing questions and predicting common pitfalls.

When all teachers of Agawam High School adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of all students through the use of formative assessment during instructional time, including strategic differentiation, purposeful group learning and additional support with alternative strategies, students will be better prepared to excel in a dynamic and challenging world.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Most teachers improve their instructional practices, individually and collaboratively, by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; examining student work; using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; examining current research; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

Teachers meet by department to analyze data from mid-year exams and final exams, MCAS assessments, and Advanced Placement exams. Teachers in the math department compare local performance on individual Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) questions with student average performance on those questions across the state. In collaboration with Common Core facilitators and under the supervision of administrators, teachers compare students' final course grades and their final exam scores to identify instructional strengths and needs and to promote consistency of content and skills acquisition across multiple sections of the same course. Additionally, teachers compared Advanced Placement (AP) mock exam results and the results of the Advanced Placement exams themselves. Seventy-seven percent of teachers agree that they improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. Teachers continuously examine their own students' work individually through the grading of assignments, while 54 percent of teachers state that they have formal opportunities to do so in collaboration with their colleagues.

Teachers receive feedback from their supervisors through formative and summative evaluations, including feedback on their progress toward achieving their professional and student learning goals. Additionally, teachers report using input gathered from parent emails and meetings concerning the progress of struggling students to adjust instruction. Forty-five percent of students agree that their teachers ask for their ideas on how to improve instruction, along with 27 percent of parents.

Teachers individually examine current research to improve their instructional practices and develop courses, including project-based learning in science, history, math, English, Manufacturing Pathways, and Information Technology (IT) Innovation Pathways. Integrated performance assessments in world languages and the addition of the language lab reflect the examination of current research in the field of language acquisition.

Teachers share effective instructional practices at monthly department meetings and during district and building-based professional development sessions, including professional learning communities. Seventy-nine percent of teachers agree that they improve their instructional practices by engaging in formal opportunities for professional discourse focused on those practices. Scheduled common preparation time occurs infrequently in the schedules of teachers who co-teach.

When all teachers, individually and collectively, improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; examining student work; using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; examining current research; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, teachers are better prepared to support student achievement of 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview

- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices as adult learners and reflective practitioners.

According to the school's Endicott survey, 94.4 percent of teachers report that they are maintaining expertise in their fields and practices, and 81 percent of students report that their instructors are knowledgeable in their content area. Departments have used an instructional rounds protocol in order to observe common courses in an effort to minimize the wide spectrum of classroom experiences seen when multiple teachers are responsible for the same course. However, there is no formal requirement or expectation for this practice. Teacher teams have been able to initiate this protocol as needed.

Teachers at Agawam High School are provided a \$600 course reimbursement stipend each year in order to pursue professional development or continuing education. The majority of these funds are attributed to the pursuit of master's degrees rather than content-specific professional development. The school provides two full days of professional development and four half-days which are also partially dedicated to professional learning communities. These opportunities for development were not always applicable to particular areas of expertise; the school subsequently provided some "menu options" so that teachers may attend the development session best-fit to their practice. Teachers wishing to participate in professional development in addition to the school-provided menu options make requests to the administrative team for release time.

Teachers have been given the opportunity to attend Advanced Placement workshops, as well as educational, subject area-specific professional development courses. Common Core facilitators for each department have been granted the opportunity to indicate areas of need for their teams and send them to receive the necessary training to enhance instructional practice. Best practice and instructional successes are occasionally shared at monthly department meetings. Teachers are asked to track their professional development in Frontline/My Learning Plan however there appears to be no formal mechanism for the dissemination of this information to the rest of the content team.

The school's administrative team evaluates teacher performance which has been useful for reflection and evolution of instructional methods. However, these evaluations have been reported by teachers as not useful in providing feedback on content-specific, modern definitions of best practice. Teachers evaluate, reflect on, and maintain their expertise on an individual or small team level. There are not school-wide mechanisms in place to ensure best practice is uniform within or across content areas or classes. Instructional method reflections are adequate, however there is disparity between different sections of each course.

Because the Agawam High School teachers as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain and grow their expertise in their content area and content-specific instructional practices, the students will be challenged and engaged in authentic learning tasks to ensure meeting the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The school's core values that are embedded into instructional practices

Commendation

The emphasis on inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking

Commendation

The instructional practices that show differentiation to allow all students to perform at high levels

Commendation

The analysis of student achievement data from formative and summative assessments by teachers

Commendation

The efforts of teachers to actively seek information to improve their instruction skills and methods within their content areas

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop instruction strategies intentionally based on academic, social, and civic expectations

Recommendation

Provide additional teacher training to support students' self-directed learning

Recommendation

Increase the amount of differentiation specifically on student-centered, inquiry-based approaches

Recommendation

Develop formal mechanisms for dissemination of content-specific best practice to ensure students are receiving the highest quality instruction across the content area

Recommendation

NA

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The professional staff at Agawam High School minimally employs a formal process to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's academic learning and social and civic expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, but are not using school-wide analytic rubrics to assess progress.* The school currently does not have a formal process to fully disaggregate data gathered regarding whole-school progress in achieving these expectations.

The Endicott survey shows that 71 percent of the staff indicate they understand the formal process and criteria for evaluation using school-wide analytic rubrics. Agawam High School utilizes Rediker PlusPortal to communicate student progress in achieving learning expectations through a drop-down menu of options with levels of proficiency. Teachers and Common Core facilitators noted that the school-wide rubrics are being used in a limited capacity in all departments. Each department has autonomy as to which two academic learning expectations are being assessed and reported on in which class. This year the math department was responsible for reporting on critical thinking and independent and collaborative work to solve problems. However, the course syllabi do not identify specific learning expectations that were being assessed within that specific course. Administrators noted that these learning expectations are communicated with all staff through professional development. Communication to parents in regards to these learning expectations takes place formally four times in the school year through Rediker PlusPortal. Agawam High School currently does not possess a method for fully analyzing whole-school student progress data toward achieving these standards.

When the professional staff plans and implements a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving all of the school's learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, in the form of school-wide analytic rubrics, which are used only inconsistently to assess progress, whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's academic learning expectations can be accurately assessed.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The Agawam High School's professional staff communicates, in a limited capacity, individual student progress in achieving the school's academic learning expectations to students and their families but do not communicate achievement of the social or civic expectations. The Agawam High School professional staff has not yet developed a means to communicate whole-school progress in achieving the learning expectations to the school community.

Agawam High School is in the process of embedding academic, civic and social learning expectations into its assessment practices. At this time, teachers minimally use the school-wide rubrics to report students' progress in achieving various aspects of these expectations. Each department and teacher chooses two academic expectations that best represent their department or course and curriculum. Common rubrics are utilized on a limited basis within some departments. Central office leadership is responsible for facilitating the updating of curriculum to ensure alignment with academic, civic and social learning expectations. Currently, teachers have extensive autonomy as to how curriculum is implemented. In the 2017-2018 school year, Agawam High School changed its student information software to Rediker PlusPortals which allows students' grades to be posted online for students/parents to accurately see their progress in class at any time. Students struggling in classes generally receive an email to the parents communicating as such. Some teachers, in some cases, have more intensive and consistent communication with parents regarding student progress on a weekly basis including rubrics, study guides, and assessment information. Currently, Agawam High School has not developed a process for communicating whole-school progress on the academic, civic and social learning expectations to the school community.

When the school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving all of the school's learning expectations to students and their families and whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community, students will have an accurate understanding of their progress.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The Agawam High School professional staff regularly collects, disaggregates, and analyzes some data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

The district administers and/or receives scores from standardized tests to all students on a predetermined schedule by grade, including the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and the Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test (PSAT). The mathematics, English language arts, and science departments also analyze data related to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Agawam also administers common summative assessments for course midterms and finals. The data from these midterms and finals is collected and analyzed to assess gaps in student achievement compared to their grades in the specific course. The teachers at Agawam High School use a number of formative and summative assessments. Course-specific assessments include, but are not limited to, quizzes and tests, Kahoot, laboratory reports, performance tasks, projects, and essays. However, there is no formal process to analyze course-specific assessment data. Common summative assessments are limited to midterms and finals. There is a data success team, comprised of an administrator, teachers and guidance staff, that looks at students' term grades and determines who is at risk and refers them to the appropriate people so that individualized paths to success are created. Students that have been identified with a specific need in mathematics are placed in an MCAS preparatory class in addition to their regularly scheduled mathematics class. Students are identified for this class based on previous MCAS data and teacher recommendation.

As Agawam High School develops a formal curriculum that includes specific assessment points and methods with a more extensive formal process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data, student achievement will improve as a result of a more rigorous feedback system.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, Agawam High School teachers inconsistently communicate to students the school's applicable academic learning expectations; however, the majority of teachers communicate unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.

While the intent is to communicate the academic learning expectations to students, at this time, the practice is inconsistent. According to the Endicott survey, 56 percent of students report that teachers communicate the school's applicable academic learning expectations prior to each unit. Teachers noted that there is a disconnection with students and the language related to the school's academic learning expectations. A majority of teachers communicate unit-specific learning goals that are to be assessed.

When Agawam High School implements a consistent protocol with fidelity for communicating learning expectations and unit-specific goals to be assessed with students, students will have a more clear understanding of the purpose of their learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, teachers at Agawam High School consistently provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

The Endicott survey report shows 75 percent of students state that teachers use clear criteria such as rubrics before an assessment or assignment. All departments use a variety of content-specific rubrics which are often modified and revised to accurately assess student performance. Students stated, with confidence, that teachers prepare them with specific directions allowing them to achieve high levels of success on summative assessments. One exception to this is the physical education department where students are not provided specific criteria for success for summative assessments. A physical education teacher stated that they have analyzed this data and are in the process of adjusting their practice. Teachers consistently clearly outline objectives and criteria for success on each assessment. Teachers across content areas use exemplars and rubrics to provide students with targeted levels of achievement.

Because teachers continue to provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success prior to summative assessments, students will continue to demonstrate high levels of achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

In each unit of study, teachers consistently employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

As indicated by the Endicott survey, 89 percent of teachers employ a range of assessment strategies including formative and summative assessments. All departments administer common midterm and summative assessments across sections of the same course. Some departments implement common formative assessments. Teachers are given autonomy to choose from a variety of formative assessments to gauge student understanding and modify instruction. Teachers use their professional judgment to determine applicable formative assessments, such as question and answer, math labs, dip-sticks, and end-of-unit assessments. Teachers would like more time and leadership facilitation dedicated to department work focused on the development of additional common formative assessments and a greater variety of assessments. For example, in the math department, common unit tests and some common quizzes are used for assessing skills.

When teachers develop additional common formative and a wider range of other assessments, the data received will inform instruction and will allow all students to demonstrate their learning effectively.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The teachers at Agawam High School do not consistently collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.

Some formal collaboration for the creation, analysis, and revision of midterm and summative assessments occurs with all disciplines. Department meetings, professional development time, and summer curriculum planning time is available to teachers. Multiple demands for this time combined with access issues to previously developed curriculum and new district leadership in the area of curriculum have significantly impacted forward progress in the development of additional shared assessments and rubrics.

When all teachers have the time and resources necessary to collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, student learning will improve.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The majority of teachers frequently provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

The Endicott survey shows that 62 percent of students and parents believe teachers provide feedback that is specific and given in a timely fashion. The Endicott survey also shows that 62 percent of students agree that their teacher offers suggestions to improve work and 63 percent agree that their grading is fair and consistent. Students said that policies for revision and improvement vary from teacher to teacher but are implemented fairly. The recent start of the individualized learning times provide students opportunities to revise and improve their work with individual or small group teacher support. Feedback during this opportunity is timely and personalized.

Because teachers continue to prioritize specific, timely, and corrective feedback to students, teaching and learning will continue to be positively impacted.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

According to the Endicott survey, 88 percent of the faculty agree that teachers use formative assessments to inform and adapt instruction. A wide range of formative assessment strategies are employed including, but not limited to, quizzes, labs, interactive games, Kahoot, and exit tickets. In one class, the instruction was revised because of a dip-stick exercise where students did not display mastery of a concept.

As teachers continue to regularly use formative assessments to drive instruction, student learning will continue to be positively impacted.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers informally examine a range of evidence of student learning and frequently use it for the purpose of improving instructional practice. However, teachers and administrators do not engage in regular formal collaboration for the examination of student work and a range of evidence of student learning including common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's academic learning expectations, data from post-secondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni. However, the school sets regular time for the review of standardized achievement data including Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), and Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), common midterms and finals, and information from sending schools.

School administration has begun a general review of 2018-2019 school-wide data regarding the achievement of the school's academic learning expectations. Teachers indicate that formal collaborative opportunities to review student work are not provided. Common midterm and final summative assessments are the only assessments reviewed collaboratively across all disciplines. Standardized test information is shared with departments and reviewed when appropriate. Although student work and individual student progress in achieving the school's academic learning expectations are monitored individually by teachers, assessment practices are not documented in the written curriculum. Curriculum development and revision, which includes assessments, has been identified as a priority. Teachers report the current departmental leadership structure is inadequate. Departmental content area leadership is needed to facilitate curriculum development and revision, common course and common grade-level assessment development. A consistent means for revising curriculum, assessment, and improving instructional practices with regard to the school's academic learning expectations has not been developed.

When the school increases directed time focused on the individual and collaborative review of student work, common course and grade level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's academic learning expectations, data from the sending school and post-secondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni, the result will be the enhancement of student learning and greater student success in achieving the school's academic learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are not yet regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

Agawam High School has not yet developed a system for reviewing and revising grading and grade reporting practices as outlined by the school's core values and learning expectations. Teachers believe that clarity regarding departmental content area leadership is necessary to facilitate discussions and decision-making surrounding grading practices. Currently, Rediker PlusPortal is used to keep students and parents up-to-date with student progress in their courses. There are minimal to no common grading practices within and across departments and courses. Beyond determining the academic learning expectations for which their department is responsible for reporting on, teachers receive little guidance on the implementation of changes within their content area. An attempt to integrate the academic learning expectations into the grading system has been started, but data reporting and the development and implementation of the steps that follow have not been reviewed.

When norms for grading practices are aligned within and across content areas and are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, students will be assured of fair and consistent grading.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The use of a variety of formative and summative assessments to modify instruction and enhance student learning

Commendation

The implementation and formal review of midterm and final summative assessment to impact instructional practice

Commendation

The individualized formative assessment practices used by faculty to improve instruction and learning

Commendation

The practice of teachers working individually to identify and respond to student achievement modifying and adjusting instructional practice as necessary

Commendation

The provision by teachers of specific and measurable criteria, feedback, and opportunities for improvement

Commendation

NA

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process to communicate individual student progress in achieving each of the school's learning expectations to students and their families and whole-school progress to the school community

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving each of the school's learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success

Recommendation

Provide formal time and direction for all teachers to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to inform instruction to address inequities in student achievement

Recommendation

Provide formal time and direction for all departments to collaborate on the development of common formative assessments

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process of reviewing and revising grading and reporting practices for consistency and improvement in teaching and student learning

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

It is clear that the school takes pride in the climate and culture of the building, and those in the building hold one another to high standards in order to maintain and further that climate. The core values of the school are reinforced by signage throughout the building. The Endicott survey indicates a majority of students feel safe within the school (58.2 percent) and that teachers respect students (57.1 percent). There are various levels of engagement with core values and academic learning expectations throughout the departments of the school. The results of the Endicott survey indicate that the application of the core values in the daily operations of the building has not impacted all students, although the supportive and inclusive culture is in evidence in classrooms, the cafeteria, and when interacting with groups of students. The Best Buddies club president and club members were supported through their attendance at a training in Indiana. The Gender Sexuality Alliance group participates in the Day of Silence each year and has furthered the experience by holding a gathering in the cafeteria at the end of that day. This allowed organizers to see firsthand how large of an impact events such as this have had on the positive school culture. The Chief leaders (student leaders) highlight and put into practice the values of the school and allow students to model the values for their peers. In the future the group will have an even more prominent role in the school, including lessons during independent learning time.

The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture at Agawam High School ensures that students are able to take ownership of their learning and are able to meet the school's academic, social, and civic expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school is consistently equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's learning expectations.

Beginning with open enrollment for Advanced Placement courses, a culture of high expectations for academic achievement is set at Agawam High School. In 2018-2019, 243 students were enrolled in Advanced Placement courses and took a total of 466 exams across 13 subjects. In addition, non-traditional courses have been and continue to be developed. These include woodworking, horticulture, internships, and most recently, Manufacturing and Information Technology Pathways. The school's understanding of their diverse population and commitment to their engagement and achievement is evident. The Connections alternative program and GradPoint credit recovery allow students with diverse behavioral, social-emotional, and academic needs and challenges to find success in a setting where they have not historically been able to do so. For students with significant disabilities, programs such as Aspire and Applied Verbal Behavior Functional Life Skills provide avenues of support tailored to their diverse needs. All students, including those in specialized programs, are grouped heterogeneously in visual/performing arts, instructional technology, and physical education classes. Elective classes have been limited in recent years, but many content areas continue to offer elective courses that allow for heterogeneous groupings of abilities and grade levels. Internships within the life skills classrooms provide an opportunity for reverse inclusion in which regular education students work as peer models. This encourages meaningful relationships between students with and without disabilities and provides a model for others in the school to follow. These opportunities support students' achievement of the school's academic, social, and civic learning expectations. According to the Endicott survey, 72 percent of students feel they have a number of opportunities to take courses in which students of varying abilities are enrolled. Furthermore, 80 percent of staff believe that the school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students.

As all departments continue to ensure the program of studies reflects the diversity of the student body, and foster heterogeneous grouping, all students will have access to challenging academic experiences supporting success in the achievement of the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- parents
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There is a limited formal, ongoing program or process through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's learning expectations.

Previously, the school had an advisory program and moved away from this program based on input from parents, students, and staff as well as by reflection on student needs. In place of advisory, the school has moved to independent learning time (ILT) which takes place for 30 minutes twice weekly. This time was created so that students can check in with faculty and peers, as well as complete their work and receive extra help as needed. Initial feedback on this program has been positive from all stakeholders. While this program is having a positive impact on student achievement and well-being, students do not have an adult in the school who guides their use of this time, leaving how they use the time entirely up to students. The time is used differently by each student, and the structure is different in each classroom leading to inconsistency in the results students are getting. In addition to independent learning time, there are students who build close relationships with advisors, coaches, and select teachers; however, not every student participates in school activities that allow them to make these additional connections.

When consistent opportunities for all students exist to form a relationship with an adult, other than their counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's learning expectations, then all students will have multiple sources of support to ensure success in school.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- students
- parents

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

In order to improve student learning through professional development the principal and professional staff inconsistently informally and formally engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; use some resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; dedicate a limited amount of formal time to implement professional development; and often apply skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve instruction and assessment.

According to the Endicott survey, 57.4 percent of staff members feel that professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills to improve student learning. Many teachers report they would like more time dedicated to professional development than the current two full and four half professional development days during the school year. A district-wide professional development committee, created through negotiations with the Agawam Education Association, formulates a plan for the use of these days. Teachers also participate in monthly faculty and department meetings. At these meetings, some time may be dedicated to teacher sharing of instructional best practices. Common Core facilitators sometimes use these meetings to work with teachers on other department initiatives. In 2019-2020, the six professional development days offer teachers choices from a menu of programs on topics that align with the district's strategic plan, department work, and teacher-chosen professional learning communities. Teachers value the opportunity to choose from a menu of workshops based on self-identified needs. Teachers use MyLearningPlan to see both internal and external professional development opportunities available to them. Teachers report communication and directives around the district's and school's professional development plan is not sufficient.

Teachers engage in informal and formal discourse on reflection and analysis of teaching and learning. Under direction from the principal, teachers compared students' final exam grades to their term grades. Departments discussed this data to examine possible areas of grade inflation, discrepancies between teachers of the same course, and appropriate difficulty level of exams. Through an opportunity created by the Agawam Education Association, teachers may observe colleagues and write a reflection for which they earn professional development points. Some teachers work with colleagues over the summer on curriculum planning and revision. Building administrators also provide substitutes if teachers want to work on professional development opportunities with colleagues during school hours, although teachers commented that this opportunity is not always available to them.

In some cases, Agawam High School faculty avail themselves of outside opportunities for professional development. These programs have included training on instruments used in science classrooms, special education co-teacher training through an outside contractor, Sheltered English Immersion certification courses through a local college, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support training, and Advanced Placement teacher training. In addition, teachers may be reimbursed up to \$600 for outside advanced coursework taken.

While Agawam High School teachers engage informally and formally in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning and use some outside professional development resources to maintain currency with best practices, so they can often apply skills, practices, and ideas gained to improve instruction and assessment, when there exists increased planning, communication, and focus in formal professional development time, the school will improve instruction, student learning, and will create opportunities for curriculum development through professional development.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview

- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.

The evaluation process is negotiated through the contract developed by the Agawam Education Association and district administration which is further guided by regulations promulgated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Administrators use the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education classroom teacher rubric, with slight adaptations, as their tool to evaluate classroom teachers. During recent negotiations, power standards were chosen and guidelines were established, such as deadlines for evaluators to provide timely feedback and removing teacher attendance as part of their evaluation. The four building administrators serve as the primary evaluators for professional staff. District administration indicates time was spent at the Agawam administrator retreat on evaluation and observation, yet they have not done calibration for consistency among evaluators. Time was spent on teacher goals, as many of them were not SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely). First-year teachers learn about the evaluation process as well as the teacher rubric at monthly new teacher meetings. At the beginning of the evaluation cycle (one year for nonprofessional status teachers and two years for professional status teachers) each teacher sets two goals. The professional practice goal is typically established as a department, based on input from the Common Core facilitator and the principal. The student learning goal is created by individual professional staff members and must be approved by their primary evaluator. Teachers indicate that while they receive helpful feedback and support from evaluators, it is typically centered on classroom management and general pedagogy. Common Core facilitators do not serve as evaluators, resulting in limited formal feedback on content pedagogy or implementation of department initiatives. Additionally, teachers indicate that observation reports inconsistently provide suggestions and feedback on the implementation of the student learning goal and on a teacher's ability to make connections with students. Prior to summative evaluations, teachers have the opportunity to provide evidence of their level of adherence to various indicators. However, there is inconsistency among what is asked for by evaluators and what is provided by teachers.

As school leaders consistently use research-based evaluation and supervision processes, which focus on improving teaching and learning, students will receive improved quality instruction across all content areas and grade levels. When a method is implemented for increasing content area feedback within the evaluation process, teachers will be able to improve implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time partially supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.

The implementation of independent learning time for all students demonstrates an understanding of the climate of the building and the needs of the students. The move away from advisory to independent learning time was a response to input from students regarding their learning needs. At times the constraints of the seven period schedule limits instructional opportunities in all subjects. Students take seven classes per day which are 47 minutes each. There is also an alternating component that allows for extra time for science labs and concurrent physical education and health courses. Issues raised by various stakeholders include the need for a more in-depth exploration of content as well as a greater amount of departmental time for planning and data analysis. The idea of depth over breadth was mentioned multiple times. Common planning and data analysis to inform instruction is practiced to varying extents from department to department and is based on the ability to have common prep periods and available professional development time. Some departments have been released from teaching duties within the school day in order to allow for this work to be done while other departments were unaware that this was an option available to them. Minimal time is dedicated to these practices within department meeting time. Insufficient time for professional collaboration impacts curriculum development in a manner that supports research-based instruction.

When the organization of class time and the school calendar fully supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students, individual students and the student body as a whole will experience greater success in achieving the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school website

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Student load and class sizes enable teachers to consistently meet the learning needs of individual students.

Individual teachers carry an average of 90 students at any time with an average class size of 18 students. These numbers are relatively consistent across disciplines and levels. Levels offered include college preparatory, 32 honors level courses, and 14 Advanced Placement courses. Additionally, online courses are offered through Pearson GradPoint, Connexus, and Edgenuity. These opportunities allow for individualized course loads and smaller class sizes. The Endicott survey determined 79.2 percent of students agree or strongly agree that class sizes in the courses they are enrolled in are reasonable. Similarly, 67.6 percent of teachers report feeling their class sizes allow them to meet the learning needs of individual students. In the Connections program, students are afforded a small-group setting averaging 9.3 students per teacher with access to a dedicated adjustment counselor. This environment along with their Behavior Intervention Plan is designed to meet each student's individual needs and to reinforce behavior that will increase academic and social success across environments. Special education teachers carry a caseload averaging ten students which supports collaboration with general education teachers to identify and communicate the needs of those students.

Because current student loads and class sizes allow teachers to meet the individual needs of students, students have the support necessary to achieve the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

According to the Endicott survey, 61.6 percent of students and 70.4 percent of staff believe that the principal provides instructional leadership rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and expectations. The six elements of Agawam High School's core values (respect, responsibility, integrity, compassion, achievement, safety) are prominently displayed throughout the building. Teachers indicate that the principal and assistant principals are respected and valued leaders, who oversee school initiatives and provide support and feedback to teachers. Instructional leadership also comes from the Common Core facilitators, although this is limited due to common membership in the teacher bargaining unit. As a result, there is minimal supervision at the content level overseeing department initiatives or ensuring commonalities among teachers of the same course. The principal works closely with the Common Core facilitators in his role as instructional leader and their role as the building leadership team. Biweekly meetings allow this team to discuss teaching and learning, to gather input on faculty concerns, and to develop the annual school improvement plan.

In collaboration with the leadership team, the principal has developed three strategic objectives: academic success, connecting with students, and technology. Along with Common Core facilitators, and input from teacher surveys, he worked to examine these topics and group them into priority categories. The principal and assistant principals collaborate to create special programming for students that reflect the school's core values. Agawam Day and spirit week allow students the opportunity to demonstrate respect and school pride. Independent learning time allows students time to connect with teachers and get extra help, to work on skill development, to receive counseling on social and emotional concerns, or to work independently on assignments. The principal also supports the school's beliefs and learning expectations through courses available to students in the program of studies. Opportunities in the technical education field, business, manufacturing, arts, and leadership courses allow students to explore areas of interest.

The principal working with other building leaders provides instructional leadership rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, to create a place where effective teaching and learning occurs.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers, students, and parents are consistently involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

A variety of groups and methods are available to provide stakeholders with roles in the decision-making process. A slight majority of staff (58.3 percent) believe that stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process at the school. Although only 38 percent of students believe that they have input into what goes on at their school, there are a variety of opportunities for student voices to be heard. Students have representation on the school council. The principal's advisory group allows students to share ideas and concerns on a monthly basis with the principal. It is through this group that the pilot for independent learning time was advanced and the Chiefs program was revamped. Some student-athletes have the opportunity to attend the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association's sportsmanship summit and captains attend online workshops on leadership. Parents indicate that students have a voice in the decision-making process, identifying student roles in creating the senior walk, allowing coffee in first period classes, and initiating the change to a one color graduation gown.

Professional staff indicate that building administration is willing to listen to their ideas and input, including ideas on the creation of new courses and programs driven by teacher interest. Examples of these include Survival Science, a new teacher-created elective science course, and the writing center, a place that students can go during independent learning time to get support on their writing. In addition to this, there are teacher representatives who serve on the district's professional development committee. Through this group, input and suggestions are offered on professional development needs. Teachers who are Common Core facilitators sit in bi-weekly meetings with the principal and share concerns from their department as well as discuss teaching and learning initiatives. Professional staff have the opportunity to express concerns through end-of-the-year surveys. This data has led to the development and prioritization of building initiatives. Guidance counselors are involved in the decision-making process through their frequent collaboration with building administration. The counseling department advocates for various needs including professional development programming for teachers on LGBTQ inclusivity through the Behavioral Health Network and a new district-wide position for a social-emotional learning director.

Because teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making, all parties involved share responsibility and ownership leading to a common path to success.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers consistently exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.

School life has been positively impacted by the initiative and leadership of faculty beginning with the extensive number of clubs that students have the opportunity to join. This is a result of teachers willingness to support students becoming engaged and succeeding. In addition, teachers and students are empowered by the administration to bring forth ideas for clubs and courses that will further engage populations within the school to promote student achievement. This is evidenced by the creation of Manufacturing and Information Technology Pathways as well as new courses such as Survival Science. Teacher choice and empowerment extends to the creation of a menu of professional learning communities for teachers to choose from. The full implementation of these communities will benefit faculty and students in many areas. At the same time, the role of the Common Core Facilitators appears to lack the clarity of definition sought by teachers in each department. Faculty volunteers are crucial to the success of the check-in/check-out program for the school's most at-risk populations.

The support and facilitation of continued initiative and leadership of teachers will increase students' engagement and success and achievement of the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school committee, superintendent, and principal are frequently collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's learning expectations.

The school committee is invited to attend the annual administrator retreat in August. At this meeting various initiatives including strategic planning, safety, and evaluation planning are discussed. School committee members have the opportunity to collaborate with district and school leaders on these items. In addition, school committee members, district administrators, and building administrators often serve together on interview teams. The principal consults with Common Core facilitators to develop the program of studies, which is presented to and approved by the school committee annually. The principal purposefully collaborates with Common Core facilitators, the business manager, the superintendent, and the budget subcommittee members throughout the budget and staffing process. The principal advocates for adjustments and changes based on the school's initiatives and needs. The superintendent meets twice monthly with building principals. While meetings were held monthly and focused on administrative topics, the superintendent added a second meeting to focus on teaching and learning initiatives, such as observation and evaluation. In addition, there is a district-wide professional development committee made up of six to eight members: the assistant superintendent, several classroom teachers, and representatives from other district leadership positions including one Common Core facilitator. This group works together to create an annual professional development plan for the district. The assistant superintendent established monthly meetings starting in 2018-2019 with the Common Core facilitators to create more uniformity within their professional development planning, from which she can bring back information and ideas to the professional development committee.

Continued focused, reflective, and constructive collaboration among the school committee, superintendent, and principal will contribute to Agawam High School students' success in meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

The school committee and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

According to the Endicott survey, 74.1 percent of staff and 73.5 percent of parents believe the principal is given sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal has autonomy on all aspects of the school's curriculum; planning and implementation of the budget for building issues, programming, supplies, and staffing; recommendations on staff hiring and non-renewal; changes to the program of studies; revisions to the student handbook; and the school improvement plan. In implementing decisions about these items, the principal consistently relies on a leadership team made up of three assistant principals and eleven Common Core facilitators. The assistant principals help with student discipline, daily supervision and operation of the building, evaluation of the staff, delivery of professional development, and creation and implementation of school-wide initiatives. The Common Core facilitators advise the principal on matters including department goals, budgeting, professional development, course and curriculum development, and creation and implementation of school-wide initiatives. The principal also develops a formal school improvement plan. This plan, created in collaboration with the Common Core facilitators, is presented to and commented on by the school council. The school council is made up of the principal, teachers, students, and parents and meets throughout the school year, during which the principal provides updates on and hears suggestions from and for the school community.

Continued decision-making authority to lead the school from the school committee and superintendent, allows the principal to serve as instructional leader and implement a core values-based vision for Agawam High School.

Sources of Evidence

- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The sense of pride and community at Agawam High School that fosters a safe, supportive, inclusive, and engaging culture of student success

Commendation

The dropout rate of 1.1 percent that demonstrates a culture of support for all learners

Commendation

The open enrollment policy for Advanced Placement coursework that encourages an environment of high expectations for all

Commendation

The diverse course offerings and activities that help to foster heterogeneity and allow students to explore areas of personal interest

Commendation

The implementation of a menu of professional development opportunities, which are aligned with district initiatives, that allows teachers to improve in a self-identified area of need

Commendation

The research-based evaluation and supervision process carried out by building administration that allows for improvement in the areas of teacher growth and student learning

Commendation

The small student loads and class sizes that allow for teachers to meet the individual needs of students and for success to be achieved

Commendation

The varied roles and leadership opportunities for students, teachers, and parents in the decision-making process that promote engagement, responsibility, and ownership within the school community

Commendation

The focused and reflective collaboration among the school committee, superintendent, and principal that helps the school support students in meeting learning expectations

Commendation

The decision-making authority granted to the principal that allows for effective site-based management of the school

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure there is a formal, ongoing process or program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the guidance counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's learning expectations

Recommendation

Dedicate sufficient formal time for professional collaboration that allows teachers to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment and to communicate effectively about these opportunities and initiatives

Recommendation

Institute a method for increasing content area feedback within the evaluation process

Recommendation

Ensure that the organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students

Recommendation

NA

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school has a number of timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's academic learning expectations.

The results from the Endicott survey indicate that 55 percent of the parents believe the school has timely and coordinated strategies to meet the needs of all students. Students may be referred to a variety of Tier 2 interventions through the instructional support team, such as the check-in/check-out program, co-taught classes, and a behavioral intervention strategist. The faculty has developed a curriculum targeting executive functioning skills and strategies for special education and at-risk ninth graders. Faculty collaborate and work, in addition to provided preparation time, to meet mandated regulatory deadlines, collect data, and create tools for students to implement taught learning and study strategies. General education and special education teachers communicate frequently to facilitate students showing at-risk behaviors or academic challenges are referred to and start in/with one of the intervention strategies available at the school. The referral process for special education and 504 Plans follows state and federal guidelines and referrals to the more informal interventions (i.e.: check-in/check-out) take place through conversations among teachers, administrators, and parents. The special education faculty that are co-teaching must create opportunities on their own for sufficient course development and daily instructional planning that will ensure academic and social success.

Because special education and general education teachers have a range of effective, timely, and coordinated interventions that ensure the success of students at at Agawam High School, students are able to achieve the school's learning expectations .

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school systematically provides information to all families about available student support services.

A multitude of communication methods are used to provide information to families. Methods used include Rediker PlusPortal and AdminPlus Notify, social media, Remind, the local newspaper, and the parent resource tab on the school's website to relay information to families. The guidance department, health services, and the career center use Twitter, the district webpage, and Facebook to provide information regarding upcoming events and information about grades, attendance, assignments, health screenings, and the college process. In addition to electronic communication, the faculty uses posters, display boards, flyers, and hand-outs to inform students, parents, and the community of upcoming events and opportunities. Information sent home is translated into home languages spoken in the school community.

As Agawam High School uses a wide variety of methods to inform families of student support services, resources, and school events, families are engaged as partners in the success of their students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Support services staff consistently use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

The school uses a variety of technology programs, such as Rediker PlusPortal to record student's grades and for communication with parents and students. School counselors use Naviance with students for career exploration and the college application process. The information technology department has initiated Google Cloud servers to access and coordinate information. The eSped system records individual data for each identified special needs and 504 Plan student and delivers Individualized Educational Program (IEP) information to faculty, counseling, and administration. Teachers support students who require language translations using Google Translate and ESL Library to produce lessons and supplemental resources. The nurses use SNAP to document student information regarding health care and nurse visits.

Agawam High School's consistent use of technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services ensures that all students have an opportunity to achieve the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Agawam High School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who consistently deliver a developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage students individually and in groups; deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health and social service providers; and use assessment data including feedback from the school community.

According to the Endicott survey, 81 percent of the staff indicate that the counseling department is adequately staffed, having two school adjustment counselors and five guidance counselors for just over 1,100 students. One guidance counselor is dedicated to ninth grade students and students in tenth through twelfth grades are distributed among the remaining four counselors. The ninth and tenth grade curriculum is delivered by counselors to students through individual meetings and three group lessons during the year within the English or history classes. They meet again mid-year, to develop the next year's individual schedules. If students have a need, they will meet on an as-needed basis. Using a goal-setting curriculum, eleventh and twelfth grade counselors meet regularly with students to discuss a variety of post-secondary planning issues, such as course selection, career exploration, and the college application process. In addition, counselors hold yearly scholarships and college application nights. Each adjustment counselor is assigned to an identified subgroup, such as students with IEPs and/or 504 Plans and the Connections program. Counselors identified a need for a more strategic plan for implementing a written developmental program for all grades, as well as additional training for all staff who work within the specialized programs. The department collaborates with outside mental health, social, behavioral, and medical agencies to help students access these services on an as-needed basis. Guidance counselors use the data from the faculty review of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), as well as student grades to assist in understanding the whole student and advise students on schedules, post-secondary options, and career choices.

Because students at Agawam High School are consistently able to access a variety of academic, social/emotional, and career development support, ensuring that all students have an opportunity to achieve the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Agawam High School's health services are adequately staffed with certified/licensed personnel who provide preventative and direct intervention services, implement an appropriate referral process, conduct ongoing health assessments, and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the faculty and staff to improve services.

Agawam High School employs two full-time registered nurses that oversee health services. In addition to administering daily medications to identified students, the health staff conduct state-mandated postural, vision, hearing, and BMI screenings to ninth and tenth grade students. Emergency information cards are sent home, signed by parents/guardians and returned to school. Student health records are updated regularly. The health services staff use a computer-based program called SNAP to maintain students' records, track immunizations, document screening information, and log visits to the health office. In the 2017-2018 academic year, the health office logged 10,878 visits and administered 3,259 medications. Health services staff communicate with families individually as needed and by sending out notices via the principal, which are disseminated through the school's web page, and student bulletin.

As the health services office offers a wide array of preventative and direct intervention services to students at Agawam High School, it supports the school community in ensuring that students are able to achieve the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- school support staff

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school's library/media services are somewhat integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum; provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum; ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school; are responsive to student's interests and needs in order to support independent learning; and conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's learning expectations.

The library/media specialist is a certified librarian. She is able to connect resources to the curriculum when teachers request such support. She has developed various ancillary curriculum pieces for grades 9-12 and teaches it in conjunction with a number of classes. With the increase in technology use, the librarian has updated databases, formed a digital library, and added resources to bring the media center up to date. The librarian will set aside resources in specific subject areas when asked and assist students in accessing resources for research. According to the Endicott survey, 88.9 percent of staff says that the library provides a wide range of print and non-print resources in various forms that support the curriculum and personal interests; 75.6 percent of students say the library provides them with a wide range of materials, technology, and other information services. The library/media center is available to both students and staff on a daily basis with operating hours from 7:00 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. through 2:00 p.m. on Friday. The library was recently renovated and is used for multiple classes, specialized learning programs, and independent student use. With increased technology available to students and staff, there has been a decline in the need of the media center physical space thus portions of the library are being used for a science classroom, language lab, and conference spaces. The library is equipped with Cloudbooks and desktop computers. With the recent renovation, the library was equipped with accommodating furniture to meet ADA standards.

The library/media center adapts to the changing needs of students and staff and conducts ongoing assessment using relevant data, including information about book and computer use, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's learning expectations.

Because the library and media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and are adequately staffed, students benefit from this resource in achieving the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who sometimes collaborate with teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff; provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students; and perform ongoing assessment using relevant data to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's academic learning expectations.

All of the teaching staff is certified. The school provides inclusive classes in most academic areas. Informally, student support services are available through peer tutoring, access to the library before and after school, teacher's after school hours, the newly established independent learning time held twice weekly for 30 minutes, and co-taught classes. The co-taught classes are challenged by sufficient and planned time for teacher pairs to collaborate. Formal student assistance is available through the special education referral process and services are accessed through Individual Education Programs (IEPs). There are special education programs and services to meet student needs including Aspire/Strive, Connections, co-teaching within most of the core content areas, strategic instructional classes, reading, occupational, speech, and physical therapy.

There is currently one English language learner teacher and one paraprofessional to work with nine identified English language learners. The English language learners participate in general education course work, and newcomers classes. The Common Core facilitator for English language learners is located at the district office and practices mostly at the elementary level due to the location of the majority of English learners. Students identified have access to learning opportunities with and without support. English learners undergo regular assessments with instructional support based on the outcomes. Staff develop and implement a variety of instructional strategies and use many types of assessment and instructional tools. The English learner teaching staff have no formal process for planning, addressing curriculum, modifying instructional material or tests and activities, and collaborating with colleagues.

While there are a number of programs to support students with various needs, when faculty providing these support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have planned and consistent opportunities to collaborate with teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff, the provision of effective and inclusive learning opportunities for all students will increase ensuring each student achieves the school's academic learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The use of timely, coordinated intervention strategies for all students

Commendation

The technology used to provide an effective range of coordinated services

Commendation

The use of technology in health services' to record, update, and maintain student records

Commendation

The academic and emotional support provided by the guidance department for all students

Commendation

The implementation of inclusive classrooms and specialized programs that assist students with academic and emotional needs

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Provide sufficient special education departmental leadership at the high school level

Recommendation

Address the need for common planning time for co-teachers and departments

Recommendation

NA

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The Agawam High School community and the school committee provide dependable funding to maintain a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies but limited professional development and curriculum revision.

The 2018-2019 student-to-teacher ratio is 11.9:1 and there have been no teaching faculty layoffs due to budgetary constraints in the past ten years. There are sufficient paraprofessionals and support staff. Teachers are allotted up to \$600 per year for out-of-building professional development opportunities. Restrictions on the application of the money to only enrollment fees and not toward other related expenses, such as travel, has limited some professional learning opportunities. The school employs a process for teachers to request appropriate funding through their Common Core facilitators. The use of technology at Agawam High School is rapidly being implemented and improving. The school continues to make progress toward its goal of issuing a laptop to every student. There are currently enough Cloudbooks to meet the one-to-one initiative in the building although there is no firm timeline for full implementation of this objective. Wireless upgrades include 133 wireless access points in the high school to support connectivity and use of devices. However, connectivity issues remain with challenging wireless connections attributed to the physical structure of the school. Information technology services are readily available to help teachers with technology assistance requests in addition to their duty to maintain a wide array of systems. While dependable funding may be available for some ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, curriculum writing and revision has not been addressed in recent years, but there is a long-term plan tentatively in place that includes the necessary time in professional development for curriculum. The availability of sufficient instructional materials, supplies, and equipment varies by department and course. There are courses with a limited number of textbooks while others use online texts. Science lab resources are limited. Athletics and a variety of clubs, listed in the student handbook, are offered to all students. All athletics are available at no cost to students and their families, with some clubs having a minimal fee for materials. According to the Endicott survey, 69.3 percent of students agree that Agawam High School has a wide range of programs and services.

When there is continued dependable funding for maintenance of all programs and services, technology, equipment, and instructional materials and supplies by the Agawam High School community and school committee, teachers will be supported for the delivery of a 21st century curriculum. When dependable funding is accompanied by a long-term plan to address curriculum through professional development, teachers will be fully equipped to deliver instruction that will ensure the success of students with the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Agawam High School partially develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of portions of the building and school plant and to keep the school clean on a daily basis while appropriately maintaining, cataloging, and replacing old equipment.

There are mixed results to facility requests put forth through the formal work order process. The prioritization of requests is unpredictable and response times vary widely with no ability to track the progress of the request. According to the Endicott survey, only 27.8 percent of Agawam High School faculty report repairs are completed in a timely manner. Concerns about broken windows and doors, windows without screens, and missing or damaged ceiling tiles are universal. Upgrades to the school's physical structure are needed in the areas of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility despite meeting with general compliance. Emergency egress for disabled students and staff is compromised by the lack of permanent ramp structures and handicap accessible pathways away from the school. There is no automated door entry for handicap access at the main entrances and exits. The entry area to school parking areas and school entrances have irregular crosswalks, sidewalks, and signage that present safety concerns when entering or exiting school property. There are challenges in science classrooms including issues of water access, plumbing drainage issues, and leaks in the roof. Steps are currently being taken to patch portions of the roof known to have leaks and continued asbestos removal from the school occurred this past summer. Concerns have been shared that repeatedly patching problem areas in an ongoing manner is not an effective way to address these long-standing issues. Previous issues such as a lack of grounded outlets for science classrooms have been addressed by the recent installation of ceiling outlet drops and the purchase of rechargeable/mobile microscopes. Students and teachers report frequently experiencing class relocations due to flooding, mold, or insect/rodent infestation. These pose reasonable health and safety concerns for students and staff that do not allow for appropriate instruction in designated science classrooms.

Requests for classroom supplies and equipment are handled efficiently by Common Core facilitators and annual classroom needs are mostly met through the budget. This includes requests for specialized furniture which is upgraded as needed. Other recent building upgrades include the installation of additional cameras throughout the school and television media monitors throughout the school as well. Technology requests are readily met in a timely manner, and 71 percent of students agree that computer labs, carts, and laptops are in good working condition. Teachers and students share a common concern regarding the daily cleaning and maintenance of the school. Only 38 percent of Agawam High School students and 48.1 percent of faculty agree that the school is kept clean on a daily basis. Of particular concern are the uncleanness and poorly maintained stocking of bathroom facilities. Two daytime custodians and seven afternoon/evening custodians are accessed through the town of Agawam to maintain the eight separate subsections of the high school.

When Agawam High School addresses the long-standing physical concerns of the school building, including issues regarding accessibility, cleanliness, health, and safety, the students and staff will have a building that fully supports the achievement of 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- students
- central office personnel
- school leadership

- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The community occasionally funds and the school implements repair efforts and specific building remodels, but there is no long-range planning that addresses facility needs and capital improvements. However, there continues to be regular funding for programs and services, enrollment changes, staffing needs and technology. There is currently no written long-range plan for programs and services, enrollment changes, staffing needs, and technology. The district and community have fully funded most needs that arise.

Areas of regular funding include the continued movement toward the implementation of a one-to-one technology initiative for all students. Enough Cloudbooks now exist to meet student needs but the program had not been implemented at this time. It is expected that the program will be in place by the end of this year. There still exists a need to build in professional development and instructional support to implement the initiative effectively. The information technology director and staff currently support a wide variety of relatively new technology, including the American Dynamics security camera system, Aerohive Wi-Fi, the new Kantech card access system, the Flysense vape detection system, the one-to-one Cloudbook initiative and the implementation of online textbooks. At the same time, there is not a capital plan for needed building repairs and renovations, a detailed fiscal plan addressing potential changes in enrollment that could impact staffing, and adjustments in department funding that considers the needs for materials and equipment. Agawam High School's five-year school improvement plan indicates shared goals by the administration and faculty of construction of classroom space, particularly safe science laboratory space, however, this has not translated into a specific capital plan for this work.

When the Agawam community creates and fully funds a plan for the provision of learning spaces, materials, and equipment in all curriculum areas, addresses changing enrollment and staffing needs, and that comprehensively addresses and supports instructional and professional development needs, students will be able to more fully access all portions of the curriculum, teaching and learning resources including technology, and successfully achieve the Agawam High School learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Faculty and building administrators at Agawam High School are somewhat involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

The building principal collaborates with the Common Core facilitators in early January, who solicit input from teachers to identify financial and curricular needs. The high school budget is then brought before district administration for review. The building principal then, with input from the Common Core facilitators, prioritizes where funding would most appropriately be applied. There is a separate budget for technology education even though it is part of the science department. Department discussion about the budget varies. Some teachers report that they are well informed about the budget process, while others report a lack of transparency. According to the Endicott survey, 60.2 percent of faculty feel they do not have input in the development of the budget. Additionally, only 31.5 percent of staff feel that the school has a long-range plan to address facilities, future programs, services, staffing levels, and capital improvements. Teachers report that there is not a formal process by which the building principal reports budget decisions back to the staff as a whole.

When Agawam High School is able to more formally engage the faculty and administrators in a clearly identified process of creating and appropriating the budget, the school will achieve a clearer, universal vision of the direction of the school improvement through annual and long-range funding plans.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

In some areas, the school site and plant limit the delivery of high quality school programs and services.

Agawam High School was originally built in 1955. The building has gone through numerous conversions and undergone a significant amount of maintenance since it was opened. Major renovations to the school occurred in 1981, 1998, 2002, and the athletic facilities in 2017. These changes have enabled the school to provide strong technology support, safe spaces for athletics, and some new science labs.

Currently, the science facilities are unsafe and insufficient to fully implement the curriculum. Many science teachers report an inability to perform laboratory investigations, thus are unable to effectively complete their curriculum. While the most recent addition to the school in 2002 included three new science classrooms built to appropriate standards, most labs are insufficient. Most of the science classrooms lack adequate storage and lab space. Teachers need to transport equipment and supplies (i.e., hot plates, chemicals, and glassware) through the hallways during passing time because of the lack of adequately equipped rooms. A lack of storage space has required teachers to use classroom space for storage with some cabinets that do not close properly. Also, the current layout lacks an adequate area for preparing science labs and investigations. Teachers use their classrooms as an area to prepare labs throughout the school day. In addition, the electrical system is sometimes overloaded when multiple electrical devices are run simultaneously. There are insufficient accessible electrical outlets to effectively run labs that require electricity such as hot plates, microscopes, or air tracks for physics. Also, several science rooms have non-Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) outlets near sinks. Sinks in the science rooms become frozen during long cold snaps and at times cause a backup of drainage backwash. In addition, several of the faucets and sinks do not work properly. The science classrooms do not have enough ventilation hoods for chemistry and biology classes causing exposure to potentially harmful fumes and vapors. Rooms with gas hook-ups lack adequate locking mechanisms for the room's gas supply. Rooms with eye and body wash locations are without floor drains in nine of twelve rooms. Most rooms have no hot water for cleaning materials and washing of hands.

The school has a greenhouse used by the science and technology staff. The space has fallen into a state of disrepair. The roof has small holes from hail damage that allow rain and snow melt to leak in. The automated fertilization system does not operate. The roof vents are bent and unable to be opened causing the greenhouse to overheat on warm days to over 90 degrees.

Staff and students in wheelchairs or with limited mobility have difficulty leaving an emergency egress. A portable wooden ramp is set in place by staff to assist those individuals when leaving. When outside, they then need to travel 120 feet through sometimes muddy, irregular ground to reach safety. Also these students do not have access to the Survival Class site. Handicap egress from the lower level music rooms was also indicated as an accessibility concern.

Additional facility reports include some windows are locked and will not open or do not have locks at all, ceiling tiles are damaged by water thus enabling mold and mildew to spread, screens are missing from windows resulting in closed windows on hot days due to student allergic reaction to bees. Staff cannot lock all doors in an emergency, and students report that most lockers are too small for clothing, books, and personal items and many do not operate. Ten exterior doors damaged by a senior prank with super glue several years ago have yet to be repaired despite a long-standing work order.

When the school site and plant support fully support the delivery of high quality school programs and services, students will have greater opportunities to achieve the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school consistently maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

Specific areas of the school are certified each year in accordance with state mandates. These areas are kept in full compliance before, during, and after the reports are filed. Agawam High School is in compliance with all federal, state, and local fire, health, and safety regulations as are annually reviewed/inspected. Various inspection certificates and safety protocols at Agawam High School include the following: the cafeteria is inspected annually by the town health inspector; two of the cafeteria workers are Serv-Safe certified; the state inspector inspects the elevator annually; the fire department inspects all fire extinguishers annually in July; the town's building inspector inspects the building annually in July; and reviews the Chemical Emergency Response Plan and Chemical Purchasing Policy.

The athletic facilities and physical education teaching stations were recently renovated. The track facility was upgraded with a six-lane rubber surface. The football field grass was replaced with synthetic turf. The area was improved with ADA-compliant restrooms and proper parking allocations for drivers with placards. Title IX issues were resolved with the inside locker rooms being brought up to matching standards on both the male and female sides. A gradually inclined walkway was placed along the side of the tennis courts that leads to the track and football fields. This walkway is permanently lit and accessible with an eight-foot wide pathway. The tennis and outdoor basketball courts have automatic lighting. The lighting system is also enhanced with an optional component to allow users more time to safely leave the courts later in the evening. The indoor locker room bathrooms were made ADA compliant, along with a gender-neutral restroom in each physical education hallway. Upgrades to the school's physical structure are needed in the areas of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility despite meeting with general compliance. Emergency egress for disabled students and staff is compromised by the lack of permanent ramp structures and handicap accessible pathways away from the school. There is no automated door entry for handicap access at the main entrances and exits. The entry area to school parking areas and school entrances have irregular crosswalks, sidewalks, and signage that present safety concerns when entering or exiting school property.

When the school, in addition to maintaining facilities, inspections, and certificates that are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations, is in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, high quality and safe school programs and services will be available to all students and faculty.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Most professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.

Agawam High School has a moderate level of parental involvement. Continuous efforts are being made to actively engage parents, guardians, students, and their families in a successful and productive school experience. The school's administration, faculty, and staff recognize that academic achievement requires the collaborative efforts of the school and home. Agawam High School schedules a Back to School Night in September. Parent conferences are scheduled in November and March. Parents are informed of these events through ongoing updates and messages automatically transmitted through Rediker Admin Plus Notify, which has become a resource when communicating with parents.

As reported in the Endicott survey, 76.9 percent of faculty feel that professional staff actively engage parents and family partners in each student's education. Fifty-six percent of parents responded that faculty engage families as partners in their son's/daughter's education. The majority of parents agree that Agawam High School provides formal reports in addition to course grades which show student achievement of school-wide academic learning expectations. Agawam High School utilizes Rediker Plus Portals for grading and reporting systems. Grades and assignments are communicated in real time to the student and parent as grades are recorded. With every report card (four times per year) teachers also report on two academic expectations per class. Agawam High School targets hands-on learners and provides information about vocational education at Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative (CTEC). A tour of the facility is offered in the spring for any interested ninth and tenth grade students. Agawam High School provides dual enrollment to area colleges for motivated student engagement. Gateway to College is offered to students at risk of not graduating. These resources are communicated through one-to-one meetings with students and families as well as online links to resources.

As a result of the professional staff actively engaging parents and families as partners in students' education, specifically those families less connected with the school, students have feedback and opportunities to best support them in school success.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

School staff regularly develop productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

The career center secured over 40 job shadows for the school year 2017-2018. Students learned firsthand at local job sites about careers such as a police detective, chef, neonatal intensive care nurse, biomedical engineer, broadcaster, and firefighter. For the year 2018-2019 well over 100 job shadows were completed. While job shadowing is available to all students, in a new project with English honors classes students are completing two to four job shadows in career areas of interest, increasing the total amount of students completing job shadows. There were over 120 students participating in internships in 2017-2018 and over 160 in the year 2018-2019. The career center mentored a student interested in a career in broadcasting, and the student created a documentary presentation to run on the local cable channel and organized a clothing drive for the local shelter. A senior intern worked with a video production company and also produced videos for the district. Many students chose to intern with teachers at schools in the district. All interns are required to complete weekly time sheets which reflect what they have completed in their internship for that week. Students can have five excused absences while participating in the program. For the school year 2017-2018 the AHS Cooperative Education Program had ten students and 2018-2019 had twenty students in workplaces such as local supermarkets, real estate, automotive, insurance, landscaping, country clubs, food service, farming, and HVAC businesses. The Agawam High School guidance department collaborates regularly with local colleges to offer pre-college awareness, facilitates military recruiter visits, hosts a college and career fair, and college representative visits.

As a result of successful partnerships involving parents, community, businesses, and higher education, the school will continue to offer an appropriate range of services to support student learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- school leadership
- school support staff

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The school's wide range of programs and services including numerous clubs, athletics, and school-to-career programming

Commendation

The local business and industry partnerships formed through faculty efforts and engagement

Commendation

The full range of technology support provided in a timely manner by the school's technology department

Commendation

The process for the maintenance and cataloging of equipment

Commendation

The ongoing implementation of the one-to-one technology goal

Commendation

The maintenance of appropriate levels of professional staffing

Commendation

The positive improvements made to the athletic facilities and compliance with Title IX

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Renovate science lab classrooms

Recommendation

Ensure doors and windows are in working order throughout the building

Recommendation

Ensure safe and respectful school access and emergency egress for disabled staff and students based on Americans with Disabilities Act standards

Recommendation

Create and implement a long-term building maintenance plan to address roof leakage, flooding issues, drainage issues, mold and mildew, and incidents of infestation

Recommendation

Clarify and communicate the annual budgetary process for faculty and more readily incorporate their feedback

Recommendation

Address the daily cleanliness issues reported in the building, particularly in the bathroom facilities

Recommendation

Create and implement a long-term capital improvement plan for the high school

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

A school's initial/continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting team 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 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 team 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 the Standards for Accreditation. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included on the next page. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The Commission urges school officials to establish a formal follow-up program at once to review and implement all findings of the self-study and valid recommendations identified in the evaluation report. An outline of the Follow-Up Program is available in the Commission's Accreditation Handbook, which was given to the school at the onset of the self-study. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by Commission staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed an exemplary self-study that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the self-study and preparation for the visit ensured a successful accreditation visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Laurie Farkas - New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Assistant Chair: Leanne Soulard - City on a Hill Charter School

Team Members

Mr. Charles Caragianes - Maynard High School

Matthew Carpenito - Plymouth South High School

Mr. Andrew Delery - Braintree High School

Nathaniel Everett - Sandwich High School

Ariana Grob - Uxbridge High School

Stephen Hitzrot - Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

Carolyn Holmy - Plainfield High School

Ron Janowicz - Malden High School

Mr. Robert Keuther Jr. - Marshfield High School

John Mosher - New Bedford High School

Stephan Paul - Killingly High School

Norman Reynolds - Middleborough High School

Juanita Suarez-Espino - Martha's Vineyard Regional High School