

**New England Association of  
Schools and Colleges**



**Commission on Public Secondary Schools**

**Report of the Visiting Committee for  
Timberlane Regional High School**

**Plaistow, New Hampshire**

**May 4 - 7, 2008**

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## STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

### The Distribution, Use and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report

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

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

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

- Teaching and Learning Standards
  - Mission and Expectations for Student Learning
  - Curriculum
  - Instruction
  - Assessment of Student Learning
- Support Teaching and Learning Standards
  - Leadership and Organization

## School Resources for Learning Community Resources for Learning

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

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

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Timberlane Regional High School, a committee of 7 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included parents and students.

The self-study of Timberlane Regional High School extended over a period of 18 school months from September 2006 to January 2008. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students and parents joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

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

A visiting committee of 17 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Timberlane Regional High School. The Committee members spent four days in Plaistow, New Hampshire, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools and, central office administrators diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Timberlane Regional High School. The visiting team built its professional judgment on evidence collected from the

following sources:

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 34 hours shadowing 17 students for a half day
- a total of 24 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

This report of the findings of the visiting committee will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Secondary Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of Timberlane Regional High School.

### **Overview of Findings**

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

### **Teaching and Learning at Timberlane Regional High**

It was with evident pride that the school displayed in every classroom and every corridor its mission and expectations for learning. These displays were second only to the wide-spread celebration of student work, especially the product of the outstanding art classes. The mission and expectations for student learning have driven some of the current work on the curriculum and it is showing some signs of being acculturated into the thinking and actions of the school. When the established expectations for learning are imbedded in the school community's thinking the rubrics that have been developed to measure the success of the expectations' implementation will find their way into the

classroom. The rubrics have yet to take on a significant focus in the school's culture. The faculty must finish this task and implement the results as soon as possible. As the mission is revised and reviewed during the next five years, special attention must now be paid to the involvement of parents and students in the process.

Curriculum has been developed for the core areas, but these will need to be revisited to ensure that the expectations for student learning are embedded in them. It is noteworthy that so many curriculum documents have been developed and that there is new thinking on the development of new electives that will incorporate contemporary fields of student interest.

A few rubrics have been developed to measure the implementation of the expectations for learning, especially for the assessment of writing skills. Many teachers are proficient with the rubric implementation while other teachers are uncomfortable with their daily use in the classrooms. This is also true of the variety of assessments employed by the classroom teachers. There have been many efforts to implement portfolios and other creative assessments, but the predominant assessment tool continues to be best categorized as 'paper and pencil'. The school has committed itself to analyzing the data generated by the students taking their external examinations. The strong staff development devoted to the development of curriculum has benefited the school. As the school moves forward in implementing its mission, similar efforts will be needed to develop a database of assessment results that are specific to the school's expectations for learning to inform efforts to improve both curriculum and instruction. It may be necessary to provide professional development in variety of assessment and in curriculum development and use.

### **Support of Teaching and Learning at Timberlane Regional High**

The administration and teacher leaders are actively engaged in working collaboratively and in a common pursuit of improving their school while also engaging in appropriate celebration of the accomplishments that are found within the school. All constituent groups expressed their satisfaction with current leadership and endorsed the belief that the views expressed by both the appointed and informal leaders represent the best thinking within the school. The challenge to leadership will be to develop a consensus on ways to better utilize time to effectively support student learning and to develop a school-wide system that ensures that each student is known well by an adult in the school.

Although the community has struggled with financing its schools, its members have articulated as well as demonstrated in numerous ways their commitment to their children and to the school system that educates their children when they have found the issue to be of importance. They have successfully maintained their existing facility and provided resources that have been appropriately utilized within the school, yet they have not responded to some pressing issues such as the need for additional rooms and flexible spaces. The children have benefited from the support they receive through the library, special services, the guidance department and the nurse. All of the professionals found in these groups are working diligently to appropriately utilize available resources

to benefit all children. The children have also received continuous support through the superintendent and his office. All are currently being confronted with a need to prepare for an eventual increase in student enrollment which will challenge the present facility's capacity and the need to design the new areas with the same intentionality as was used in the design of the Performing Arts Center. There are design aspects of the existing building that require rethinking and redesigning as well as projected needs that will be best met through an expansion of the present facility. The community has shown its ability to support the best in the status quo; it will soon be called upon to create something new that is worthy of its ideals and its care for its young people.

## School & Community Profile Report

### I. The Community

Timberlane Regional High School is located in Plaistow, New Hampshire, and serves the communities of Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow, and Sandown. Situated in southern New Hampshire just north of the Massachusetts border and the Merrimack River, Timberlane is approximately 25 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean and almost equidistant from Portsmouth, NH, (33.5 miles), Manchester, NH, (36 miles), and Boston, MA, (39 miles). The high school is located in a residential wooded area, while the entire district ranges in character from rural to suburban. The nearest city with a population over fifty thousand is Haverhill, MA, adjacent to Plaistow, four miles from the school. With proximity to Route 495 in Massachusetts, district commuters have reasonable access to major highways (I-95 and I-93) and commercial centers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

In a fifteen-year period the population of the Timberlane Regional School District increased over 28% (from 19,098 in 1990 to 24,501 in 2005) with the greatest increases taking place in Danville and Sandown. 2005 figures indicate 6,613 residents of Atkinson, 4,394 residents of Danville, 7,769 residents of Plaistow, and 5,725 residents of Sandown. The District's ethnic make-up is over 99% Caucasian with 0.5% Asian. The median income for households in the District is just over \$65,000, with Atkinson at the high end (\$69,729) and Danville at the low end (\$57,287). The District is mainly residential; there are no major industries in any of the four towns. Atkinson and Plaistow have retail and sales centers, whereas Sandown and Danville only have small town stores. Plaistow's largest employer is the School District with 455 employees, followed by Market Basket (225); Wal-Mart (222); and Shaw's Supermarket (160). Atkinson's largest employer is Lewis Builders with 88 employees. Neither Sandown nor Danville has firms that employ more than forty people. As in other communities along the Massachusetts border in southern New Hampshire, the District has seen a dramatic rise in the cost of housing over the past decade. The unemployment rate in the District ranges from a high of 4.5% in Plaistow to a low of 3.4% in Danville. The percentage of families living below the poverty line ranges from 3.3% in both Atkinson and Sandown to 2.1% in Plaistow.

In addition to the high school, there are five elementary schools and one middle school in the District, for a total student population of 4,463 during the 2006-2007 school year. There are no non-public schools in the District other than private kindergartens. The District is offering public kindergarten for the first time during the 2007-2008 school year. The percentage of local property taxes allocated to the District's schools was 57.9% for the 2005-2006 school year. The average expenditure per pupil, including State aid, for the 2005-2006 school year in the state of New Hampshire was \$8,982.24; for that same period the District expended \$8,635.72 per pupil. School choice is not an option in the State of New Hampshire.

## II. The School and Students

Timberlane Regional High School enrolled 1,613 students in grades 9 through 12 as of October 1, 2006. Twenty-two students (1.4% of the study body) were non-residents of the District. The ethnic/racial/cultural composition of the student body has remained consistently around 99% Caucasian throughout the high school's forty years of operation. Three of the largest classes in the school's history are currently enrolled, due to a steady rise in the student population over the past decade. At the present time, student population projections indicate a leveling-off of this increase over the next few years.

Timberlane Regional High School employed 106 full time regular education and special education teachers in 2006-2007. The daily teacher attendance rate for the previous two years averaged 94.85%. The average teacher/student ratio is 1/14 for all teachers and 1/17 for regular education teachers with an average class size of 21 students. The average number of students assigned to a regular education teacher in academic classes over the course of a semester is 105.

Timberlane has an eight-period day with forty-seven minutes per period. Sixty-two minute lunch periods are spread over four class periods. There are two homogeneous levels of core course groupings: Accelerated (ACC) and College and Career Prep (CCP). In addition to these basic groupings, students are heterogeneously grouped in most elective courses as well as in the team-taught World Studies (sophomore) and American Studies (junior) courses. Within the eight-period day, there are presently only a few instances of common planning time for such courses. Teachers meet by course in small learning communities once or twice a month during professional development time.

The District's five elementary schools and the middle school feed students into the high school. Average daily student attendance rate in 2004-2005 at the high school was 92.7%. The student dropout rate declined from 5.1% in 2000-2001 to 1.9% in 2004-2005. The evening division diploma program contributed to this decline in the dropout rate.

Several academic awards ceremonies are held toward the end of each school year. These include: separate honors recognition ceremonies for freshmen-sophomores and juniors-seniors, an honor societies cording ceremony, a senior awards ceremony, and a scholarship awards evening for seniors. Athletic teams and the Music Department hold their own awards ceremonies. Faculty members nominate candidates for Student of the Quarter over the course of the school year with 312 students honored. Two juniors are honored annually with the Boys and Girls' State Award, and one sophomore is honored with Hugh O'Brien Leadership Award.

The May 2006 summary report from the State of New Hampshire of state testing results shows that Timberlane sophomores scored below state averages in reading and slightly above state averages in mathematics. (State average reading scores of advanced or proficient stand at 49% compared to the Timberlane 40%, and state average mathematics scores of advanced or proficient are at 41% compared to the Timberlane 42%.) The last two years of SAT scores (Class of 2005 and Class of 2006) show Timberlane students averaging half a point ahead of other public schools in New

Hampshire in math (516.5 to 516) but two and a half points behind the national average in math (516.5 to 519). Timberlane students for this two-year period averaged four points behind the other public schools in New Hampshire in verbal ability (506 to 510) but two points ahead of the national average in verbal ability (506 to 504). (*In regard to SAT verbal scores, the separate 2006 critical reading and writing scores were combined for this comparison.*) In the 2005-2006 school year 82 students sat for 121 AP Exams, and 51% scored 3 or better. Beyond performance on standardized tests, Timberlane students excel in competitive academic programs such as Robotics, Model UN, Math Team, and All State and All New England Music Festivals. Presently, there are no performance graduation requirements beyond Carnegie units and required courses.

38% of all students enrolled in required courses are in Accelerated classes, and 11.7 % of all juniors and seniors are enrolled in AP courses during the 2006-2007 school year. 16% of all students receive Special Education services. For the graduating class of 2006, 39% enrolled in four-year colleges, 24% enrolled in two-year colleges, 4% enrolled in service training programs, 2 % joined the military, and 31% went directly into the work force. The top three school choices of 2006 graduating seniors also happened to be the three closest public colleges: Northern Essex Community College in nearby Haverhill, Massachusetts, the University of New Hampshire, and the New Hampshire Community Technical College System.

Beginning in the 2003-2004 school year, Timberlane has undertaken several initiatives reflecting our Mission Statement's focus on student growth, continuous improvement, and standards. In this period, we have made steady progress to establish a standards-based curriculum with common assessments and to implement a common writing rubric (6+1) across the curriculum. Each of these initiatives has been supported by professional development opportunities during which teachers have worked in small Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to achieve the goals of the initiatives. Formal and informal discussions also took place during this time concerning the advantages and disadvantages of moving away from our current eight period days to some form of block scheduling. For the 2007-2008 school year, a small number of courses will be offered in longer blocks of time. With a focus on growth and continuous improvement, Opportunity Academy was created in the 2003-2004 school year to help the transition of low achieving, incoming freshmen. In the 2007-2008 school year, two teams of core subject area teachers will share common freshmen students to help them to become more successful in their first year in the high school. A Credit Recovery program was initiated in the second semester of 2006-2007 to deal with freshman who had failed their first semester in introductory Math or English courses. In 2007-2008 NovaNet an internet credit recovery program has been implemented as the school's main academic recovery program. This after-school program afforded students the opportunity to continue in a full year course, while re-focusing on those skills and concepts they failed to learn adequately in the first semester, allowing them to gain full credit for the course. A Math Connections program was also put into place to address the needs of students struggling in traditional math courses as they entered the high school. Project Running Start offers students a chance to gain dual high school and college credit in a few selected classes, and Project Lead the Way offers a pre-engineering course of studies for highly interested students. Attendance contracts offer students a second chance, through greatly improved attendance, to gain credit where their record of poor attendance resulted in loss of credit in a course or courses where they received a passing grade. In a three year

implementation process, teachers have been asked to use the Blackboard Configuration (BBC) as a daily lesson planning technique to ensure adherence to their departments' standards based curriculum and to reflect teaching strategies that address their students' various learning styles.

Many local business and civic organizations are generous in their support of our senior scholarship program, and a wide range of area employers support our student-employee internship program. Raytheon Corporation has been a major funding source for the school's U.S. FIRST Robotics team with additional support from Analog Devices and Ward Fabrication of Plaistow. In addition to the dual-credit Project Running Start classes, the New Hampshire Community Technical College System offers on-site certification courses for our staff's paraprofessionals. The University of New Hampshire, Keene State, Plymouth State and Rivier College have regularly provided Timberlane with teaching and administrative interns, including a UNH mechanical engineering graduate student for the 2006-2007 school year through project PROBE (Partnership for Research Opportunities to Benefit Education). Funding for Project Lead the Way and PROBE has come primarily through grants from the Walker Fund and the National Science Foundation. Partners for Advancing Learning in Science (PALS), funded by a grant from the New Hampshire Department of Education, provides opportunities for our science teachers to train and collaborate in study groups on matters related to science curriculum with colleagues from three other regional public high schools. The New Hampshire Department of Education also has established a Future Educators Academy career preparation program in many parts of the state, and Timberlane has participated from the start, winning substantial scholarships for individual students in each of its membership years. Members of the Social Studies department have benefited greatly over the past three years from educational training and experiences provided through a \$587,000 Teaching United States History grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

### **District Mission Statement**

The mission of the Timberlane Regional School District is to educate all students by providing challenging opportunities that emphasize high standards and continuous improvement; and to prepare them to be responsible, self-sufficient, and contributing local, national, and worldwide citizens.

### **TRHS Mission Statement**

The Timberlane Regional High School community values and nurtures the academic, personal, creative, and social growth of all students.

We uphold rigorous academic standards and promote continuous improvement through curriculum and experiences that foster excellence, cooperation, and responsibility.

#### **Academic Expectations**

Timberlane students will:

1. Write effectively.
2. Use problem-solving strategies effectively.
3. Research and gather information effectively.

#### **Social and Civic Expectations**

Timberlane students will:

1. Offer their best effort and be involved, contributing citizens at school and in the wider community.
2. Work cooperatively and resolve conflicts peacefully.
3. Live responsibly and lend a helping hand to those in need.
4. Speak and act respectfully toward all.

Approved by Faculty November 27, 2006

Approved by School Board February 1, 2007

# COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

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MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING  
CURRICULUM  
INSTRUCTION  
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

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# 1

## MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that:
  - are measurable;
  - reflect the school's mission.

4. For each academic expectation in the mission the school shall have a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric.
5. The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations.
6. The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.
7. The school shall review regularly the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.

## Mission and Expectations for Learning

### Conclusions:

The Timberlane Regional High School (TRHS) Mission Statement & Expectations for Student Learning at were developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and by the student leadership group. This process took place over a sixteen month period starting in the 2005-2006 academic year. Input from the Executive Committee of the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), the faculty, and the student leadership group was incorporated into the developing mission statement. Wider parental feedback was solicited via a mass mailing to the homes of all students. At the beginning of the 2006-2007 academic year the new mission statement and academic, social and civic expectations were shared with the student body. Final adoption of the revised mission statement and academic, social and civic expectations took place at a series of meetings in the middle of the 2006-2007 school year. The high school faculty approved the document on November 27, 2006. The school faculty and TRHS Student Voice, a representative body of the various student organizations, approved the mission and expectations. The final approval step took place when the school board approved the mission statement and expectations for student learning at a meeting in February 2007. At the time of the accreditation team's visit, the Mission and Expectations for Student Learning had been in place for fourteen months, providing some time for it to become a guiding force in the school community, although, in fact, work must be done for this to take place. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Meetings with teachers, Endicott Survey)

Timberlane Regional High School's Mission Statement represents the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning; but, the school is in the very beginning stages of assessing its attainment of the expressed goals and the effectiveness of teaching and learning at the high school. There is general agreement among all Timberlane constituents that the "6+1" writing rubric is the most highly developed and widely implemented measure with which the 'effective writing' expectation can be measured. Despite the considerable time and effort devoted to the development of the 6+1 writing rubric, it is not yet fully implemented across the curriculum, however. While performance rubrics are used in other academic areas, their use is not consistent in the various departments or with every teacher at Timberlane Regional High School. Performance rubrics to measure the personal, creative, civic and social growth of all students identified in the mission statement have yet to be developed and implemented. As a result, the operational organization of the widely held beliefs expressed in the mission statement remains incomplete. The resulting impact is twofold: Timberlane has not yet reached the point where it is a fully mission-driven school and the faculty is challenged by the work ahead of them to become fully mission-driven. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Shadowing, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Endicott Survey)

Timberlane Regional High School teachers have thoroughly defined a measurable

academic writing expectation. Both the 6+1 writing rubric and the writing traits scoring rubrics are comprehensive and clear for both teachers and students. While the 6+1 writing rubric is not yet used in a predictable or similar fashion by each Timberlane teacher in every department once every semester, the effective writing expectation and its accompanying measure are close to full implementation. That said, the quantity and quality of written work required of students in the College Career Prep (CCP) level of the curriculum do not meet the expectation of rigor expressed in the mission statement. The problem-solving and research expectations are in the early stages of definition. The performance rubrics to measure attainment of these two academic expectations currently exist in draft form and appear well on their way to completion. The TRHS civic and social learning expectations expressed in the OWLS motto have been clearly stated but rubrics have not yet been developed. Without defined rubrics, the faculty and students have been unable to measure appropriate performance by which the school can judge a student's achievement of his/her goals. As a result of the substantial focus on the effective writing expectation and performance measures, progress on the other academic, social and civic expectations has been slow. Teachers and students are far less aware of these other expectations, and many students are actually unaware of their existence. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Shadowing, Student work, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with parents, Meetings with school leadership team)

At this time, the Timberlane faculty has not identified a targeted level of successful achievement in a rubric for each of the academic expectations. While the school's 6+1 writing rubric and the draft rubrics for problem-solving and research show a clear continuum of student skills in those academic areas, a particular level of performance has been identified as the minimum level of success for all students. Documents supporting the 6+1 writing materials state: "we would expect that our students will demonstrate greater strengths in some areas rather than others. The scoring and reporting provides students with formative feedback of their writing strengths and weaknesses in a variety of different areas. It should be noted that some courses will be scored only in areas aligned with their subject's attributes." Consequently, interdepartmental collaboration is necessary for the faculty to have a targeted level of achievement identified within the rubric for writing. This is also necessary for the problem-solving and research expectations. This, in fact, is not supportive of the need for curriculum integration. (Classroom observations, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with department leaders)

TRHS does not yet have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations. While a small number of students are aware of the school-wide civic and social expectations, evidence suggests that there is not wide-spread understanding of the expectations. TRHS has been developing school-wide rubrics for its academic expectations and has yet to develop indicators and evaluation tools for its civic and social expectations. According to the surveys, fewer than half of the teachers were aware of the work done on social and civic expectations. While the self-study reports that "The agenda book annually given to each student provides the standards by which all actions are measured", the student survey data shows that only 25% of the students says they respect each other and only 31.5% of the

students reports that students respect teachers. This result indicates that a small minority of the students fully understands the civic expectation of speaking and acting respectfully toward all. Furthermore, only 30% of the students report “knowing the goals my school is working on this year”. As a result, there is no method at present of assessing the progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations. (Self-study, Shadowing, Meetings with students, Endicott Survey)

The mission statement and expectations for student learning do not currently guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and are not universally evident in the culture of the school. TRHS has begun to use its expectations for student learning to direct the teaching of writing, but has yet to fully implement the expectations related to problem-solving and research. The academic expectations for student learning are prominently displayed throughout the school in its classrooms, offices and hallways. However, only a small number of students appear to understand and have internalized those expectations. The 6+1 writing rubric is being used by many faculty members and students are well acquainted with the program. The teaching of effective problem-solving strategies varies from class to class and subject to subject. The fact that rubrics for problem-solving and research exist only in draft form prevents them from being used at this time to guide procedures, policies and decisions of the school. Surveys indicate that less than 60% of the staff feels that the school lives its mission statement or considers it when making important decisions. Significant work needs to be done to insure that all stakeholders understand and implement the mission. (Self-study, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with parents, Survey)

Over the past three years, TRHS has revised its mission statement and expectations for student learning. Following the first revision of this document, it was presented to faculty, parents, students and the superintendent. It was approved by the school committee and has been in place for approximately 14 months. Since the adoption by the school committee, this document has not been reviewed. A number of students and parents state that they are unaware of the mission. Many teachers acknowledged not considering the mission in important decisions, thus, there is a need for a discussion about the importance of the mission and expectations. Regularly planned review of the mission by a committee representing all stakeholders is necessary to assure the continued relevance and strength of the mission. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with parents, Meetings with department leaders, Meetings with school leadership team,)

### **Commendations**

1. The concise and clearly written Mission Statement and Expectations for Student Learning
2. Adoption of the 6+1 writing rubric and writing traits scoring rubric
3. Use of the 6+1 rubric across the curriculum to improve writing

### **Recommendations**

1. Create the conditions for greater school and community awareness of the mission and expectations
2. Clearly define each of the academic, civic and social learning expectations
3. Create performance measures for each of the civic and social learning expectations
4. For each of the three academic expectations, clearly articulate the targeted level of successful achievement identified in the rubric
5. Develop and implement a set of indicators by which the school will assess their progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations
6. Establish a process by which the mission statement and expectations for student learning guide the creation of procedures, policies, and decisions of the school
7. Regular review of the mission and expectations is necessary to insure its viability and relevance

# TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

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## 2 CURRICULUM

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

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

## Curriculum

### Conclusions

TRHS specifies three school-wide academic expectations for which departments of Art, English, Health & Physical Education, Mathematics, Music, Theater, Science, Social Studies, Special Education, Technology, and World Language assume responsibility. All curriculum areas (save World Languages) support the academic expectation to write effectively as assessed by the school-wide adoption of the 6+1 Rubric and they share joint responsibility for its consistent use at least two times per marking quarter. The World Language department is developing an appropriate set of rubrics for students writing in a language other than English. The remaining two academic expectations for problem-solving and researching and gathering information have not been similarly supported as school-wide rubrics are in development for those expectations. Because the agreed-upon use of twice per quarter is not consistently implemented, the academic expectations are not yet a driving force in the development and implementation of curriculum at TRHS, nor is there a clear plan outlining how all curriculum areas will work together to deliver these academic expectations to all students. It is necessary to include the expectations in all curriculum delivery and the rubrics in frequent assessment to make them part of teacher student relationships in the classroom. (Self-study, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with School Board)

Most of the curricula at TRHS have been developed within the last three years, and they indicate the school-wide academic expectations for writing that each course is responsible for teaching. In addition, completed curricula have been aligned with the New Hampshire State Standards, and they list core competencies which students must practice and demonstrate in order to show mastery of the objectives for the course. Currently, all of the core area curricula have been completed; however, the curricula for elective courses, Evening and Summer School divisions still need to be completed. Because curricula at TRHS are connected to the school-wide expectation for writing, as written in the curriculum, students have many opportunities to practice and achieve this expectation through a variety of curricular offerings and through prescribed graduation requirements. Moreover, the school-wide use of the 6+1 rubric gives students many opportunities to master the expectation of writing effectively in many different curricular areas. However, opportunities connected to the remaining expectations remain incomplete so that students can not practice and achieve all of the school-wide expectations. (Meetings with teachers, Self Study materials, TRHS Curriculum)

TRHS makes use of a school-wide curriculum template designed to promote consistency across subject areas and endeavors to ensure that all curricula adhere to state standards. The existing written curricula at TRHS include school-wide learning expectations and identify New Hampshire Grade Level Expectations, essential questions, enduring understandings, core course competencies, key terms and vocabulary, and lists of suggested texts and skills. Curricula do not suggest instructional strategies; rather, curriculum guides provide a direction for content and a general timeline for unit completion. Some assessment strategies are included in the curricula, but this is not a common practice and rubrics do not yet exist for assessments; common assessments do exist, but these are few in number and have not been implemented in a substantive manner. All curricular areas do, however, identify the 6+1 Rubric as a consistent assessment measure of the school-wide expectation for writing. As a result, while curricula provide a direction for delivery of instruction, there are inconsistent measures for the ways in which curriculum is assessed. (Self-study, Meetings with teachers, TRHS Curriculum)

The curriculum engages a limited number of students in higher order thinking skills and inquiry-based learning. There are areas of strong teaching with high expectations which include inquiry-based learning and higher order thinking skills taking place in some classes. For the majority of the students in CCP classes, the

expectations are too low and not enough is being done to encourage critical thinking. As a result, many of the students who would benefit most from the experience of the higher order thinking skills to be gained through inquiry, problem-solving and other activities are not receiving them. For these students the curriculum largely involves repetitive practice of skills rather than an important emphasis on critical thinking or application. (Classroom observations, Shadowing, Student work, Meetings with teachers)

Few students are being asked to apply what they learn in activities that demand authentic application of their skills. Many examples of inquiry-based learning and problem-solving skills are cited in the curriculum and noted in the self-study, but there are few examples of authentic application of knowledge and skills in the curriculum, in student work, or from information gathered in meetings with teachers. Survey information also indicates that while 85% of teachers believe their students have many opportunities to apply what they are learning, only 52% of parents and 41% of students agree. Thus, many students perceive limited opportunities to engage in the real-life applications of the instruction that is taking place in the classroom. (Self-study material, Student work, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Survey)

The course offerings at TRHS are extensive and offer a wide variety of choices to the students. The curriculum, however, is largely isolated by subject area. Aside from the American and World Studies classes, there is almost no integration taking place. This is acknowledged in the self-study and in meetings with teachers. Teachers cite lack of time to prepare integrated units and an abundance of other initiatives that have taken precedence over issues like integration. The administration and teachers also cite the unavailability of teachers and room as the reasons for the absence of the third integrated class, "Humanity and the Cosmos", as not being given. There must be an active effort created to encourage integration of subjects while the limitations of resources are addressed. Curricula for academic areas are exact in identifying grade level expectations, essential questions, enduring understandings, core course competencies, key terms, and skills, but they are much less exact in describing the depth of understandings which students should gain as they complete the activities in all academic areas. (Self-study material, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school leadership team)

TRHS has made efforts to provide extended opportunities for students. While some of these are good programs, a few fall short of their intended purpose. The Opportunity Academy is noted in the self-study as an extended learning piece and is designed to capture freshman students who might otherwise fail to find success in school due to reading deficiencies. It is observed that leveled CCP classes lack rigor, which is denying these students the opportunity to engage their minds. There was a recurring theme throughout the visit that there is more tracking of students within the school than is noted in the schedule and in the self-study. Learning opportunities that group students together homogeneously do not provide high expectations for all students and thus, actually inhibit student learning for some. (Classroom observations, Teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with school leadership team)

There is some curricular coordination and articulation between and among academic areas at TRHS, but these are not consistent. There are two School Improvement Facilitators who are charged with coordinating the development and implementation of curriculum and working with individual departments to ensure that there is coordination within curricular areas. The school's recent work in all curricular areas using the school-wide curriculum template has also improved the articulation within individual subject areas. The TRHS's adoption of the 6+1 Rubric across subject areas has fostered some alignment among various curricular areas as all teachers make use of the rubric and report results on at least two assignments. The use of the 6+1 Rubric has also fostered some articulation with the Timberlane Middle School where the rubric is also used there. There is less curricular coordination among all subject areas, with World Literature and American Studies as

the only integrated courses, both combining English with social studies. Other courses integrated with the Art Department have been planned, but to date, none of these have been taught. The Endicott Survey information indicates that students [64%] and parents [45%] see little evidence of interdisciplinary applications in classes. As a result, there are small pockets of coordination among various curricular areas at TRHS, but there are no consistent and systemic measures to provide articulation between academic areas. (Self Study, Interviews with teachers, Endicott Study)

The faculty and staff highly commend the efforts made by the media specialist to open up the media center to students and to provide materials for curricular support. They comment that there has been a tremendous improvement over recent years. The staff also believes that technology and equipment are adequate for the implementation of curriculum this sentiment echoed by the school board and the "My Voice" survey. However, this same survey cites that only 18% of students use the library during class and that even fewer use it outside of class. There is very little seating space in the media center and this is part of the problem. The Center is not large enough to accommodate a full class comfortably and often crowded with students from study halls eager to enjoy the space, further limiting available seating. It should be noted that, while staff members find technology equipment throughout the school to be adequate, some departments do not have as great an access to technology as others. Teachers have also stated that there are challenges in coordinating the sharing of materials and books when there is a single class set and more than one class needs to use them. A complete implementation of the curriculum is restricted by absent technology, insufficient instructional materials, limited supplies, and the inadequacies of the facilities. (Self-study material, Facility tour, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with School Board)

There has been a consistent program of ongoing evaluation and revision of curriculum at TRHS. The creation of the School Improvement Facilitator positions in Humanities and the Science, Math and Technology have been of value in developing new, uniform, school-wide curricula and in assisting teachers with curriculum delivery. School Improvement Facilitators review standardized assessments to determine areas of needed improvement within the curriculum. The professional staff, through departmental PLCs, has recently completed a three-year task of developing/revising all core subject courses to achieve a standards-based curriculum. The District conducts an ongoing review of subject matter within all academic departments, on a five-year cycle performed by the professional staff from each of the district schools. Staff members from the various departments serve as high school representatives on all District Curriculum Area committees. The results of student performance on standardized assessments such as the NHEAIP and NECAP state testing have been analyzed at both the administrative and departmental level to make decisions regarding the evaluation and revision of curriculum. However, teacher and common departmental assessments of student performance on Six Plus One writing assignments (academic expectation #1) have not yet been used to inform ongoing development, evaluation or revision of curriculum. This is true, as well, for the recently introduced school-wide academic expectations related to problem solving and research. In addition to existing structures, a regular process for the review of curriculum based upon assessment of student performance relative to the school-wide academic expectations needs to drive the evaluation and revision of curriculum. (Self Study, Teacher Interview, Meetings with Teachers, Survey, Principal Interview)

TRHS employs two School Improvement Facilitators as curriculum specialists. One of them teaches one class per day while the other is not currently assigned to any classes. One of these individuals reports that this is currently enough time to allow them to accomplish what they need to do. The faculty, however, feels very strongly that there are not enough time and financial resources committed to the curriculum work which must be done by the teachers. The faculty reports that the lead teachers in each department have many demands

placed on their time that can not currently be met, including work necessary for curriculum. To accomplish what has been done, tremendous dedication and focus have been dedicated to curriculum work by the entire faculty, and more time and resources need to be allotted to conclude the proper development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. (Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with department leaders, Survey)

The Timberlane Regional School District – through its Professional Development Committee – provides many professional development opportunities for teachers, although many have broad application rather than providing specifically for the support and implementation of curriculum. Professional development topics are drawn from a district-wide survey. During the school year, 6 Professional Development Days and 9 Early Dismissal Days are dedicated solely to district and school-based issues. Faculty members report that they would like more professional development time that is directly related to implementing, reviewing and revising the new curricula. Teachers at Timberlane High School have adopted the Professional Learning Communities [PLC] model which focuses more directly on issues pertaining to curriculum. Of the PLC's currently in place, most are oriented toward academic areas and deal exclusively with curriculum. Faculty and administration should provide more opportunities for school and district professional development, particularly pertaining to curriculum development and implementation to facilitate completion of the excellent beginnings and the commendable professionalism of the faculty towards curriculum. (Self study, Meetings with teachers, Teacher interview)

### **Commendations**

1. The development of curricula which are aligned to State Standards and district goals and which make use of core competencies
2. The ongoing cycle of curriculum review and revision
3. The implementation of a comprehensive curriculum format which is used school-wide
4. Efforts made by the media specialist to reach out to her students and staff and improve the atmosphere of the media center
5. The development of Professional Learning Communities

### **Recommendations**

1. Identify the curriculum areas which have responsibility for the academic expectations of problem-solving and researching and gathering information
2. Complete and implement the sequence of curricula for all instructional areas, including elective courses, Evening Division, and Summer School
3. Ensure that regular and extended learning opportunities meet students' needs without compromising curriculum, rigor, or high expectations
4. Design and implement activities that provide authentic application of curricular goals and objectives and develop higher order thinking skills and practices for all students, no matter the course or level
5. Provide time within and across departments for professional development activities that address curriculum review and implementation
6. Ensure that the curriculum template includes instructional activities and assessment strategies, including the use of school-wide rubrics

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

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### 3 INSTRUCTION

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

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
  - personalize instruction;
  - make connections across disciplines;
  - engage students as active learners;
  - engage students as self-directed learners;
  - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
  - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
  - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection.
3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

## Instruction

### Conclusions:

Some TRHS teachers employ instructional strategies that align with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. However, only 51% of teachers responding to the survey reported that the mission statement influenced their repertoire of teaching methods. Writing across the curriculum is a TRHS whole school priority. Teachers in all disciplines are expected to use the 6+1 rubric to assess student writing at least once per semester and to report the results to administration. According to teachers and students, this is not yet happening consistently. In some classes, problem-solving is an integral part of the instruction. In the Gourmet class, students are given a 'Mystery Basket' of ingredients and must develop recipes and cook a meal using those ingredients. In physics class, students are trying to figure out how to build a race car using a mousetrap for the 'motor.' Students in a math class demonstrated problem-solving skills in a group activity. However, the majority of lessons observed did not reflect widespread development of problem solving and critical thinking skills. Lessons that tapped into higher order thinking skills were observed in some of the AP and accelerated classes, but were rarely seen in the College and Career Prep classes. Student work shows that students are asked to research and gather information in many classes. There should be a close alignment between instructional strategies and the school's expectation that students will effectively write, problem-solve, and gather information. (Classroom observations Self-study Shadowing, Student work, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students)

Some teachers at TRHS employ creative instructional strategies and varied practices in their classrooms. Samples of student work reveal some very creative lessons while others are very traditional. In some classes students demonstrate active learning. In Spanish classes, students were singing their new vocabulary words and in a physics class, students were measuring friction while racing toy cars. In several classes teachers were using video segments from YouTube to spark student interest. A few classes followed the instructional model of teacher as coach, student as worker. In these classes students were self-directed and worked independently to assemble portfolios of their work, and teachers conferred with students about the work. However, observations reveal that there is still an emphasis on teacher-directed lessons in many classrooms. There are passive, seemingly disengaged learners doing such things as wearing iPod/MP3 headphones. This is not consistent with students as active learners. At the same time, teachers at TRHS appear to have a good rapport with their students, and 96% of the teachers feel excited to be working with students. Teachers were observed making personal connections to their students in an attempt to help students connect to the lesson. Students also feel comfortable chatting with teachers, and in fact, in some cases there was an excess of casual conversation to the detriment of the lesson. The Program of Studies offers a wide range of courses available to students, including vocational programs, AP classes and a range of electives. Within some classes, students are allowed to opt for either accelerated or College and Career Preparation credit. Although all teachers at TRHS express a commitment to help all students achieve success, there is little personalization of instruction beyond a choice of questions for an essay or different options for a project. Differentiation of instruction was not observed in the majority of classes.

Teachers at TRHS have tried to make connections across disciplines. Some students take the combined American Literature/American History course, and others are in the World Literature/World Studies program. There have been attempts to develop an interdisciplinary freshman program, but that program is struggling because of a lack of common planning time for the teachers involved. There is also an effort to provide consistency for students as they move through the schedule. The school has adopted the Blackboard Configuration (BBC) model to provide a consistent instructional strategy across the disciplines. The BBC protocol was observed in about 50% of the classes. Some teachers have modified the basic structure to meet

the needs of the lesson. Most students expect to find a “Do Now” activity when they arrive for class. The TRHS mission statement refers to “rigorous academic standards” for all students, and there are high expectations and rigor in many accelerated classes and some College & Career Preparation classes, although the expectations for student work and behavior are obviously lower in other classes. Some student work shows high marks for work with errors in grammar, punctuation, and usage. According to parents, and teachers, expectations for student work and behavior vary from teacher to teacher. Effective and varied instructional strategies can lead to depth of understanding, however. In one senior film study class, students develop higher order thinking skills by writing a thesis paper based on their independent analysis of a film. While students are asked to analyze and synthesize in some classes, especially at the accelerated level, other classes do not include or require higher order thinking skills. A math teacher offered the excuse that a lack of preparation at the middle school level prevents the high school teacher from tapping into higher order thinking skills. In a few classes, students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in real world situations. The theatre department presented the musical *My Fair Lady* for the middle school. In the Gourmet and Pastry classes, students routinely plan and prepare meals for faculty members. Students in a playwriting class have written plays, the best of which were performed in another theatre arts class. Students in the Math Honor Society tutor other students. TRHS teachers and administrators are in the process of adopting school-wide rubrics. When they are actively implemented, these rubrics can help students critique and assess their own work. Such self-assessment and self-reflection seem to be firmly in place within the music and art departments where students routinely analyze their performance or their work although other departments utilize this to a lesser degree. Overall, improved instructional strategies and consistent adherence to academic expectations are needed to promote higher order thinking skills, raise expectations, and lead to rigor for all students. (Classroom observations Self-study Shadowing, Panel presentation, Student work, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with parents, Survey)

Teachers at TRHS make limited use of feedback as a means of improving instruction. New teachers at TRHS work with a mentor who observes the new teacher and provides written feedback and suggestions regarding instructional strategies. Teachers report this feedback valuable and appreciate the collegial relationship. Administrators have piloted performing informal observations of teaching practices and recently have initiated a “Palm Pilot walk-through observation process” for which they plan to do at least 10 “walk through” observations per week, recording data from the walk through on the Palm Pilot. Additionally, administrators also perform formal observations of some teachers although many teachers report that they have not been observed for many years, and there is less satisfaction with this evaluation process. In a recent survey fewer than half of the faculty (48%) feels that the evaluation process is effective in improving classroom instruction. Teachers want feedback from evaluators who know the subject area and express regret that the department chairpersons were no longer doing evaluations. When the evaluator was not knowledgeable in the subject area, only 14% of the teachers found the evaluation to be effective. Many students also have the opportunity to offer feedback to teachers using an online form available for this, and many teachers use their own evaluation form at the end of a course. This feedback is then used informally to improve instruction. However, in the student survey only 44.5% of the students report being asked to provide input in order to improve instruction. Fewer than 20% of the parents responding to the survey report being asked to provide input regarding their child’s instruction. There must be feedback pertaining to the improvement of instructional strategies in order to strengthen instructional practices, but teachers must avail themselves of the existing feedback. (Self-study Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with department leaders)

Teachers are expert in their content area, somewhat knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches and frustrated by a lack of time and structure to reflect on their own practices. All teachers are teaching in their own areas of expertise and are highly qualified in their content areas. Teachers

remain current in their subject specialty by maintaining subscriptions to professional journals and attending professional development activities when approved by the administration. Some teachers attend summer programs to acquire new instructional strategies. Content area knowledge is driven by course content and the needs of the teacher to adapt to curriculum changes. Seventy-five percent of students report that teachers know the material for their classes, but only forty nine percent of parents feel the same way, and only sixty-seven percent of school board members are satisfied with the qualifications and expertise of teachers. Teachers try to remain current about effective instructional practices through reflecting on their own practices, informal discussions with peers, the evaluation process and the mentoring program; but district-driven professional development does not fully meet the needs of the faculty. Teacher reflection on student assessments conducted within most departments led to review of specific skills and content area knowledge, but teacher reflection on their own practice seems limited in depth. The continuous improvement of pedagogical knowledge of teachers and a structure for reflective practices are needed in order to positively impact student learning. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Facility tour, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Survey)

While teachers are not routinely engaged in formal discussions of instructional practices, they are often engaged in informal conversations. Nearly 91% of teachers discuss instructional strategies with colleagues. Teachers report that some 75% of department and faculty room conversations and a significant number of e-mails revolve around instructional strategies and personalization. A "shoptalk log" was started to track informal discussions within departments; but because teachers found the process frustrating, the log was discontinued. An open, critical friends group, "What Works for Me," meets monthly after school with a small number of participants this process is also informal and voluntary. A book club meets to read books on pedagogy or other titles of interest, but again this is voluntary and limited in scope. Recently, senior students were invited to join in, and the library purchased copies of **A Thousand Splendid Suns**. Unfortunately, there is a lack of common planning time, hindering collaboration for all teachers--especially for the Freshman Academy. A lack of formal, structured discussion concerning instructional strategies has an adverse effect on the engagement of students as active learners who use higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding. (Self-study Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with school leadership team, Survey)

Technology is integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning. Approximately half the teachers use technology as part of their instructional strategy, even though some systems are outdated, and peripherals such as LCD projectors are not widely available. The school district has made an ongoing commitment to new technology with a 5-year replacement and improvement plan. Previously, the pace of acquisition was slow because of the expense. Some teachers feel the need for both more technology and training. Students are required to use technology as a means to apply knowledge in a variety of ways. One student reported that he used technology in most of his classes and the computer lab was used during his science class. Nearly all computer labs are full of students being instructed on computer use. Student learning is positively impacted by the use of technologies. (Classroom observations Self-study Shadowing, Student work, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meeting with School Board)

The school's professional development program is created by school leaders and is not aligned with teachers' perceived instructional needs. According to faculty members, identified instructional needs do not drive the professional development offerings of the district. The faculty believes professional development offered during early release days is driven by the district. Teachers need more professional development offerings concerning technology. The district professional development committee takes a survey of staff members on a yearly basis, to guide the types of offerings--50% of staff members respond and 50% of those attend after

school offerings. Staff members reports that only 43% feel professional development in the area of instructional strategies is based on identified needs. Conflicting evidence concerning the driving force for professional development frustrates the faculty and may be reducing the knowledge growth of rich and varied instructional strategies that should be driven by the school's mission. This conflict limits professional development of faculty and therefore the instructional growth of teachers and learning of students. (Self-study Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Survey)

At TRHS there is limited use of the supervision and evaluation process to improve instruction. Less than half of the faculty feels that the evaluation process is effective in improving classroom instruction. Evaluations, are limited by teacher contract, are not done on a regular basis, partly because of the number of evaluations each administrator must complete. Recently, administrators have initiated informal walk-through observations using a Palm Pilot checklist to gather data that is to be shared with the staff as a whole. The supervision and evaluation process should be used to open dialogue that will result in improved instructional strategies and possibly, in improved evaluations. (Self-study Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with school leadership team)

### **Commendations**

1. Teachers who use technology in their instruction have dramatically increased the educational opportunities of students
2. Those teachers who have made connections across disciplines
3. Initial attempts to personalize learning for students
4. The evident content expertise of the faculty
5. Initial efforts to promote discussions of instructional strategies

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop a strategy and timeline for the immediate implementation of the school-wide rubrics to ensure that they are universally used in instruction
2. Embed in the regular practices of the school varied and creative assessments to ensure rigor and challenging expectations for all students
3. Implement authentic assessments to promote higher order thinking in all classes
4. Institute a supervision and observation process that includes feedback from a variety of sources which provides direction on how to improve instructional strategies to positively affect the quality of students' learning
5. Provide sufficient time and a structure for teachers to collaborate and reflect on instructional strategies that will improve student learning

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

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# 4

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

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

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

## Assessment

### Conclusions:

TRHS does not have a clear process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations. The school's mission and student expectations document has been written over the last few years but received its final approval from the school board fourteen months ago. In order to assess students' achievement in the academic expectation students will "write effectively," the rubric "6+1" was implemented school-wide. The cooperative effort between the middle school and high school to implement the same writing rubric ensures that the students, parents, and faculty members can measure the students' writing development. The next step in the evolution of the use of the "6+1" rubric is to develop a mechanism to allow faculty members and administrators access to a student's history of 6+1 scores, as well as any future school-wide assessments to ensure that the results can be monitored for growth in student learning. In addition, there is some disparity in the application of 6+1 between faculty members and an indication that it is not used on a regular basis to evaluate all writing across the curriculum. Rubrics are being developed for the other two academic expectations dealing with problem-solving and research. The use of 6+1 Rubric is online but there is a clear need for more uniformity in application. The two other rubrics are in their infancy. At this point, there is not a clear way to assess whether or not the school's graduates have reached the academic expectations as outlined in the mission statement nor is there a way to monitor progress and provide feedback to individual students. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Shadowing, Panel presentation, Student work, Teachers, Meetings with teachers)

The administration and faculty do not collect data in order to determine student success in meeting their civic and social expectations. The social climate at TRHS meets the expectations stated in the school's mission statement. The school does collect data in order to present an overview of student achievement at a student-wide awards assembly. The school has many extra-curricular activities which assist students in reaching the school's civic and social expectations, and has in place a full time social worker, and a "peer-to-peer mediation" group that is very successful in resolving student differences peacefully, which is included in TRHS's social and civic expectations. The school plans to move forward in assessing these social and civic expectations using progress reports, 'My voice' surveys, and discipline data. Because there is no formal assessment of the civic and social accomplishments, students are unaware of what they have achieved and the expectations of the social environment in which they live. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Shadowing, Meetings with students)

The TRHS faculty, as a matter of practice, shares with students the learning goals of the class during the introduction of each learning activity, but the school-wide academic expectations have not been part of this presentation. Classroom observations and review of student work show that teachers have stated learning goals and outlined them with activity specific assessments that were given students as part of their learning activity. On occasion teachers have been observed emphasizing school-wide academic expectations in addition to the activity-specific expectations, and the two were tied together. For example, a social studies teacher introducing a research project emphasized to the students that one of the purposes of this project was to teach the students how to research effectively and included a rubric that explained how this was to be done. In most cases however, students are not aware of how classroom activities relate to the academic expectations in the mission statement that they are responsible for achieving. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Shadowing, Student work, Teachers)

TRHS teachers utilize assessment rubrics to evaluate student performance using course-specific rubrics, but

there is limited evidence of the use of school-wide rubrics. Many teachers have created rubrics which clearly outline their expectations for student achievement on a given project. There is no common rubric format, however, and many assignments are graded according to rubrics that are not referenced to the school-wide learning expectations. In English classes, the 6+1 Rubric is not used on all writing assignments, but only once a quarter on a targeted writing assignment. Currently, there are no department-specific rubrics, but some departments (specifically social studies) have developed subject-specific rubrics for writing and are in the process of implementing them department-wide. It is clear to students how to meet classroom expectations, but it is not always clear whether they are meeting school-wide expectations. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Shadowing, Student work, Teachers)

The teachers at TRHS use a variety of assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills and competency. Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies such as paper and pencil tests, homework assignments, lab reports, computer simulations, posters, research papers, Power Point presentations, projects that may be oral, written, video, or audio. For example, in a physics class, a teacher wrote a computer simulation model for orbiting space stations and asked each student to calculate the velocity necessary to lift their station to a geosynchronous orbit. In a physical science class, students were challenged to design a bottle rocket that remains in the air a maximum amount of time and explain how each part of their design will work to maximize the time in the air. Faculty members use the 6+1 writing rubric for some assignments, as required by the school progress reports, but they use their own writing rubric for most of the writing assignments. There are indications that students in some classes are allowed to improve their work, but this was not a universal practice. Portfolios or work folders are used in many English classes to assist students in tracking their growth over time. Students have varied opportunities to demonstrate their classroom specific skills but do not always get to improve their work and have few opportunities to measure their skills against the school-wide rubric. (Classroom observations, Shadowing, Student work, Teachers, Meetings with teachers)

The faculty sometimes uses the results of different assessment instruments to revise the curriculum in order to improve instruction. There is a lack of scheduled common planning time for teachers to collaborate, but teachers report finding other informal venues to work together. In an anonymous survey, 70% of the faculty members reported that they meet regularly with colleagues and share student work and best practices. The faculty has designed common midterms and finals in some World Language, Math, Social Studies and Science courses. These specific teachers meet both before and after the exams to discuss student achievement and relevancy to the exam itself, as well as to classroom instruction. The self-study reports that they use assessments to drive their teaching and curriculum offerings as when low sophomore test scores on a state-administered exam in Social Studies revealed a need to revise the Economics course and move it to freshman year. Some curriculum decisions are based on student assessment data, improving instruction over the long term. (Self-study, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Survey)

There are regular professional development days set aside for faculty collaboration in developing student assessment strategies, but this past year these days have been dedicated to preparation for the NEASC visit and to author state-mandated course competencies. TRHS has a professional development coordinator who works on the district development committee to arrange for quality learning opportunities for faculty and staff, but on a current faculty survey, less than 40% of the staff thought that the professional development program provides opportunities to collaborate with other teachers in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. Even though 6+1 was implemented school-wide with a six-hour training session, only a selected few English teachers were sent to extended 6+1 training and, because of other pressing issues, there was no time allotted for them to train their colleagues. As a result, there is a wide variety of interpretations of the 6+1 rubric from department to department and teacher to teacher. For example, some teachers feel that no

sophomore should expect a “5” on the “voice” aspect of the 6+1 rubric, while other teachers feel that any student who puts out a maximum effort can receive a “5.” Without having ongoing professional development time dedicated to training for the use of the 6+1 school-wide rubric and any future school wide rubric, the school cannot accurately assess student achievement. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Survey)

The faculty and staff at TRHS use progress report comments to communicate with parents about how students are progressing on the 6+1 writing rubric. Currently, twice a year on progress reports teachers are mandated to include the score earned by that student on the school-wide rubric for writing effectively. The school plans to institute similar rubrics for the two remaining academic expectations. Parents are invited to contact their child’s teacher at any point during the year via e-mail if they have any questions about their child’s progress. Future plans also include reporting the status of the school’s academic achievements on school-wide expectations to the community at large. There is a real need to improve communication to the parents and the community at large concerning the school-wide expectations, as is being done with the 6+1 rubric results. (Self-study, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Survey)

### **Commendations**

1. The adoption and use of the 6+1 Rubric as an assessment tool
2. The efforts made at the start of each lesson to clarify the learning expectations
3. The initial steps that have been taken to develop a variety of assessment strategies
4. Efforts to engage the faculty in discussion of authentic assessments

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that the rubric for all academic expectations are in use in all classrooms
2. Collect data to assess whether or not the students and the school are achieving their social and civic goals
3. Embed school-wide and academic expectations in assessment practices
4. Provide dedicated scheduled time to be trained in approved rubrics
5. Provide dedicated scheduled time for faculty members to work together to settle on uniform ways to apply the contents of all of the academic rubrics
6. Develop and implement a process which uses the school-wide rubrics to assess individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations
7. Communicate individual student progress in achieving the school-wide academic expectations, based on a set of rubrics, to students and their families

## **SUPPORT STANDARDS**

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**LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**  
**SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**  
**COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

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## SUPPORT STANDARD

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# 5

## LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

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

1. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
3. Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school.
4. The organization of the school and its educational programs shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
7. Meaningful roles in the decision-making process shall be accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.
11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

## Leadership and Organization

### Conclusions:

The principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead Timberlane Regional High School. The new superintendent has supported the principal's leadership by providing flexibility in the budget formulation process to allow the principal to develop a building budget that is aligned with the goals and mission of TRHS. Furthermore, while school initiatives are developed at the district level with input by the principal, the implementation of those initiatives is in the hands of the principal. The principal has been extended the autonomy to make decisions related to professional development and use of teacher time to work towards these initiatives. The principal has made changes that have an impact on the school community, to include the development of school improvement facilitators, a power walkthrough system to begin to collect instructional data and provide feedback to faculty members and the restructuring of the department head positions. The level of autonomy provided to the principal by the school board and superintendent has supported the principal to lead TRHS through the change process of school reform. (Meeting with school board, meetings with central office administration, meetings with school leadership team)

While the principal has implemented several formats for communication, a variety of stakeholders reports that too often communication has been one-way and not clear. Communication from the principal to the faculty and staff members, parents and students has been an effort to articulate the vision, direction and focus for school reform. However, there remains to be a need to develop consistent avenues of communication that promote meaningful collaboration, clarity in the articulation of the vision, and depth of discussions focused on school initiatives and their impact on student learning. The principal has an established level of trust and respect in the school community. Stakeholders have described their high regard for his long-term investment and strong reputation at TRHS. He has implemented many avenues for parents, students and faculty members to communicate directly with him, including the *Semesterly with coffee and conversation with the principal*, quarterly newsletter, attendance at the PTSA, and a consistent open door policy. While this has been initially productive, survey data indicates that only 40% of the school staff feels they are involved in school-wide decisions. With this, only 43% indicated that staff members communicate effectively in the building. Also, faculty members describe an inconsistent and ineffective model for collaborative discussion within the school and say they are often frustrated by the quality of school-wide communication. Because TRHS is in the midst of comprehensive school reform, it is critical for the principal to establish a communication system that emphasizes clarity of communication, collaboration and meaningful discussions. Direct and timely communication will contribute to a full investment in the decision-making process for all stakeholders which, in turn, will positively impact the quality of the educational experience for students. (Self-study, panel presentation, teacher interviews, meetings with teachers, meetings with department leaders, meetings with central office administration, meetings with school leadership team, meetings with school support staff)

Teachers are provided with opportunities to take an active role at TRHS. The principal's style has been to provide a structure where faculty members are able to have an appropriate level of autonomy to complete their work. Teachers are involved in the work of the liaison committee and other leadership opportunities within the building. Individual faculty members have been given the opportunity to develop new courses that take advantage of best practice and professional interests, for example, Art and World History and the World Studies courses. There are teachers who provide leadership at the departmental level. There are also two school administrators assigned as School Improvement Facilitators. These positions require them to provide leadership in curriculum, instruction and assessment. To improve effectiveness, however, the school must

clarify the roles and responsibilities of both the School Improvement Facilitators and Team Leaders. Currently, these leaders are overburdened with tasks, and their schedules are not structured to ensure success in completing what is expected of them. Clarifying and redefining the roles of team leaders and school improvement facilitators consistent with the needs of the school and the movement towards school reform will promote the effective leadership at many levels that is essential to the successful improvement of the school. (Teacher interviews, meetings with central office administration, meetings with school leadership team)

The Program of Studies and educational programs support the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The school continues to identify structural opportunities to meet the needs of students and to promote a level of personalization that contributes to student achievement. For example, the school focus on the ninth grade class through the Freshman Academies is indicative of a specific solution for problems that require particular interventions. A policy of inclusion allows students with special needs to participate in a variety of general education classes in order to meet graduation requirements. The district continues to develop the Evening Division that is designed to be an extension of the day program. The evening program continues to provide alternative opportunities for students who are unable to access a traditional educational model. A credit recovery program and summer school programs are in place for students to access support throughout the school year. The school implements a specific writing rubric to address the writing expectations of all subject areas in the school, but it must adhere to a timeline for implementing additional school-wide rubrics that support the academic, social and civic expectations. The school leadership team needs to continue to reflect on the programs already in place to determine whether or not they are consistent with the school's mission, and the school must continue exploring other educational programming opportunities to address student learning. For students with special needs, the student's service delivery should drive the student's educational needs, not program availability. Appropriate educational programs that align with the school's mission and academic expectations will enhance the quality of student learning and educational experience. (Teacher interview, meetings with teachers, meetings with department leaders, meetings with central office administration, meetings with school leadership team, meetings with school support staff)

TRHS utilizes a level system to place its students and structure the academic programs. Examination of the existing level of patterns reveals low expectations at the College Career Program (CCP) and lower-level courses. This pattern of low expectations denies opportunity and may inhibit students from achieving the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Elective classes and select core classes are heterogeneously organized, however. There are also over 30 other non-leveled courses offered to students. At this time, there is also inconsistent programming and learning opportunities for students with special needs within the academic program. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices do not consistently reflect the individual needs of students with special needs. Observations and teacher interviews suggest that too many students on Individual Education Plans (IEP) are placed in a few co-taught classes. Large class sizes are a result of combining class sections resulting in an inclusion classroom with more students identified with special needs than students without this identification. Individual teachers make an effort to create an environment characterized by warmth but are frustrated by the number of students with special learning needs. Educational opportunities for students with special needs within the evening program have limited access to support. The school continues to explore opportunities to implement courses that do not designate a particular level of study. TRHS needs to engage in an active dialogue as to whether or not current grouping patterns reflect the educational philosophy of the leadership team, faculty and community and whether they are consistent with educational best practices. These conversations should be meaningful, research-based, and serious about articulating the positive effects of non-leveled courses relating to all students in the building. This school's student grouping patterns reveal low expectations particularly within the CCP and lower level

courses that result in inequitable opportunity for some of the school's students. (Classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, teacher interview, meetings with teachers, meetings with students, meetings with school leadership team)

The current master schedule is limited in its support of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The school has identified the need to implement a block schedule system to address teacher collaboration, flexibility and opportunities for creative programming. The building principal hopes for the implementation of a block schedule program for the 2009 - 2010 school year. The building leaders predict that any block schedule will reduce transition times and school disruptions. Special education and general education staff will then be able to meet regularly meet for common planning time to coordinate the effective implementation of accommodations and modification strategies within the general classrooms. The school community needs to engage in an active conversation about the structure of the block schedule and how it will promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Engaging all stakeholders in the discussion of the block schedule will enhance the quality and effectiveness of the schedule's implementation and success. (Self-study, student showing, panel presentation, teacher interviews, meetings with teachers, meetings with department leaders, meetings with school leadership team, meetings with school support staff, Survey)

Stakeholders indicate that they feel their voices have not been heard in the decision-making process on some critical issues. While teachers indicate they are able to provide initial input related to school initiatives, they do not see themselves as an active part of the actual decision-making. According to survey data, nearly half of the parents and students surveyed feel that they are not contributing members in the decision-making process. Promoting partnerships with parents, students, and faculty members in developing school initiatives will promote broader ownership and may produce higher quality decision-making. (Self-study, teacher interviews, meetings with teachers, meetings with students, meetings with department leaders, meetings with Central Office administration, meetings with school leadership team, meetings with school support staff)

A majority of the teaching staff reports that their teaching loads do not enable them to address the needs of students in their class. While teaching loads vary in number, many report their loads are in excess of 100 students each. Students have indicated in survey data that only 46% of the teachers are aware of their learning needs and 61% of the teachers surveyed have reported that they do not have enough time to meet with students individually. School initiatives, particularly the implementation of a block level schedule, will reduce the student to teacher ratio per day allowing for greater amounts of personalization and meeting the individual student learning needs. Reducing teaching loads will support the goals for improving personalization and will improve the quality of instruction. (Classroom observations, teacher interviews, meetings with teachers, meetings with department leaders, meetings with Central Office administrators, meetings with school leadership team)

A majority of students at TRHS states in the survey that there is no adult; beyond a guidance counselor that they can turn to if they have a problem. In addition, only 20% of staff members indicate that they participate in the school's new program for mentoring students. However since the Endicott survey, TRHS has promoted an initiative to improve the quality of personalization in the school environment. Students, teachers and parents report that the school milieu is caring, supportive and safe. In addition, an advisory program for the 9th grade was implemented this year although the program has yet to be evaluated. There currently is a plan in place to extend the program to students in 10th through 11th grades. A formal program designed to personalize the educational experience for each and every student is critical to ensure that each child will have the personal attention that would contribute to achieving the school-wide expectations. (Self-study, panel

presentation, teacher interview, meetings with department leaders, meetings with school leadership team, survey)

There is a collegial environment at TRHS that promotes learning for all students; however, there is a lack of time for faculty members to collaborate around student work, to develop and implement best practices, and to work together across disciplines to improve student learning. This, coupled with many concurrent initiatives and intense focus on writing curriculum, has adversely affected the professional environment. While professional time must be allocated to complete necessary work, time for reflection and collaboration focused on student learning must also be provided. A formal, regularly scheduled time specifically designated for faculty collaboration is needed to offer an opportunity to reflect on student learning and means the of finding success for all students. (Self-study, teacher interviews, meetings with teachers, meetings with students, meetings with department leaders, meetings with school leadership team, meetings with school support staff)

The total school community at TRHS promotes the well-being and learning of students. Office personnel, dining hall staff, Student Resource Officer, school nurses and other support staff members are committed in their support of the students. The dining hall staff earns generous praise from students, parents and faculty members for their responsiveness to recommendations and the service and quality of food offered. The commitment to students by all school staff members has a positive impact on student learning and the quality of the educational environment. (Teacher interviews, meetings with teachers, meetings with students, meetings with department leaders, meetings with school leadership team, meetings with school support staff, survey)

Student success at TRHS is regularly acknowledged, celebrated and displayed. Student achievement is recognized in many different ways including the principal's newsletter, student of the month, spirit week, publication of the honor roll and other student achievements, and specific award ceremonies. Moreover, student success is celebrated throughout the school hallways and classrooms. Student recognition contributes strongly to school pride and a positive learning environment. (Classroom observations, student shadowing, facility tours, teacher interviews, meetings with students, meetings with school leadership team)

While a majority of students indicated, in a survey, that respect has been a troubling issue in the school and community, interviews with parents, students and staff members, as well as direct observation indicated quite the opposite conclusion. TRHS continues to celebrate student success as can be seen in the freshman advisory program, open door policies, and diversified school services, in a serious effort to meet the needs of all students. The addition of the School Resource Officer promotes a climate of safety. Continuous focus and improvement in the school climate is necessary to enhance a sense of well-being and positively impact student achievement. (Classroom observations, student shadowing, facility tour, meetings with teachers, meetings with department leaders, meetings with Central office administration, meetings with school leadership team, meetings with school support staff)

The school board supports the school's mission and expectations for student learning as evidenced by their response on the school survey and the actions they have taken on behalf of all students. The school board has supported technology upgrades, programs in the arts, and the expansion of the world language programs. The board has supported the new administration, the restructuring of the leadership team, and the school initiatives that are currently in place. The board's efforts to emphasize its oversight role and its clear intent to avoid micro-managing have supported a more positive working relationship between the school and the board. (Self-study, meetings with school board, meetings with central office administration, meetings with parents, survey)

## **Commendations**

1. The principal has sufficient autonomy from the superintendent and school board
2. Development of creative and unlevelled courses
3. Level of trust and support between administration and faculty
4. Degree of caring exhibited by all staff members toward students
5. Student recognition

## **Recommendations**

1. Increase genuine participation in the decision-making process for all school and community constituents
2. Ensure that all students, no matter the course or the level, have multiple opportunities to practice higher order thinking and to be involved in problem solving
3. Establish daily teaching loads that support the need for personalized education and empower and enable all teachers to use contemporary teaching techniques that allow the learning needs of all students to be met
4. Implement a formal comprehensive program which personalizes the educational experience for every student and provides an adult in addition to the guidance counselor who can assist the student in achieving the expectations in the mission

## SUPPORT STANDARD

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# 6

## SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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

### All Student Support Services

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.

6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.
7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

### Guidance Services

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

### Health Services

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

### **Library Information Services**

10. The library/information services program and materials shall be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program.
11. Library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation.
12. A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population shall be available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
14. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.
15. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

### **Special Education Services**

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

## School Resources for Learning

### Conclusions:

TRHS's Student Support Services complement the school's mission and expectations for student learning by supporting and facilitating the implementation of the academic, civic and social expectations. Collaboration and cooperation are demonstrated by guidance and special education personnel interacting with faculty and staff members to provide appropriate educational opportunities for students. The school's two full-time nurses provide preventive and direct intervention services and also provide appropriate referrals, mandated services, emergency responses, and ongoing health assessments, which foster students' academic, personal, creative and social growth. The personnel in the media center work cooperatively with teachers and other staff members in support of the curriculum. Overall, the level of student support services effectively supports the school's mission and expectations for student learning. ( Self-study, Shadowing, Panel presentation, Facility tour, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with parents, Meeting with School Board, Meetings with department leaders, Meetings with school support staff)

The school sufficiently funds most resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. The school board is committed to allocate resources to improve student achievement. Funding appears adequate for continued technology development in the media center but lacking in some classrooms. Existing technology is replaced on a five-year plan. The health office is well-staffed and adequately equipped. The guidance department members have reasonable case loads. Special education personnel are certified and moving towards a more inclusive model. School resources cover all students and provide for equal access to student services. ( Classroom observation, Self-study, Facility tour, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with parents, Meetings with community members, Meetings with department leaders, Meetings with school support staff)

Guidance counselors, the school nurses, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals work together and cooperate with other faculty members in addressing academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students, thereby enhancing student learning. Guidance counselors, student assistance counselors, adjustment counselors (full-time social workers), and nurses also refer students to community resources and outside agencies as needed. For example, students receive services from: Exeter Counseling Center, Greenleaf Woods Counseling, Center for Life Management, and RMB Counseling Associates. The school's library media specialist works with the faculty to provide resources for special projects, units of study, and research projects. Student support personnel involve members of the faculty and staff as well as community resources when appropriate. These service providers support students to address their academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. (Classroom observation, Panel presentation, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with department leaders, Meetings with central office administration, Meetings with school support staff)

Student support services at TRHS are evaluated both formally and informally. However, not all services have been adequately revised to support improved teaching and learning. The guidance department provides annual surveys to seniors to evaluate guidance services. Freshmen are surveyed to evaluate the transition to high school program, but it is not clear how this feedback is used to improve delivery of services. Currently, there is not sufficient formal evaluation conducted by the media center to improve services offered. Health services staff members and programs are evaluated every two years and the immunization program is evaluated by the state each year. The special education department completed the State of New Hampshire review in 2006 and was granted a five-year approval. Overall, the guidance department is in need of further evaluation and revision in order to more fully support teaching and learning in a more focused manner. (Self-

study, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meeting with School Board, Meetings with school support staff)

Student support services staff members provide clear and continuous communication through a variety of media. Both the school and individual student support services departments maintain an updated website and a community access channel on television (T.E.N.) and provide several publications both in print and on-line. Report cards and progress reports are sent home four times during the school year. Parents and teachers have access to student performance through "Power School." The guidance department schedules grade-specific parent information programs to share relevant information regarding student services. These communication sources help keep parents, students, and faculty members apprised of general information, policies, upcoming events, deadlines, and requirements. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school support staff)

Student records are maintained in a confidential and secure location. Cumulative student records are maintained five years after graduation. Student health records are kept in a secure computer program accessible only by health services staff members. All media center records are maintained on a secure network. Special education records are maintained in locked cabinets in the special education office. These records are maintained for eight years from the date of discharge. Teachers are sent an electronic copy of a student IEP, thus maintaining confidentiality. Maintenance of student records is consistent with federal and state laws and assures student confidentiality. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Facility tour, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school support staff)

The student support staff is fully certified to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library/media services. All five guidance counselors and one director are fully certified through the department of education. The two nurses are registered nurses in accordance with state and federal laws. The media specialist is fully certified, as are the two media center paraprofessionals. The special education department has twenty two certified instructors and fifteen certified paraprofessionals. Sufficient certified staff is able to provide effective services for all students. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with department leaders, Meetings with central office administration, Meetings with school support staff)

The school has a full range of services offered by guidance staff, school psychologists, and social workers to support students and deliver services. All students are seen at least twice a year by the guidance staff. Juniors and seniors are seen more often for post high school/college planning. Students are assisted with course selection by the guidance staff. Students needing assistance are referred to the Student Assistance Program. Referrals are made to appropriate outside agencies as needed. Student assistant and adjustment counselors support regular and special education students with learning centers and tutors [note separation of SAP and adjustment people]; small group counseling seminars take place as part of the comprehensive guidance plan. The guidance and special education departments deliver services to students to support student success and learning. Outside agencies are referred to where needed. The senior survey has resulted in positive ratings for the guidance services offered although student meetings indicated that some students felt the guidance office was not approachable. All students must be encouraged to take advantage of guidance services in a welcoming environment. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with department leaders, Meetings with school support staff)

Students, parents, and teachers indicate that the school health services provided are satisfactory and a variety of preventive health services and direct intervention services are offered. Participation in the referral system-

mandated services is an integral part of the school community as are ongoing health assessments for students. The preventive health services provide 10<sup>th</sup> grade health screenings in hearing, eye, and vision along with day to day intervention services. When appropriate, the nurse makes referrals to guidance, administration, special needs, and local primary healthcare services. There are currently 12 students on individual health plans. Emergency response guides are located on the walls in every classroom. CPR and AED training for all district staff is offered five times per year, training fifty percent of the staff so far. There are three automatic defibrillators on site. The health services have two preventive programs "Blood Pressure Program" and "Not on Tobacco." Staff program include Healthy Heart program, Weight Watchers, and a walking program. The nurse serves as a liaison to the School Safety Committee and to local and state health departments. School health services are delivered on a regular basis. Healthy students make better learners; however student record-keeping and visits are limited by a limited secretarial staff, which results in records not being maintained up-to-date. (Self-study, Facility tour, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with central office administration, Meetings with school support staff)

The library/information services program and materials are integrated in some areas of the school's curriculum and instructional programs. Services are provided informally to interest and "sought after" teachers, through e-mail and personal contact; through these contacts, the librarian works earnestly to integrate research skills with curriculum. The librarian has cultivated a welcoming and focused information center for students and staff members. Teachers and library staff members state that a draft form of a research rubric which is part of the information literacy curriculum and the mission statement is being phased into the social studies department during the 2007-2008 school year in a limited way. Other departments are expected to follow although there is no articulated time-line for any department. The librarian looks forward to further integration of this rubric throughout the school. Book purchases are made based on curriculum needs and wants. Library/information services are offered on a formal and informal basis to all staff members and students. Collaboration through the media center supports curriculum implementation in classrooms thus supporting the learning needs of students. (Self-study, Shadowing, Panel presentation, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with central office administration, Meetings with school support staff)

Teacher and library staff interviews show that the library/information personnel are knowledgeable in the curriculum area and actively support its implementation. The media specialist is certified as both a media specialist K-12 and in education. The American Association of School Librarians 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner standards are being used as the benchmark for the district technology literacy program curriculum integration. The knowledge of the library/information personnel facilitates student learning and curriculum integration in some areas. (Self-study, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with parents, Meetings with school support staff)

Sufficient materials, technologies, and other library/information services are responsive to the school's student population. These materials are available to students and faculty members and are used in some areas to improve teaching and learning. The library staff is providing materials, technologies and other library services on a daily basis. Materials are purchased to align with the curriculum. Teachers are targeted to use the materials. The students benefit by the recent expansion of the library and the resources contained within. The wealth of materials, technologies and other library/information services is actively enabling students and teachers to integrate various resources into their subject matter and research to improve teaching and learning. (Self-study, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school support staff)

Students, faculty, and support staff members have access to library/information services, facilities, and

programs as an integral part of their education experience, before, during, and after the school day. Students, teachers, and staff members have access to the library before school, during study halls (with a pass), free periods (seniors) during library lunch, and after school with the notable exception of the Evening Division. The Media Center is open from 7:00 – 3:15 everyday. After school many students use this area for homework, especially the athlete tutoring program. On average, seven classes a day used the Media Center, plus other students who come in during their free block or study halls in the main room. Seven classes also use the computer lab area. Class use depends upon the interest and willingness of individual teachers to incorporate research into their curriculum. However, student survey data from 2006-2007 indicate that 59% of students does not feel they use the library often during classes. Consistent access to the media center for all programs enhances student learning experience. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with school support staff)

The media center at TRHS provides a wide range of materials, technology, and other library/information resources available in a variety of formats. The media specialist has purchased many materials to attract students, including books on mp3 players. Circulation records show increased use of the media center by students and staff members. Both students and staff members believe that the library materials are up-to-date. Most students gain access to the media center through scheduled class time, ninth grade orientation, and use of the media center's computer lab. They also have access to the media center during study hall time and after school hours. Students and the school community access various resources readily available in the media center, fostering greater independent inquiry. (Self-study, Shadowing, Facility tour, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school support staff)

The media center has an adequate acceptable use policy for the access of computer technology by students. A signed acceptable use policy is required of all students, and their parents must sign a copy of this policy for students to access computer and Internet technologies. There is a filter in place to block selected Internet sites although this has caused some valid research sites to be unavailable. The library/media center has a policy for selection and removal of print and non-print material from circulation, but the policy should be revised to reflect current best practices. The media center collection selection is based on teacher requests, student interests, and curriculum. As a result, the opportunity for students to access up-to-date resources that apply to current studies and course offerings is acceptable. (Self-study, Facility tour, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school support staff)

TRHS provides a full range of education referral and special education services that comply with state and federal laws. TRHS has a special education evaluation and placement team (SEEPT) to coordinate student referrals made by teachers or parents. All school personnel and parents are able to monitor student progress using Power School. Special education teachers collaborate with subject-area teachers to make appropriate accommodations for students in need of services, and disseminate electronically the accommodation plans for each student. All subject area teachers are given opportunities to provide input and observations regarding student progress and are invited to attend all special education and academic support service meetings during the school day. As a result of this collaboration between special education, support services, and subject area teachers, students in need of academic and other support services are placed according to their individualized education plans, however. Special and regular education teachers have expressed concerns about the ratio of identified students within the inclusion model and have appealed to the administration for a change in practice. (Self-study, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school support staff)

## **Commendations**

1. The high volume of users and wide spectrum of services and programs offered through the health services department
2. The existing plan to upgrade existing technology on a five-year schedule
3. Support of the curriculum through the media center
4. The variety of library/media center learning resources that are designed to support student needs
5. The welcoming attitude and work ethic exhibited by the media center staff

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop formal program evaluation tools to garner feedback to improve services in the guidance department
2. Provide additional administrative support in the health office and the media center to maintain records and better serve the needs of students
3. Increase personalization of and access to services in the guidance area
4. Provide appropriate media center access for students participating in the Evening Division
5. Update the methods used for maintaining the library media collections
6. Increase seating in the media center to accommodate more than one class at a time
7. Evaluate the ratio of regular education to special education students in inclusion/co-taught courses to ensure that it complies with state and federal regulations as well as current research in best practice

## SUPPORT STANDARD

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# 7

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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

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

## Community Resources for Learning

### Conclusions

TRHS engages some parents and families as partners in their students' education and encourages their participation in school programs and parent support groups. TRHS uses the Internet with programs such as PowerSchool, the TRHS website and the use of e-mail to enable parents with computers to connect easily and directly with the school. TEN (Timberlane Educational Network) provides the community with access to information about meetings, sports, and theater events on television. The principal has recently initiated parent "coffees" once a semester, as another way parents are encouraged to become involved in the school. Parents of seniors work to facilitate a chemical-free after-prom party. Additionally, they have created a dress donation program to enable students in need to get a prom dress. Music boosters, who were instrumental in the development of the Performing Arts Center (PAC), as well as the sports boosters, and PTSA, provide additional vehicles for parental involvement. While these opportunities exist, survey results show that only one-third of the parents participate in school programs and organizations. To address the need to have greater parental involvement the administration and staff must direct more effort toward further parental engagement, particularly for parents who do not own computers. For the benefit of student learning, TRHS needs to continue to foster the partnership between ALL parents and the school. (Classroom observations, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with parents, Survey)

TRHS fosters business, community and higher education partnerships. TRHS is affiliated with many community business organizations, such as Plaistow Area Commerce Exchange (PACE), Pre-Engineering Technology Curriculum Advisory Council (PETAC), Atkinson/Plaistow Lion's Clubs, Raytheon, and other local businesses that provide athletic score boards and snow removal. TRHS is also working with diverse local organizations like the Safe and Drug Free Coalition (intervention programs), the Boy Scouts, and The Red Cross (blood drive). Some students are also engaged in the local community by performing community service projects as internships through the school. The existence of these partnerships supports the educational opportunities of TRHS students. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Facility tour, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school leadership team, Meetings with school support staff)

The present school site and plant do not adequately support all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. Although TRHS added a new wing in 2001 with 16 classrooms to accommodate the increase enrollment in the high school, expanded the cafeteria, and updated the science lab furniture and equipment, the school needs to provide more rooms appropriately designed for Special Education and Science as well as school-wide. There are sixteen Special Education teachers and only ten special education rooms. There are ten science classrooms for fourteen science teachers, and there are nine math classrooms and fifteen math teachers. There are similar statistics in other departments such as art and foreign language. Students are losing teaching time because teachers have to travel from classroom to classroom. Despite the expansion, the cafeteria now must support six lunch periods to accommodate all the students. This drives the schedule, and the lunch periods are short, barely giving students enough time to eat despite the implementation of four food stations to allow students to get their food quickly. The school needs to design and implement improvements in the physical education locker rooms (too small with too few showers), gyms (too small to handle two or more large classes engaging in movement-oriented activity), and the weight room (wall repair needed). It needs to provide more meeting rooms, especially for guidance and special education. More classrooms are needed in most of the academic areas; for example, currently, there is a science class meeting in a shop area. There is a problem with vehicle traffic congestion in the mornings and afternoons outside the school, creating what might be a safety issue. Student learning in the areas noted is

compromised by the inadequate present facility. (Classroom observations, Shadowing, Facility tour, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school leadership team, Meetings with school support staff)

Most of the physical plant and facilities at TRHS are in compliance of the local fire, health, and safety regulations, but there are ADA mandates that must be fulfilled. There are three Life Pak defibrillators in the school with most of the coaches and numerous others trained in their use. A sprinkler system and fire extinguishers throughout the school brings it into compliance with fire regulations. In accordance with the Fire Chief and State Fire Marshall, chemicals and flammable liquids are stored in approved locations. There are materials safety data sheets (MSDS) for all chemicals available to personnel, including the nurse, teachers and staff members. New security cameras have been added on the roof and near entry doors as well as new external lighting. A new roof was added last year on the old part of the school which has alleviated the majority of leakage and mold problems. Braille system signage has been posted in the school. Some of the school has been made handicapped accessible, but the sinks, counter-tops and cabinets in the special education rooms are not in compliance with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates nor are all the bathrooms and all the doors compliant. There are persistent heating and ventilation problems. There is a safety concern regarding the fact that the announcements on the intercom in case of emergency situations cannot be heard in all rooms. TRHS must complete its efforts to bring its physical plant and facilities into compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and to be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations to facilitate the safety of all students and personnel and to support the curriculum and give students the opportunity to meet the expectations found in the school's mission. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Facility tour, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with school support staff)

Equipment at TRHS is properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when necessary, although the addition of more computers in the classrooms, more laptop computers, and more equipment would further enhance the quality of education. Many classrooms would benefit from the addition of computers other than just that of the teacher in the classroom, making them available for student use so that technology could contribute to instruction. There are currently three laptop computers available in the Library and there is a high demand for them. The science department has one computer for every two students. Regular maintenance of technology equipment is done on a rotating schedule (five-year cycle). The Maintenance Direct Software Program is used by the faculty and staff to manage work orders to maintain the computers. Microscopes and Pasco Measuring and Data System with Clean Harbors handles chemical waste disposal once a year. A paraprofessional in the science department is responsible for maintaining its supplies and inventorying its equipment. The media specialist, in conjunction with the library assistants, monitors and maintains the audiovisual equipment via both a school and a district bar-coding system. A formal inventory of all the equipment owned by the high school and repair records are maintained at the SAU. The district technology coordinator and her in-school staff maintain the information technology equipment, including software licenses. Repairs that cannot be done in-house are outsourced. Increased technology and equipment needs to be added to TRHS to create better educational opportunities for all students. (Self-study, Facility tour, Teachers, Meetings with teachers)

Neither funding nor building and site management are adequate to ensure appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant. There is currently one daytime custodian from six to ten-thirty in the morning with another coming on at ten-thirty. There are six evening janitors. Cleanliness, maintenance and daily repairs are needed. The bathroom floors and sinks are not clean, nor are they fully functioning. The waste cans are over-flowing with trash on a Sunday after vacation; there are stalls where the doors did not close properly and the waste receptacles in the women's bathroom are falling off the bathroom stalls, and there is no door at all on the toilet in the girl's locker room. In the men's locker room, hot water is being used in both faucets of the sinks and also in the toilet. Several water fountains in the hallways do not work properly or are

broken. The dumpsters are located directly outside the cafeteria kitchen, allowing insects to enter the kitchen. In the home economics kitchen, there are ants crawling all around the baseboard. In the science labs, some sinks are not fully functioning and they are filled with debris. Additionally, the gas jets do not work properly in all the labs and, in one case are plumbed incorrectly, thus posing a safety hazard necessitating the system to be entirely shut off which is detrimental to learning. Despite work being done to improve the heating and ventilation system and the addition of a new roof, more maintenance must be done to solve the problems. Areas of the roof still leak and the heating and ventilation systems still work unevenly. Although there recently was a work order method of tracking and prioritizing problems implemented for the staff to use, it is often not currently leading to change due to funding and capacity. It is imperative for safety reasons and the morale of the students and teachers that continuous attention to maintenance, repair and cleanliness of the school be provided. (Classroom observations, Shadowing, Facility tour, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with department leaders)

There is no capital improvement plan for the next five to ten years to effectively meet the needs of the current and future programs, facility, and technology. Congestion with traffic in the parking lots is a safety issue that needs to be addressed. A grant has been applied for in relation to this called "Safe Routes to Schools". Currently, there is a strategic planning committee comprised of community members, administrators from district schools and students to anticipate and plan for future needs in the district. The district has recently hired a consultant to help in planning. TRHS needs are addressed every year when the principal submits a prioritized list of needs gathered from all the departments within the school to the superintendent. The budget is presented to the district budget committee, and a determination is then made as to what can be accomplished within the budgetary constraints of that particular year. A capital improvement plan needs to be developed to meet the current needs and improve the quality of life and education at TRHS. (Self-study, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with parents, Meetings with school leadership team)

The current budget is not adequate to maintain facilities, provide additional space, the appropriate programs, supplies and materials at TRHS. Two modular classrooms, a new wing and expanded cafeteria space have been added, but more are needed to support an adequate education. At TRHS, the average spending per student (\$8,822) is lower than the state average (\$9,431). The self-study indicates that supply shortages such as paper and other materials exist before the end of the school year. Furthermore, the inadequate funding is corroborated in a survey where sixty percent of the staff feels that the physical plant is not conducive to education. Limited resources prevent staff members from properly meeting the curriculum, instructional, and assessments needs of students. (Classroom observations, Self-study, Shadowing, Panel presentation, Facility tour, Teachers, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with students, Meetings with parents, Meetings with department leaders, Meetings with school support staff, Survey)

Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the budgetary process. The school budget at TRHS begins at the school level. It is a needs-based budget in which the teachers provide a list of justifiable needs to their department leaders. Usually in September those leaders forward their proposed budget to the principal. The principal analyzes and organizes these budget requests and combines them with additional requests for facility needs and staffing and submits them to the superintendent, who reviews them. The principal and superintendent meet and make adjustments to the proposal before presenting it to the budget committee and school board in early October. A collaborative budget process contributes to alignment of spending with critical building needs. (Self-study, Panel presentation, Meetings with teachers, Meetings with department leaders, Meetings with school leadership team)

## **Commendations**

1. Active support of the music boosters in inspiration for and creation of the PAC
2. The support and involvement of the members of the community provided by local businesses
3. The collaborative budget process

### **Recommendations**

1. Comply fully with ADA handicapped access.
2. Increase technology and equipment
3. Provide a facility and faculty that support all aspects of the curriculum that exists today and will be needed in the future and meets the needs of all student learners
4. Complete all repairs to the roof
5. Immediately address all health and safety issues including ADA regulations and cleanliness
  
6. Investigate and propose solutions for school safety issues related to traffic congestion outside the school
7. Develop, fund and implement a plan for maintenance and on-going repairs of the facilities
8. Develop a new five to ten year capital plan for improvement of the facilities
9. Provide consistent funding for supplies

## ***FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES***

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 60. 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 wishes to express its gratitude for the quality of the self-study and the pre-visitation effort and for the hospitality that was afforded during the visitation. All of the accommodations were thoughtfully arranged and the warmth conveyed by the Timberlane Regional family is recognized and acknowledged.

***Commission on Public Secondary Schools***

**Appendix A**

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- ◆ available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities
- ◆ available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance
- ◆ level of funding
- ◆ school day and/or school year
- ◆ administrative structure, including the number of administrators and supervisors
- ◆ number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- ◆ number of support staff
- ◆ student services
- ◆ the use of distance educational programs or courses
- ◆ educational media services and personnel
- ◆ student enrollment

- ◆ grades served by the school
- ◆ the student population that causes program or staffing modification(s), e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency.

## Appendix B

### Visiting Team Members

Mr.	Richard	Kraemer	Retired Principal	137 Carpentier Farm Road	Morrisville, VT 05661
Ms.	Colleen	Meaney	Souhegan High School	412 Boston Post Road	Amherst, NH 03031
Mr.	Eugene	Connolly	Concord High School	170 Warren St.	Concord, NH 03301
Ms.	Tina	John	Belmont High school	221 Belmont Avenue	Belmont, MA 02478
Mr.	Stephane	Debovzy	Glister High School	32 Leslie O. Johnson Road	Gloucester, MA 01930
Ms.	Sandra	Samaha	Masconomet Regional High School	120 Endicott Road	Topsfield, MA 01983
Ms.	Michelle	Heath	Fall Mountain Regional High School	134 FMRHS Road	Langdon, NH 03602
Mr.	David	Rea	Laconia High School	345 Union Avenue	Laconia, NH 03246
Mr.	David	Hardy	Stevens High School	175 Broad Street	Claremont, NH 03743
Ms.	Carol	Brown	John Stark Regional High School	618 N. Stark Hwy.	Wears, NH 03281
Mr.	David	Cook	Billerica Memorial High School	35 Boston Road	Billerica, MA 01821
Mr.	Peter	Weaver	Winnacunnet High School	1 Alumni Drive	Hampton, NH 03842
Mr.	Matt	Do iron	Sanford High School	52 Sanford High Blvd.	Sanford, MA 04073
Mr.	Wayne	Ogden	Franklin Public Schools	355 E. Central Street	Franklin, MA 02038
Ms.	Jean	D'Orsi	Methuen High School	1 Ranger Road	Methuen, MA 01844
Ms.	Stephanie	Hassapes	Merrimack Valley High School	106 Village Street	Penacook, NH 03303
Mr.	Mark	MacLean	Portland High School	284 Cumberland Avenue	Portland, ME 04101