

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

DEER ISLE-STONINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Deer Isle, ME 04627

October 25-28, 2009

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of Deer Isle-Stonington 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 (60) days of its completion to the superintendent, school board, public library or town office, and the appropriate news media.

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Those standards are: *Teaching and Learning Standards*

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

Leadership and Organization

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Commission's visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the

findings of its own self-assessment and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Commission in the follow-up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit – The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Deer Isle-Stonington High School, a committee of eight 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 students, parents, school committee members, and members of the community.

The self-study of Deer Isle-Stonington High School extended over a period of twelve school months from September 2008 to October 2009. The visiting committee was pleased to note that all members of the school community viewed the NEASC accreditation process as valuable and important. The school plays a critical role in life on this Maine island and members of the school community were very willing to work together to help improve Deer Isle-Stonington High School.

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, Deer Isle-Stonington 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 13 educators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Deer Isle-Stonington High School. The Committee members spent four days in Deer Isle, Maine, reviewed the self-study documents that had been prepared for their examination, and 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, teachers, and building administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Deer Isle-Stonington High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 36 hours shadowing 13 students over two days
- a total of 23 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 20 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 section 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 that will make a decision on the accreditation of Deer Isle-Stonington 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 Deer Isle-Stonington High School

A mission statement that was crafted by community members guides Deer Isle-Stonington High School (DISHS). "Launching life-long learners and responsible citizens able to keep our island vital," is so much more than a catch phrase at DISHS – it is who they are and what they do. The mission, which was adopted in 2005, is proudly displayed in classrooms, on the school's website, on the program of studies, and on the DISHS letterhead. More importantly, this same mission is embraced by the district's elementary school, and it also serves as the foundation for the school district's five-year strategic plan. Community and school committee members, teachers, students, and administrators are strongly invested in this mission statement – and it is beginning to manifest itself in decision-making within the school and within the school district. Changes in course offerings, graduation requirements, and teaching practices are samples of areas impacted by the mission statement. DISHS can carry the mission statement's level of importance and positive impact to higher levels by formalizing a process for regular review and revision, ensuring that the communities' voices are heard by actively engaging all stakeholders in that process, and by making public how the mission statement guides decision-making.

The curriculum is the formal plan by which the school will achieve its mission. It is a contract between the school and parents and students. At present, DISHS does not have a formal, written, school committee approved curriculum in all content areas. Within the district's five-year strategic plan are academic preparation goals and intended outcomes that state:

- *The curriculum includes a variety of coordinated learning opportunities, with a focus on programs that teach real life skills: ethics; parenting; budgeting; reading; writing; problem-solving*
- *The curriculum focuses on strengthening in students the characteristics of ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and independence*
- *The program provides the opportunity for all students and their families who want to succeed at higher education to do so...*

These goals and outcomes cannot be realized until there is at the very least a written grade 9-12 curriculum, and, at best, a K-12 curriculum. Without such a curriculum, it is like two business entities entering into a contract without specifying the terms and conditions.

Without such a curriculum, it is also like those same two businesses agreeing on a contract but failing to sign that document. Without such a curriculum, there is no binding agreement as to what it is all students must know and be able to do before they leave Deer Isle-Stonington High School. Put very simply, it is not a good way to do business. The school is well aware of this glaring omission. They can cite external factors that may have hindered the development and adoption of the written curriculum. These range from uncertainties in the state's effort to move forward with school unit reorganization and consolidation (now a moot point as the citizens of the State of Maine voted in favor of retaining the law that supports this) to the loss of a curriculum coordinator position. DISHS now needs to move thoughtfully and with a sense of urgency beyond why curriculum development has not occurred to when it will occur. Curriculum along with assessment will be the cornerstones of their standards-based diploma system.

Over the past ten years, DISHS has drifted somewhat aimlessly in the absence of strong and consistent leadership – both within the principal's office and among the teaching staff. As a result of the hiring of the current principal over two years ago, there has been a very noticeable sense of direction and purpose at DISHS that very clearly focuses on student

learning. Professional learning communities were established so teachers could have dedicated time to talk about teaching practices. What strategies work well in helping students to learn? How can educators design teaching so the school's mission is fulfilled and learning is personalized? How can instruction be framed so students are involved in real-life activities and have numerous opportunities to problem-solve? How do *what* teachers teach and *how* they teach assist all students in becoming clear and effective communicators? Does the teaching help these students set and achieve goals? Under the current school leadership that consists not only of the principal but also of teacher leaders, these questions are being addressed most noticeably among teachers who deal with freshmen. When these practices expand to all grade levels, the teaching staff will truly become a community of learners and all students are sure to benefit.

The work at DISHS that has gone into the development and implementation of the school-wide expectations (uniquely known as SWEs) is outstanding. The level of detail in explaining each expectation, whether it is academic, social, or civic, and the accompanying rubrics show a very careful and deliberate process that aims to have all students meet or exceed those expectations. The alignment of these SWEs with the school's mission statement is equally clear. The teachers and administrators at DISHS very purposely limited the implementation of these expectations to the present Class of 2013. It will be interesting to watch how they review and revise these expectations based on freshman student performance – and how the use of these SWEs improves both curriculum and instruction. Again, if the level of thoughtfulness and deliberation that went into the development of these expectations and rubrics is also used in determining their effectiveness, there are certain to be some changes that benefit all students. Teachers and administrators must also expand their use of assessment to monitor student achievement in areas such as state and national standards. Granted, the mission of DISHS is “launching lifelong learners and responsible citizens able to keep our island community vital,” but they must also realize that those same

students are part of a broader, more global society. How do the school and DISHS students fare in achievement in reading and math in comparison to other students? How can staff members use that data to make informed decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment? How does the expanded use of assessment data relate to the standards-based diploma?

Support of Teaching and Learning at Deer Isle-Stonington High School

As stated previously, there are some very positive changes taking place at Deer Isle-Stonington High School as a result of steady, focused, and visionary leadership. In the book Making Sense as a School Leader (Ackerman, Donaldson, van der Bogert, 1996), the authors describe successful principals as "...problem solvers, decision makers, vision seekers, and relationship builders with and for their school communities." (p.3) They further state that, "Principals need to ask continually if the school's work fulfills its basic purposes and mission." (p. 2) Both of these descriptors aptly characterize the current principal. He has collaborated with teachers to keep the focus on student achievement. Meaningful and long-lasting school improvement necessitates giving voice to those impacted by changes: students, teachers, and parents. As more members of the school community begin to see the positive results of their work as reflected in improved student achievement, then participatory leadership will become a reality.

The student body at DISHS has many diverse needs, and the school has in place a variety of student support services to meet those needs. Whether one student is choosing to continue the family tradition of lobstering or another is going to venture into higher education – DISHS has resources and programs tailored to those different choices. As stated in their self-study, the "delivery of services is based on the belief that students come first..." and that such services should enable all students to "navigate the complexities of the world." There are two areas that need attention so that the school can deliver on these promises.

First, the health services: currently, a school nurse is available at the high school on a limited basis to provide responsive services such as treating an illness or injury. The limited availability of health services personnel to provide preventive care – especially in the areas of substance use and abuse – works counter to the belief that “students come first.” Secondly, students today must have effective, reliable, and regular use of technology to support their learning. Teachers must be trained to integrate that technology into their teaching and their curriculum. Progress has been made in improving technology, such as with the increased availability of computers, but there must be an up-to-date infrastructure to maximize use of such tools.

The Community School District #13 School Committee and the citizens of the communities served by Deer Isle-Stonington High School are to be commended for their support of education. With the many challenges facing these communities – the downtrend in the economy that impacts the tourism trade, the increasing regulations on the fishing industries, and spiraling costs and reduced wages – the education of students at Deer Isle-Stonington High School remains a priority. These are communities who must shoulder the burden for funding education from property taxes as they receive little in state funding – yet school budgets pass each year. Students and teachers at DISHS are very fortunate to have such supportive community organizations and partnerships as the Island Education Foundation and the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, to name but two, to enrich the education experience. The arts play a very important role on these islands, and one need only to visit the Reach Performing Arts Center at the nearby elementary school to learn this. This facility was made possible by the generosity and commitment of the residents of Deer Isle and Stonington. But protect those investments and demonstrate their importance and value by ensuring that all school buildings and grounds are well maintained and clean and contribute to a healthy and safe learning environment for all.

Without exception, each member of this visiting team commented that Deer Isle-Stonington High School is a very special place – one in which teachers and students form very special and meaningful relationships. The hospitality that was shown to the visiting team members by everyone with whom they came in contact left a very favorable and memorable impression. This is a place to which we would all like to return some day – not only to fully enjoy the breathtaking scenery, but also to learn that this wonderful high school is quickly on its way to becoming one of the premier high schools in the State of Maine. It has the capacity to become that place.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

SUMMARY

Deer Isle-Stonington High School is located on the northern end of the island of Deer Isle, which contains the towns of Stonington and Deer Isle and is reachable by automobile over a high, narrow suspension bridge. Fishing and its related industries (i.e. marine trades) are the mainstay of the economy. An active fishing fleet works the waters of Penobscot and Jericho Bays amidst the schooners, yachts, canoes, kayaks and other pleasure crafts of summer visitors.

Deer Isle is a rural area about thirty six miles from Ellsworth, the closest full service city, and is situated at the end of a peninsula that extends into lower Penobscot Bay in Maine. The island is approximately fifteen miles long and three miles wide and is known for its breathtaking scenery. Deer Isle-Stonington and the surrounding communities uniquely reflect the proud and diverse heritage of coastal Maine. A sense of tradition and a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency characterize the island's working economy. This community's economy is based on a traditional fishing industry and people here demonstrate entrepreneurship and a daily commitment to hard work.

The year-round population of the island is approximately 3,028. The Deer Isle-Stonington community is not ethnically diverse but, rather, increasingly diverse in career and income levels. Traditionally, the primary occupations have been fishing and related marine businesses, crafts, construction, and tourism. The three largest employers on the island are Billings Diesel & Marine, the Island Nursing Home, and the Community School District. Most of the other commercial ventures are small or seasonal businesses often in the service industry that employ fewer than fifteen people. A large number of people are self-employed. The island has attracted a wide range of artisans, performers and craftsman. Writers, photographers, artists and musicians add to the creative mix and often share their talents at public events.

The economy of the Deer Isle-Stonington and surrounding communities is changing. Declining resources in certain areas of fishing and an increase in new state and federal regulations are reducing opportunities in the fishing industry. There is a growing population of artists, professionals, retirees, and summer residents. Shore property and real estate values have steadily increased making it difficult for some local families to maintain possession of their shore property and for young people to afford to stay on the island because of the resulting increase in property taxes.

Many individuals and private organizations are extremely supportive of our students, either by volunteering in their area of expertise or with financial support. The Island Education Foundation was established in 1994 to provide increased financial support for educational opportunities for Deer Isle and Stonington residents. To accomplish this, IEF seeks to stimulate and support the efforts of school personnel, parents, local organizations and other citizens to develop educational activities and experimental programs that expand and enhance the standard academic curriculum. Haystack Mountain School of Crafts is an international craft school located on Deer Isle. The school offers intensive studio-based workshops in a variety of craft media including clay, glass, metals, paper, blacksmithing, weaving, woodworking and more. Programs range from weekend workshops to two-week sessions and are open to all ranges of experience. Many students from the high school participate in the studio-based learning program and follow-up mentorships. The building of the new elementary school with the Reach Performing Arts Center has also afforded students many enriching opportunities previously not available such as participating in theatrical productions, technical training, musical performances and increased exposure to visiting artists. Additionally, Opera House Arts, a community based performance and arts organization, has ongoing projects in live performance, senior exhibitions, movies and community forums that involve the students and greater community.

Of the 178 students enrolled at Deer Isle-Stonington High School in 2007-2008, 31% are receiving either free or reduced lunch. Families with incomes below the poverty level make up

roughly 38.5% of the school community population. The median household income for 2007 was \$35,600 for Deer Isle and \$31,300 for Stonington. The Maine average median income was \$45,888 and the Hancock County average was \$44,127 for 2007. The unemployment rate is 6.2% for Deer Isle and 5.9% for Stonington. There are two schools in the district, Deer Isle-Stonington High School and Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School. The total student population of the district is 413 (178 high school and 235 elementary school). The per student expenditure for Deer Isle-Stonington High School in 2006-2007 was \$9,683.58 compared to the state average of \$8,039.18. The percentage of local taxes going toward school funding for the two years of 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 was 85% for Deer Isle. The percentage for Stonington was 58% and 68% for those two school years. To our knowledge, one island high school age student attends another public high school and there are no students attending non-public high schools. Thirty-eight non-resident students attend the high school as tuition students.

The high school facility was built in 1974 for students in grades 9-12 from both island towns, as well as for tuition students. Junior high school students were moved into the facility in the fall of 1980 and moved out in February 2000 when the new elementary school was built behind the high school creating a campus complex that includes the Reach Performing Arts Center. One hundred seventy-eight students attend the high school of which 38 students are non-resident youth from six off-island public elementary schools and they pay tuition through school choice. The average dropout rate for the past two years has been 5% - or about eight students per year. The student body is made up of 97% white, 1.5% black and 1.5% Hispanic population. The professional teaching staff is comprised of sixteen full-time and four part-time teachers (19.2 FTE). There are 176 instructional days in the year plus 8 professional days and 1 parent/teacher conference day for a teacher calendar of 185 days. The school has a 4 x 4 (80 minute) block schedule with an average class size of 10, and a student-to teacher ratio of 10:1. The average student load for teachers was 70 students for the 2006-2007 school year (35/semester). Approximately 25% percent of the student body is enrolled in special education

courses. For the 2007-2008 school year, fifty-one students were enrolled in upper level Honors and A.P. classes—A.P. Calculus (4), Honors U.S. History (12), Honors Language Arts 12 (12), Honors Algebra (8), and Honors Language Arts 10 (15). The Hancock County Higher Education Center (ASPIRE Program), Hancock County Technical Center, and I-TV courses are all educational opportunities available to students and the community.

For the 2008-2009 school year, teachers will have one hour every other week during x-block to collaborate with other teachers in small teams. These teams will create the graduation portfolio component of the standards-based diploma. This will be implemented with the freshman class for the 2009-2010 school year. NEASC work teams, the leadership team, X-block/ professional learning communities, literacy team, and team teaching are all examples of small learning communities and teacher collaboration. Two hundred and thirty five students are enrolled in the elementary school that graduates to the high school. The average high school daily attendance rate for 2006-2007 was 93.36% males and 94.33% females. The dropout rate for both 2006-2007 and 2005-2006 was 5%. Fifty-six percent of the student body participated in curricular and co-curricular activities for the 2007-2008 school year.

End of semester awards assemblies are vehicles used to recognize highest academic average, most improved, perfect attendance and any other significant achievement that a teacher chooses to recognize. End of the year activities include an honors banquet to recognize students that have maintained honor roll status for the school year and induction of new National Honor Society members. Seniors are recognized for their accomplishments during their high school career at seniors' last assembly, prior to graduation. Sports awards ceremonies recognize athletes for their achievements.

At present the SAT is the only form of standardized achievement test being used to measure student performance. The average SAT scores for 2005-2006 are:

	School Average	State Average	National Average
Critical Reading	397	443	503

Mathematics	425	444	518
Writing	386	435	497

SAT scores for 2006-2007

	School Average	State Average	National Average
Critical Reading	406	466	502
Mathematics	433	465	515
Writing	391	457	494

Follow-up data on the class of 2007 show that 44% attended four-year colleges; 0% entered military service; 12% pursued fishing careers; 10% pursued other skilled or semi-skilled careers; and 5% are unknown at this time. Twenty-nine percent are enrolled in a business, technical, or community college program. Post-secondary education is increasingly attractive to students. More and more local families are recognizing the value and importance of post-secondary education and want to send their children to college, but it continues to be financially difficult for many families.

Over the past two years, local resources have contributed approximately 76% of the funding for the school budget. State resources have contributed 17%, federal money contributed 4%, and funding from other sources has contributed 1%. The percentage of the local property tax dedicated to school funding has stayed at 85% for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 for Deer Isle and increased from 58% for 2005-2006 to 68% for 2006-2007 for Stonington.

To satisfy graduation requirements, students must earn 23 credits with 15.5 required credits and 7.5 elective credits, as well as complete 40 hours of community service. In February 2007, the CSD #13 School Committee passed a strategic plan and in August 2008 they endorsed the implementation of a standards based diploma. The CREST (Communities for Rural Education, Stewardship and Technology) program, arts integration, the Great Maine Schools Partnership's iWalkthrough protocol, NWEA/MAP testing, Literacy team and the SAT (student

assistance team) are all recent school initiatives. CREST, PERC (Penobscot East Research Center), LINC (Learning in Community), Opera House Arts, Haystack, and the Healthy Peninsula Project are all examples of school and community partnerships. There are also community/business connections through the School to Work Program.

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS**

**MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS
FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT
LEARNING**



DISHS



... launching lifelong learners and responsible citizens able to keep our island community vital

-Mission Statement adopted November 2005

DEER ISLE-STONINGTON HIGH SCHOOL Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Academic Expectations

Students are Creative and Practical Problem-Solvers

Students are Clear and Effective Communicators

Students Set and Achieve Personal Goals

Social Expectations

Students Contribute to a Safe and Respectful School Environment

Students Demonstrate Independence, Responsibility, and a Sense of Ownership

Civic Expectation

Students are Responsible Citizens

1 MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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 identify and define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that are measurable and 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.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of the Deer Isle-Stonington High School (DISHS) Mission was a process that expanded beyond the requirements set by NEASC as the district tried to write a statement that encompassed the beliefs held by the schools within Community School District#13 and also served as the guide for the district's five-year strategic plan. Thus, "Deer Isle-Stonington Schools: launching life-long learners and responsible citizens able to keep our island vital," was approved by the school committee in November 2005. Concerted efforts were undertaken to involve students, parents, and community members throughout the mission adoption process. The Deer Isle-Stonington School Committee approved the document entitled *CSD #13 Strategic Plan FY 2007-2012* on February 6, 2007. This plan is divided into three parts: vision, mission, and goals. The work to produce a mission as required by NEASC served as the impetus to frame the entire district's strategic plan. (self-study, website, school committee)

Residents of Deer Isle, Stonington, and the surrounding communities served by the high school place great value on the true Down East, Yankee character traits of independence, self-sufficiency, ingenuity, and entrepreneurship. Those same values are mirrored in the school's mission statement which further proclaims that Deer Isle-Stonington High School students will receive an education that allows them to "succeed at whatever they choose, by offering a variety of learning opportunities and teaching real life skills, strengthening the characteristics of ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and independence..." and to help those same educated students "... build and sustain the island's future." This mission comes to life whether watching a student learn to repair a skiff in the school's industrial technology center, use web design software to upgrade the school's website, work independently on line to complete an advanced mathematics course, or create a mural in the school's lobby. At DISHS, the mission statement is not a placard adhered to classrooms walls but rather a way of life and teaching on this Maine Island. The mission statement is viewed as the capstone on a pyramid that also includes DISHS's school-

wide expectations (SWEs) and the school and district's vision as the base of the pyramid. The district's strategic plan is the overarching vehicle that will give further shape and function to the pyramid. This graphic representation is the visual by which the school is working toward its own improvement and fulfillment of the mission statement. (students, teachers, self-study, panel discussion, student work)

The school's academic, civic, and social learning expectations are measurable and reflect the school's mission. DISHS's mission of "launching life-long learners and responsible citizens able to keep our island vital" is reflected in DISHS's establishment of six school-wide expectations (SWEs) for their students. The six SWEs were established through the melding of the school vision, mission, and Maine's Guiding Principles as articulated in the Maine Learning Results. The DISHS staff met, examined the guiding principles, and then extracted essential words from the Guiding Principles, which were then developed to become the school's own six school-wide expectations. Also involved in this process were students and parents. The school is beginning to implement the expectations with their freshman class (the Class of 2013). The faculty has agreed that for each freshman course, there will be an assessment that will cover one or two of the SWEs. Once an assignment / assessment has been developed, teachers review it during their professional learning community (PLC) time. After an assessment has been reviewed by the PLC, it is then presented to the principal for his approval. There are three academic school-wide expectations, and the faculty has agreed that each course will cover at least two of those expectations. In the coming years, all courses at all grade levels will also be responsible for addressing two of the three academic expectations. The academic SWEs are evaluated through the school-wide rubrics, with which the students are familiar, as teachers take the time to explain these to their students. These rubrics are detailed and comprehensive. They consist first of a cover sheet that offers a clarification / expansion of the concept. For example, for the school-wide expectation that students are creative and practical problem-solvers, the

document states, “When presented with a problem, students engage in inquiry to define, analyze, and prepare suitable solutions to the problem,” as well as further clarifying sentences. It also lists key terms; for example, “inquiry: to ask a question to investigate and gain information.” There are then benchmarks listed within the actual rubric. For the problem-solver example, this progresses from defining the problem, planning, process, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. For each of these, there are clearly written descriptors explaining what it looks like for “does not meet,” through “exceeding” the expectations. Lastly, it explains that for each course taught at DISHS, there will be one summative assessment to be used as a source of evidence for successful completion. All students are expected to meet or exceed the expectations prior to graduation. The work that has gone into the development of these school-wide expectations and all of the accompanying information provide a very clear and concise document to be used by teachers, students, and parents as the school works to fulfill its mission and expectations. (self-study, teachers, principal, students)

The social and civic school-wide expectations are also in the process of being fully implemented. The social and civic SWEs also have very detailed rubrics following a similar format as used in the academic expectations. For example, the social expectation that “students contribute to a safe and respectful school environment” is clarified with additional information that “every school community member is entitled to a safe and supportive environment regardless of gender, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, learning style, or political affiliation.” Key terms are listed as well as a variety of progressive benchmarks. These benchmarks have very clear descriptors for each of the categories of achievement. DISHS also lists the sources of evidence for assessing the attainment of social and civic expectations as careful monitoring of disciplinary referrals, involvement by students on committees and groups, and successful completion of the graduation requirement for community service. DISHS has dedicated time and work into the development of these school-wide expectations, and the detail

within these documents should contribute to greater understanding by students and parents as to the school's expectations. The expectation is that all students will demonstrate proficiency (meet or exceed the expectations) for each of the school-wide expectations prior to graduation. When the student has demonstrated such proficiency, the evidence is collected within the student's graduation portfolio. (self-study, school-wide expectation document, teachers, principal)

The school-wide academic, social, and civic expectations are in their infancy. The faculty and administrators at DISHS were very deliberate in implementing the SWEs first with the freshman class. They have agreed to monitor carefully the implementation and to make adjustments as needed this school year before they expand implementation to the other grade levels. Since the implementation, some other teachers at other grade levels have voluntarily offered to use parts of these documents for the academic expectations within their classes. Members of the school community have also noticed significant improvement in student conduct at Deer Isle-Stonington High School as a result of "spelling out" what good behavior looks like within the social expectations. Therefore, although these expectations are just being phased in, they are already having a noticeably positive impact on the culture of the school. (school-wide expectations document, teachers, students, self-study, school committee)

The mission statement and school-wide expectations for student learning are becoming embedded in DISHS. The students, staff, and some of the community members are aware of the mission, vision, and school-wide expectations. Students may not be able to relate what a specific document says, but they do know what is contained in the documents. Students report that the language of the documents is becoming part of the instruction and assessment in their courses. The teachers are purposely including this language in the assessments. The community was mainly responsible for the language used to craft the school's mission statement, and community members were active participants in writing the vision and school expectations. Students were also on those same committees. The mission, vision, and school-wide expectations are guiding teaching and student learning and procedures, policies, and decisions made by the school. To a

lesser extent, in policy development, the board uses these same documents. Even though the documents are new, they are becoming part of DISHS's culture. (students, parents, community members, self-study, standard committee)

DISHS has plans to review its mission statement every five years. They also plan to review the school-wide expectations in the spring 2010 and then on an annual basis after that. It is not clear how the school will actively engage students, parents, and community members in that review. The members of DISHS clearly acknowledge that the mission and expectations for students learning are “a work in progress,” and they publicly state that those documents will be reviewed and modified on a regular basis. The school has a carefully crafted improvement plan that presently outlines two goals focused on student graduation rate and demonstrated proficiency in meeting the school-wide academic expectations. Accompanying these goals are five strategies to help realize them. DISHS acknowledges that it uses only a limited number of assessments to gauge student attainment of the academic expectations. The primary source of assessment is the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) tests, and faculty members are just beginning to review and analyze that data to monitor student performance. Noticeably absent is any connection or interpretation of student performance on the state required Maine High School Assessment (MHSA) and the school’s academic school-wide expectations. Although the MHSA is used to determine a school’s status in making adequate yearly progress (AYP) in reading and mathematics as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), a close review of that data by administrators and faculty members can point to strengths and areas needing improvement at both the student and school level in meeting state and national standards. The use of iWalkthrough data (a software program that monitors instruction and its impact on student learning) provides useful information on the extent to which the school is fulfilling its mission. Currently lacking is a comprehensive and systemic process to track the attainment of the academic expectations in all content areas. When the school has expanded its use of assessment

to include formative and summative assessments, and trains all faculty members in the review, analysis, and interpretation of data, then the school's mission and expectations will take on significantly greater importance. (self- study, teachers, principal, school leadership team, standard subcommittee, community members)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The well-articulated mission statement that very clearly captures the values and beliefs of the communities served by DISHS
2. The common use of the mission statement by all schools within and the district and by the school committee in its strategic plan
3. The obvious connection inherent in the mission statement between the school and island life
4. The hard work by all members of the school community to provide rich detail within the school-wide expectations
5. The thoughtful and deliberate implementation of the school-wide expectations with one grade level to allow for further review and revision
6. The noticeable improvements in school climate as a result of the clear expectations for student conduct within the mission and expectations
7. The willingness by DISHS faculty members to expand the school-wide expectations to other grades voluntarily

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formalize the plan to review and revise the school's mission and expectations on a regular basis and include all members of the school community
2. Make public the ways in which the school committee uses the mission statement in its decision-making

3. Expand the use, analysis, and interpretation of data to ensure the school's mission is reflective of student needs, community expectations, and state and national standards
4. Design and implement a process to collect and share exemplars of student work

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 the curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the most critical needs for Deer Isle-Stonington High School (DISHS) and for Community School District (CSD) #13 is the development and adoption of a written comprehensive K-12 curriculum. Currently, work has been done only within certain subject areas, and that is in its very initial stage with the exception of mathematics. During the NEASC reaccreditation visit, a number of reasons were given to account for the school's failure to complete this requirement for accreditation. The first reason was connected to the uncertainty of the future of school consolidation. School leaders and members of the governing body were unsure if CSD #13 would be required to merge with other neighboring school districts and if those same school districts would be supportive of adopting the DISHS curriculum. A second reason faulted the vacant curriculum coordinator position that came about as a result of a retirement when the position was not refilled as a cost saving measure. In sum, they just did not do it. Without a clearly written curriculum that precisely shows the progression of skills and knowledge that all students will have access to, that integrates the school-wide learning expectations, cites instructional strategies used by teachers to help students successfully acquire those skills and knowledge, and lists the assessments that will be used to measure progress – the school cannot fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. (self-study, administrators, teachers, documents review)

Faculty members and administrators are well aware of this void in their quest to maintain accreditation and, as mentioned earlier, some progress has been made. For example, all curriculum areas have identified those school-wide academic expectations stated in the school's mission and expectations for student learning for which they are responsible, but they do not have the means to assess the attainment of those expectations. In freshman English, an assignment is given with the intent of measuring the school-wide academic expectations through a teacher-designed rubric. The expectations are clearly posted on classroom walls, and students are aware of these expectations through teacher discussion. Admittedly, the faculty has stated that although freshman courses have identified expectations, they do not have the means to assess progress in meeting those expectations. Even though most freshman teachers have begun identifying the expectations in their curriculum, teachers at other grade levels have only individually experimented with aligning their curriculum. Not all content areas at all grade levels have clearly shown how their courses and their curricula align with the school's mission and expectations. Although each curriculum area is able to identify the school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible, those same curriculum areas do not have the suggested assessment techniques to monitor progress in the attainment of those expectations. (self-study, teachers, principal, curriculum documents)

The faculty members at DISHS have only recently (2007-09) produced the school-wide expectations (SWEs). However, it is clear that teachers and administrators are committed to the process of articulating these expectations and affording all students sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve the expectations. This is evidenced by changes in graduation requirements, which will lead to a standards-based diploma beginning with the class of 2013. The addition of a learning center and the expanded student assistance team also demonstrate the school's willingness to give each student sufficient support to meet these expectations. Students comment that teachers are readily available to provide additional support to help them meet the expectations. Therefore, even though DISHS does not have a written and aligned curriculum,

students still have opportunity to practice and achieve each expectation, albeit undocumented.

(self-study, teachers, students, principal)

In the absence of a written and school committee adopted curriculum in all content areas, it is difficult to project how the school will progress to implementing a standards-based reporting system. Few teachers have written curriculum, let alone written curriculum that prescribes content, integrates relevant school-wide learning expectations, suggests instructional strategies and suggests assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics. Those teachers who have written curriculum have admitted that their documents are outdated and that they do not necessarily align with the current school-wide expectations. Teachers need a written curriculum to integrate relevant expectations, suggest instructional strategies, and suggest assessment techniques, all of which will positively impact student learning. (teachers, self-study, principal)

The informal curriculum used by the DISHS staff members gives students the opportunity to engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. There are also examples of authentic application of knowledge and skills in the CREST (Communities for Rural Education, Stewardship, and Technology) class, the marine resources classes, technology classes, many other teacher-designed assessments, and in the senior exhibition project. In a psychology class, students were given an assignment to go to the mall and observe and record the effects of personal space. Students also have the opportunity to engage in authentic application through the many community projects/experiences that are initiated by teachers and administrators. Although students are given the opportunity to engage in authentic application, inquiry, higher-order thinking, and problem-solving, these learning skills are not evident in all academic areas. As a result, not all students are given the opportunity to see the relevance of their learning and to learn and practice higher level thinking skills. (teachers, student work, community members)

Currently, DISHS teachers' academic programs emphasize breadth over depth. In classroom observations conducted over three days, many teachers were observed attempting to

cover a breadth of material rather than focusing on the depth of understanding by the students. Student assignments were occasionally more focused on depth versus breadth, but with no written curriculum, the amount of this emphasis is unclear. Without a formally written and adopted curriculum in all content areas that clearly outlines course-specific learning goals, there will be wide variances in the emphasis of depth of understanding. (classroom observations, student work, teachers, administrators)

DISHS provides many opportunities for all students to extend their learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus. In the current school year, senior students are able to pursue areas of interest in the community through their senior exhibition projects. Students also perform community service, such as volunteering with the local fire department. Some examples are CREST class members who have the opportunity to travel, freshmen who participate in team-building activities off-campus, and all students who have the opportunity to become involved at the Reach Performing Arts Center or the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. Students have an opportunity to become a certified nurse's aid through the adult education program, enroll in Hancock County Technical Center, or take online AP courses through the AP4All program. As a consequence, these opportunities allow students to explore learning outside of DISHS in order to gain experiences outside of their small community. (self-study, teachers, program of studies)

Effective curricular coordination and articulation is marginally evident between and among some academic areas within the school. Teachers and administrators are using professional development time to evaluate the limited current curriculum work; however, very little time has been set aside to look at the alignment within the high school curriculum and that of the sending schools. The administration has set up biweekly time for staff members to meet as professional learning communities (PLCs) to review portfolio tasks and to examine student work. A leadership team has been set up to deal with such academic issues as personal learning plans and the emerging standards-based diploma. There is very little formal coordination

between and among the sending schools in the district. The high school principal and the elementary school principal both see and understand the need for such alignment, but the reasons mentioned earlier for not developing a formal K-12 curriculum also serve as explanations here. The superintendent cites the same roadblocks preventing vertical coordination. Without horizontally or vertically aligned curriculum, students are not guaranteed a comprehensive education K-12, however, and there is no clear way to monitor the existing curriculum at the high school to determine if all subject areas are sufficiently covering the state required Maine Learning Results. (building principals, superintendent, self-study)

Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers are adequately equipped with instructional materials, supplies, and resources to allow for the implementation of their curriculum despite recent budget limitations. The librarian is satisfied with the present supply of materials, supplies, equipment, and resources. Progress has been made in providing more technology for use by both students and teachers to enhance teaching and learning. The increased availability of computers supports the curriculum, yet teachers still cite concerns about the reliability of the technology infrastructure. As a result, teachers are able to deliver what they have as a curriculum to their students without worry of inadequate materials, technology, supplies, facilities, staffing, and library/media resources. (teachers, self-study, principal)

The staff and administration are aware of the limitations of their curriculum and the need to formalize the alignment with the academic expectations of the school's mission statement. Currently, most of the work in this area has been done only at the grade nine level. Some teachers in the upper grades have independently introduced assignments and assessments that are aligned with the school's mission and school-wide expectations. What are needed are a very clear plan, a very specific timeline, and the support for all teachers including professional development in curriculum design and assessment at all grade levels to complete this work. Until

this is done, there will be students who do not meet all of the school expectations for learning.

(self-study, teachers, administrators)

The school has committed little time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. Money was given to the school by the Island Education Foundation and from the district budget to send five staff members and the principal to the Maine Principals' Association-sponsored DuFours conference this fall and to conduct a leadership team retreat this past summer. To develop and implement the comprehensive K-12 curriculum, there must be a district-wide plan that dedicates sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to accomplish this task in an effective and expedient manner.

(self-study, principal, teachers)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The principal's leadership in attempting to drive the curriculum alignment process
2. The principal's support for curriculum change by providing time for teachers to align their curriculum to the school-wide expectations
3. Teachers' acceptance of the process of change to better their school and learning for students
4. The efforts to integrate technology into instruction
5. Teachers' dedication to enriching curriculum by encouraging authentic application of knowledge and skills and encouraging the use of the island's resources for learning
6. School committee support of instructional materials, supplies, and resources in light of the recent budgetary restraints
7. The school's implementation of the learning center and expansion of the student assistance team to help students meet school-wide expectations
8. The numerous opportunities students have to extend their learning beyond the school campus

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Update current curriculum documents to clearly align with the school-wide expectations
2. Ensure the development of a comprehensive written curriculum that will be closely aligned with the school-wide expectations for learning and will also be used as the basis for the standards-based reporting system
3. Develop a written curriculum that prescribes content, includes course-specific learning goals, suggests instructional and assessment strategies including the use of school-wide rubrics at all grade levels
4. Develop a written curriculum that emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage
5. Expand identification of school-wide academic expectations in current curriculum to all grade levels
6. Continue efforts to integrate technology into curriculum
7. Develop vertical alignment of the curriculum
8. Provide professional development to assist staff members in curriculum design and assessment

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 programs shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.

8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

CONCLUSIONS

Teachers at Deer Isle-Stonington High School (DISHS) employ instructional strategies that are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Although the school's mission and vision statements have only recently been revised, interviews with students and discussions with faculty members show, for the most part, that the mission and vision statements guide instructional strategies. Recently, school-wide rubrics were introduced into freshman courses to assess the academic expectations of the mission and vision statements. The initiation of professional learning communities (PLCs) allows for the ongoing discussions of instructional methods related to assessing the school-wide expectations. A modified four-by-four block schedule (some 80 minute classes—some 40 minute classes) allows teachers the opportunity to employ different instructional strategies. Interviews with students and faculty members indicate that teachers allow students the opportunity for personalized instruction and challenging coursework. These opportunities allow teachers to employ instructional methods consistent with the mission and expectations, thereby enhancing student learning. (self-study, teachers, students)

Instructional strategies at DISHS personalize assignments and allow students to be engaged as active and self-directed learners. There are fewer opportunities for students to make connections across disciplines, engage in higher-order thinking skills, and promote depth of understanding, self-assessment, and self-reflection. There is often some assignment choice at DISHS. For example, art students are given general guidelines for an assignment and then are

allowed to use their personal touch to create the final project. Personalized instruction and students as self-directed learners are strengths at DISHS. A CREST (Community for Rural Education, Stewardship, and Technology) student, for example, was given an open-ended research project where he researched, organized, and portrayed in a poster “The Deer Island Boys” who crewed the America’s Cup yacht at the turn of the century. Although not clearly offered to all, some students at DISHS engage in higher order thinking skills. For example, a student in an AP calculus class calculated the volume of a vase using the regression feature of the calculator and integral calculus techniques. Another example of students engaged in higher-order thinking skills is an English exercise that requires students to analyze *Hamlet*. This exercise requires students to journal as they read *Hamlet* reflecting on different literary aspects of the play. There are also examples of science courses using math concepts such as statistics, graphing, and algebra. Higher order thinking is also exemplified in the social studies assignment entitled “Colonial Essay.” This assignment requires students to analyze the different conditions in three major geographic areas of English settlements in America. The industrial arts program and the marine science programs also make connections with history, science, and math. Students in marine science and physics designed and constructed an electric boat, and students in marine science are conducting experiments to see if there is a connection between the color of a lobster trap and the number of lobsters captured in that trap. Students in the industrial arts program create authentic projects on a daily basis. Several examples include the making of library conference tables, construction of skiffs, guitars, and furniture utilized throughout the school. Students also constructed the CAD (computer assisted drafting) tables in the design room where one student explained the need to construct the table on an angle to facilitate 2-D drawing. There are examples of students given the opportunity to self-assess and self-reflect. The foreign language classes allow the students opportunities twice per quarter in the domains of reading,

writing, listening, and speaking. Teachers at DISHS employ instructional strategies that provide the opportunities for students to be active and self-directed learners. Opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking skills, cross-curricular assignments, the promotion of depth of understanding, and the use of self-assessment and self-reflection can be found to a lesser degree. When all teachers in all courses increase the opportunities for all students to engage in higher order thinking skills and to be involved in practical, integrated activities, then DISHS will move closer to fulfilling its mission. (self-study, students, teachers, classroom observations, student work)

Teachers at DISHS use and gather feedback from students, administrators, colleagues, and students to improve instruction. The principal utilizes an iWalkthrough program and protocol (hand-held observation tool offered through The Great Schools Partnership) on a regular basis to assist in the evaluation of each teacher at DISHS. He provides feedback to the teachers regarding his observation. Peer teachers have also used this tool on a limited basis. All teachers report that informal feedback is received from students on a continuing basis. Teachers solicit input from students at the end of each teaching period and several times during the course of a semester. Parents are given an opportunity to provide input on their child's instruction during parent teacher conferences conducted twice a year. It is a school policy that all teachers must provide a copy of their course's syllabi and that parents are required to sign the syllabus and the student return it. Students praise their teachers for providing extra help when needed. One student said that she had called her math teacher on a weekend and obtained help from that teacher. Teachers at DISHS are very committed to meeting students' educational needs. Many teachers also mention the use of journals to obtain student feedback. Clearly, the use of feedback allows teachers at DISHS to improve instruction, providing a positive impact on student learning. (self-study, students, teachers, principal)

Most teachers at DISHS are experts in their assigned area of instruction, are current as to best practices in their discipline, and are informed on best practices. Many teachers are members of their professional/discipline organizations and are kept abreast and current in their area of expertise. A significant percentage of DISHS teachers have achieved master's degrees. Teachers at DISHS take advantage of many opportunities to attend professional workshops, seminars, and conferences. This is also true of those opportunities to address cross discipline training and technology. Although the self-study indicates a relatively low level of confidence by students (68%) that teachers know material for classes, students seemed satisfied that teachers are knowledgeable in their discipline. Outside sources are used to supplement the educational experience of students as when DISHS partners with the Kennedy Center of the Arts to enhance literacy and the NY Yacht Club for America's Cup history. The Island Education Foundation supports DISHS financially, especially the mentoring programs. The school also takes advantage of educational activities outside the school such as Haystack Mountain School of Craft. Teachers reflect upon their practices and often modify/fine-tune instruction based on those reflections. The faculty members at DISHS take advantage of opportunities to maintain currency in their field of expertise by regularly attending workshops and maintaining memberships in professional organizations. Clearly, teachers at DISHS are engaged in maintaining currency in their teaching practices so they can provide a quality education to students. However, when faced with a teaching vacancy, the school often finds a limited pool of candidates. There have been times when a teacher has been hired who may not have full certification to teach within a certain content area. Although these instances may be rare, and done to ensure that there is a teacher within a classroom, more diligence in hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers would ensure high quality education for all students. The district also has the responsibility to track new hires and veteran teachers to ascertain that they are working toward the proper certification or

recertification within the guidelines set by the State of Maine. Without such a procedure in place, the school and district are not in compliance with state and federal regulations, and the quality of education may suffer. (self-study, teachers, personnel records)

Teachers at DISHS discuss instructional strategies as a means to improve student learning and to improve their craft. For example, cross-discipline and multiple discipline offerings appear in the applied physics course taught by the physics and marine sciences teacher and the CREST program. These offerings require teachers involved to discuss strategies and desired outcomes. DISHS has instituted an X-block class that allows teachers to collaborate in PLCs one block a week. This program engages students in activities outside the traditional classroom, freeing teachers to meet during the regular school day. The plan is that this time will be devoted to opportunities for teachers to investigate instructional strategies. Although there are some informal discussions of instructional practices and that time has been dedicated during the X-block, the small size of DISHS makes it a challenge for professional dialogue to take place between teachers. Teachers have indicated a desire for additional opportunities to meet and further the dialogue between staff members to discuss instructional topics. Thus, additional opportunities for collaboration among staff members to discuss instructional strategies would contribute to every teacher's potential to offer the best instruction possible. (self-study, teachers, principal)

Most staff members embrace the value of technology in supporting and enhancing education at DISHS. However, there is a fundamental question: "Do we believe DISHS students must have sufficient access to technology to support and enhance their education?" If the answer to this is "yes," the district has an obligation to fund and maintain such technology. The four aspects of technology that must be addressed are: equipment, infrastructure, training, and support. Without all four of these aspects being addressed equally, the effective use of

technology to enhance the education of DISHS students is in jeopardy. There is a common feeling among staff members and students that although they are appreciative of the improvements that have been made with technology, until there is a very deliberate, focused, and committed effort to boost the facilities infrastructure and to sufficiently educate all teachers in best practices to help them use that technology to enhance teaching and learning – the efforts will fall far short of expected outcomes. Many staff members have received training in the use of technology and are prepared to utilize this training when confidence in the support of technology is in place. The conditions described are a result of both insufficient equipment and equipment insufficient to support the use of technology at DISHS, and the school has an infrastructure that is antiquated and in need of modernization. Clearly, unless all aspects of technology are addressed, efforts to enhance education with that technology will be limited. (self-study, classroom observations, teachers, students, committee meetings)

Professional development used to enhance instructional practices at DISHS is aligned with and guided by the strategic plan outlined in the mission document. School committee members and the administrators fully support the professional development of the staff. While some teachers felt the in-service portions of staff development limited, they are given frequent chances to attend seminars and workshops outside of the school. Teachers have attended professional development in the area of literacy. Members of the literacy team model specific activities. These activities provide the teachers with opportunities to enhance instruction. This literacy staff development has been provided for teachers during the summer with the goal of understanding and analyzing NWEA scores. Teachers have mentioned they use this data to improve and adjust instruction. Although there are some professional development opportunities in the area of technology, teachers have expressed a need for more opportunities. The goal of the staff is to enhance the integration of the available technology into the classroom. The CREST

class is an example of a technology-based course at DISHS. Students and instructors attend weeklong summer institutes to gain greater knowledge in the areas of GPS, GIS, and web design. Because of staff development, teachers at DISHS are given some opportunity to adjust and improve instruction. (self-study, teachers, principal, strategic plan, school committee)

The teacher supervision and evaluation process at DISHS is used to improve instruction and enhance student learning. Teachers are evaluated on a five-year cycle of reflection and evaluation that supports professional growth. During the cycle, teachers are evaluated on domains—two of which are directly related to instruction—Planning and Preparation and Instruction. A two-year professional growth plan requires teachers to set goals, where at least one of these goals has a measurable impact on student learning. Teachers report that the principal informally and formally evaluates the faculty. Even though the principal reports he formally evaluates one teacher once per week, several teachers have commented that he visits their classrooms more frequently. While there is an informal process for mentoring new teachers, the lack of a formal and structured program leads to inconsistencies in the induction and orientation of teachers new to DISHS. The principal comments that a significant portion of the evaluation process is devoted to instruction. As a result of the evaluation process, teachers are given the opportunity to improve instruction and enhance learning. (self-study, teachers, principal)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The use of school-wide rubrics to enhance instruction and student learning
2. The use of PLCs to improve instructional strategies
3. The use of the CREST class to enhance instructional strategies

4. The support of the school committee and administrators for staff development
5. The evaluation process as a tool to enhance instruction
6. The link between instructional strategies and the mission and expectations for student learning
7. The time earmarked on a weekly basis, X-block on Wednesdays, for teachers to participate in PLCs and training
8. The initial efforts by teachers to increase their understanding of how technology can support teaching and learning
9. Cross - curriculum opportunities for students offered in multiple courses
10. The willingness of faculty members to participate in professional training and workshops
11. The reflection by teachers on their teaching and their seeking feedback from many sources
12. The focus of the teacher supervision and evaluation process on improved instruction that includes the use of iWalthrough

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase the opportunities for all students to engage in higher order thinking skills in all classes
2. Provide the opportunity for all students to make connections across the curriculum
3. Provide the opportunity for all students to self-assess and self-reflect
4. Provide more staff development in the area of technology
5. Enhance in-service professional development to improve instruction
6. Provide a formal system for mentoring new teachers

7. Develop and implement a plan to improve and modernize the technology supporting infrastructure
8. Utilize the time allocated to PLCs to address and offer opportunities to further the use of current practices and to dialogue with colleagues on best practices.

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.

9. 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 rubric.
10. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations.
11. For each learning activity, teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed.
12. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.
13. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
14. 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.
15. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies.
16. 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.

CONCLUSIONS

DISHS is in the initial stages of assessing school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations. The faculty has started this process with the freshmen (Class of 2013). All students in this class are required to demonstrate proficiency in meeting each of the three academic, two social, and one civic expectations that comprise their school-

wide expectations. There are clearly developed rubrics that outline each level of achievement for each expectation. This process is applicable only to grade nine at this time, and it will expand to all grades over the next three years. Implementation has begun in ninth grade but not in all tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. The upper grades are only formally exposed to the school-wide expectations (SWEs) by a school-wide writing rubric and during their senior year by way of the senior exhibition. By expediting the process of introducing the SWEs to upperclassmen, more students will have an opportunity to benefit from them as well. Once this process is institutionalized, the school will have a vehicle to determine its effectiveness in helping students to meet the school-wide expectations. (self-study, teachers, principal, school leadership team)

DISHS developed its social and civic school-wide expectations (SWEs) in January 2009. The faculty members plan to collect and analyze data related to these expectations every spring. The administrators will collect data relevant to the rubrics from the discipline referrals, community service projects, co/extracurricular rosters, and other means once the data is gathered and processed. The entire staff will review it during meetings at the end of the year. This review process will determine the future steps for the next year. Although the school's professional staff has yet to fully use the recently created rubrics as an assessment tool, an annual plan is in place to implement and measure the success of the school on achieving its civic and social expectations. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

Teachers apply the school-wide expectations to both formative and summative classroom assessments, reinforcing their relevance and helping students become familiar with the vocabulary of assessment. Each learning outcome is very specific and detailed. They provide:

- a) clarification/expansion of concept;
- b) definition of key terms (as they are applied to Bloom's Taxonomy in the rubric);
- c) benchmarks, as defined in the corresponding rubrics; and
- d) sources of evidence.

Teachers utilize Bloom's Taxonomy even when doing formative assessments and

assessing the students' knowledge and understanding. In an English class, the teacher facilitated a quiz on the chapters that were read for homework. Before she started her questioning, she asked the students, "We are starting the quiz with the bottom level of Bloom's Taxonomy, which is what?" The students answered, "Basic Recall." "Correct." answered the teacher, "Now mark the question as 'Recall' on the quiz." When it was time for the next question she asked a student what the next level would be, and was answered, "Interpretation." "Correct, good!" answered the teacher. "What do you mean by interpreting?" This questioning took place during a freshman class which is the first graduating class that is going to be required to demonstrate mastery of the SWEs. By daily review of the terms and definitions and applications to daily assessments, the students recognize the terms that are embedded in the school-wide expectations and accept them as a natural part of the teaching and learning process in that class. (classroom observations, teachers, students)

As of Fall 2009, teachers of freshmen (and some other classes) have begun to clarify the relevant school-wide academic expectations as they pertain to specific courses and how they will be assessed. DISHS Class of 2013 will be the first graduating class to have to demonstrate mastery of the new school-wide expectations of learning through the completion of a graduation portfolio. This work has begun already in the freshman English, social studies, science, and a few other select courses, by requiring the freshmen to demonstrate mastery of two of the school-wide academic learning outcomes. The freshman English class has just completed learning outcome #2: Clear and Effective Communicator, through the work done in their symbolism project, based upon their literary work The Outsiders. In math, students were involved with a "Lobster Landings" project demonstrating Learning Outcome #1, "Creative and Practical Problem-Solvers." All student work met the criteria outlined in Learning Outcome #2, and a few demonstrated mastery of Learning Outcome #1. The senior exhibition, which was piloted over

the past two years and is “high-stakes” for the Class of 2010, has a well-designed and articulated handbook that clearly states on the first page under Rationale for Senior Exhibition “Allow students to demonstrate independent achievement of the DISHS School-wide (Academic) Expectations #1, #2, and #3. When a student was asked to explain his CREST project and how it related to the school-wide expectations, he stumbled a bit; however, through guided questioning he found the answers in his product descriptor and accompanying rubric. (This student was a junior.) A teacher of freshmen commented, “Freshmen are now asking ‘Is this a ‘SWE’?” It has become evident in the pilot programs that teachers and students are on their way to embedding the school-wide expectations into the daily teaching and assessment practices. Further “refitting” of curricula and associated assessments to school-wide expectations and the advancement of this year’s pilot class, will further solidify the expectations into the newly developing climate of the school toward a standards-based diploma. (students, teachers, classroom observations, course descriptors, rubrics)

DISHS has several assessments in place, both formative and summative to gain snapshots of student knowledge and skills. These assessments are varied within and throughout the various disciplines. Placement in Title I reading is based on NWEA scores; MEA scores are used to improve math curriculum (pre-SAT); common scoring of a 6th – 8th grade writing prompt is used to inform 9th grade English curriculum; NWEA lexile scores are used to select 9th grade English books; TI Navigator is used in math to gather in-class formative assessment data to inform instruction during the lesson; informal question and answer sessions are held after a reading assignment, yet before the quiz to ascertain the success of giving the quiz at that moment or waiting on the summative assessment; computers are used in one class to enable the students to choose by which medium they want to demonstrate their mastery of the learning goals. Some students use iMovie to make a video; some use publishing software to make a brochure,

garageband is used to do voice-overs; Powerpoints are being made – all for the same project. Each class that was observed provided varied assessments. The CREST class varies assessment and teaching strategies just by the very nature of this unique interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning wherein the students design their own projects and determine their own final assessment, which is the culminating exhibit or demonstration of their topic. At the beginning of a semester, some teachers give diagnostic tests, student learning inventory surveys, MI (multiple intelligence) surveys, or just informal questionnaires asking, “How do you learn best?” to students. A consensus was found among the teachers that they want to integrate more technology into their classes and assessments; however, they do not feel confident in the reliability of the current technology available in DISHS. One problem with some of the assessment strategies for placement purposes is the level of buy-in of the students. One sophomore said, “If I had known what the NWEA was all about before I took it, then I wouldn’t have ‘blown it off’. Now I am stuck in the wrong reading class until I can take the test again in the spring.” Assessments are only as effective as the teacher allows them to be. If a student does not have a clear understanding as to why an assessment is being given and how that assessment connects to a specific learning goal or outcome, then the student will not take it seriously, despite all the teacher’s best efforts to create varied assessments. Technology is a means to provide variety in assessments, but if that technology is not always in proper working order, then both students and staff will approach the use of it with skepticism and fear, skewing the results of an assessment. (self-study, teachers, students, observations, administrators, panel presentation)

Teachers meet on a regular basis to share and discuss student work. Headed by teacher leaders, PLCs (professional learning communities) have been formed to share student work and to assess student learning in response to the proposed SWE and its connection to the course-

specific rubric. Teachers share a project, a rubric, get it 'approved' by their PLC and principal, then test it in the “lab” (classroom). Teachers then get student feedback on the rubric's efficacy either by informal or formal feedback (surveys after completion of projects) or assessment results. This then assists all teachers in further lesson planning. Teachers meet every other Wednesday during school time in PLCs for this sole purpose. During this initial stage of gathering peer feedback, the PLCs are grouped by discipline-specific criteria; i.e. science/math – related courses and humanities – related courses. This homogeneous grouping streamlines the feedback process as there is a minimal need for further understanding of the various disciplines. These PLCs have led to a greater understanding and clarification of the SWEs by the teachers, which will better enable them to communicate the expectations to the students. As the process of designing course-specific assessments becomes clearer, planning interdisciplinary projects to meet the SWEs will become easier in all and across all content areas. (teachers, students, self-study)

DISHS has a professional development plan to facilitate understanding of assessment strategies. Professional development is widely encouraged throughout DISHS and funding is supported not only by the district but also by outside community resources. According to all the teachers in the various teacher interviews, the principal encourages and supports the teachers' professional development endeavors. He passes along to them any course offerings and workshops that he becomes aware of. There are professional development workshop flyers hanging on the board in the teachers lounge. The Island Education Foundation, a non-profit group located on Deer Isle, and others fund and assist the district in their various professional development efforts. They provided funding this summer to freshmen teachers who worked to rewrite their course-specific rubrics to have them ready to implement when the Class of 2013 arrived in September. The ongoing support by administration and the local community of

professional development toward the goals of assessment of school-wide expectations sends a clear message to the faculty and students of the importance of the mission and its strategic plan. (teachers, principal, self-study, observations)

The staff is still in the process of formulating a plan to disseminate the two types of grades being earned: content-based and standards-based. Staff members realize that the new standards-based diploma program is a different way to assess and report. So, for the time being, they are still reporting grades for content-based assessments via their online portal, “Edline,” which parents with computers can easily access. DISHS faculty and administrators realize that there is still a large percentage of the community without computer access, so they also use the traditional reporting processes such as progress reports, report cards, and parent-teacher meetings and phone calls home. Various articles by the principal and others explaining the SWEs and their respective methods of measurement have been published in local newspapers. Some community members stated that they are well informed about the mission, vision, and strategic plan, and as a result, they enjoy helping the school with their achievements. This is a new process and a new concept to the students, staff, and community. Keeping open the lines of communication between all stakeholders is vital to the success of adhering to the school’s vision and mission of all students meeting the requirements of this new standards-based diploma. (self-study, teachers, administrators, community members, parents, newspaper articles)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The clear and concise rubrics that detail the expectations for learning
2. The plan which is in place to review the rubrics

3. The reinforcement of the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy through formative classroom assessment tying together the definitions of key terms in the school-wide expectations documents with the course-specific learning goals
4. The expansion of the school-wide expectations to incorporate them into high-stakes assessments such as the senior exhibition, thus embedding it into the culture of the school as a graduation requirement in this first year of its implementation
5. The use of varied assessments and their resulting data by some of the teachers to guide instruction
6. The already-established PLCs and commitment by administrators to their value and necessity
7. The support of administrators and the community and the desire of the faculty to pursue ongoing professional development to become more skilled in assessment
8. The "open-door" policy of the school towards the community; the continued use and improvement of the school website, local newspaper, and administrative communication to parents and community members

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Document that the plan to fully implement school-wide expectations to all grades is carried out as scheduled
2. Fully develop, implement, and analyze the methods by which the school tracks attainment of the civic and social expectations
3. Require that all teachers provide specific detail and clarity on assignments of the prescribed learning goal, relevancy, and connection to the school-wide expectations
4. Ensure reliable access to technology to assist in effective assessment practices

5. Provide sufficient training to all staff members to effectively use technology to monitor student attainment of the academic, civic, and social expectations
6. Ensure that all teachers receive professional development so they understand the clear distinction between assessment for learning versus assessment of learning
7. Provide training for all staff members in the review and analysis of data to determine strengths and areas needing improvement in curriculum and instruction
8. Provide more opportunities for teachers to teach and assess across disciplines so students see the interrelatedness of education
9. Provide a variety of means for parents to monitor their children's progress that take into account the home's access to technology and printed sources

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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 is characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices which support 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 assist's the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.

11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

CONCLUSIONS

Leadership at Deer Isle-Stonington High School (DISHS) has undergone significant changes over the last ten years. There have been five principals in that time. Such leadership instability has left the school adrift in its efforts to bring about meaningful school reform. However, the present principal, who took on the position in June 2007, has been instrumental in providing the stability, the drive, and the focus to collaboratively lead the school, not only in the development of a mission, but also in keeping student learning at the center of all school initiatives. He has been granted full authority by the superintendent and by the school committee to act as the instructional leader at DISHS and to work with faculty members to achieve the school's mission. The principal's job description states explicitly that the principal is the educational leader and responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the school. The superintendent views the principal as the instructional leader. The principal attests to feeling supported by the school committee and the superintendent. As a result, the principal is the driving force at DISHS who provides the clear direction necessary to lead the school as it strives to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, students, school committee, parents)

The principal is regarded by members of the school committee and the high school faculty as providing steady, focused leadership. In the first two years of his leadership, the principal has developed a shared vision focused on student learning through such initiatives as

the development of a leadership team, professional learning communities, and clearly defined school-wide expectations based on the school's mission. He has also taken the lead with the adoption of the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessment, senior exhibition, student portfolios, and a standards-based diploma initiative. He has brought stability to the disciplinary atmosphere by exercising clear expectations for behavior and consistent enforcement of the rules. For example, according to several students, it may not have been uncommon a year or two ago for a student to tell a teacher to “f*** off” with no teacher response or administrator disciplinary consequence. Today, in significant contrast, that student receives a swift, severe, and appropriate disciplinary response from the principal for such unacceptable behavior. In addition, the principal works with that student to assure that he/she understands why such behavior is not acceptable. As well, the principal clearly expects that the teacher will respond to such inappropriate behaviors and promptly report them to him. However, the student response on the Endicott College Self-Study Survey indicates less agreement on the impact of his leadership in this regard. When change is imposed on an established school culture, even when that culture is negative, there can often be a great deal of resentment and resistance. That may account for the disparity of results in the Endicott Survey. As a result, though students express some ambivalence, it is clear that the school climate is improving. (teachers, students, Endicott Survey, school committee)

The participatory leadership structure at DISHS allows faculty members to be regularly engaged in determining the direction of the school. The school administrative team (which consists of the principal, assistant principal, athletic director, student services director, and administrative assistant) meets weekly to consider issues involving scheduling, curricular/co-curricular activities, school climate, school improvement initiatives, and other administrative and operational concerns. The assistant principal chairs the individualized learning plan

committee, participates on the student assistance team, leads the weekly staff meeting, and coordinates the student school-to-work program along with carrying a regular teaching load. The director of student services and the athletic director both take active leadership responsibilities for various areas of academic and program management. Teacher-leaders and administrators work together to provide active and meaningful leadership at DISHS on such essential group work as the master scheduling task force, student assistance teams, literacy team, the school leadership team, and the work of the PLCs. This participatory structure facilitates communication, constructive discussion, and consensus decision-making. (teachers, administrators, self-study)

DISHS is developing both a structure and educational programs that reflect the mission statement, primarily by utilizing professional learning communities and designing curricula to enhance place-based and project-focused courses that support the Deer Isle-Stonington school vision. Two years ago, faculty-administrator working groups drafted school-wide expectations reflecting the school's vision and mission and the district's long-range strategic plan.

Professional learning communities were then formed to target “clear and effective communication,” and “critical and creative problem-solving,” standards as major focuses for instruction. Those standards formed the framework for the school's expectations for student learning and the standards-based diploma initiative. Other objectives of the PLCs include the development of a greater interdisciplinary and collaborative place and project-based curriculum such as CREST (Communities for Rural Education, Stewardship, and Technology), marine ecology and applied physics, a student magazine project, and collaborative and team-taught courses. The PLCs provide an essential mechanism for teachers to continue to seek avenues for greater interdisciplinary and collaborative curriculum and to improve all aspects of teaching. (administrators, teachers, school leadership team, self-study)

Inclusion and community are hallmarks of DISHS. DISHS has equitable grouping practices. The broad mix of students in the advisor/advisee program works to ensure that diversity and inclusion are an integral part of school life. Students are not tracked; classes are heterogeneous. For a school this size to have courses that range from AP Calculus to Marine Resource Technology is testament to the school and faculty's efforts to provide a variety of learning opportunities "to prepare students to succeed at whatever they choose." Most students with special needs are mainstreamed for much of the day, and regular education and special education teachers work to meet each student's individualized educational plan (IEP). While gender and socio-economic background are not major factors in student grouping patterns, girls and students from more affluent backgrounds have greater representation in honors level courses while more male students enroll in the applied programs. For the most part, however, student-grouping patterns at DISHS foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (school and community profile, self-study, classroom observations)

DISHS adopted a 4X4 block scheduling system four years ago to support the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and to meet the needs of its students and faculty members. An ongoing process that reviews and revises the daily schedule ensures that the schedule supports the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. Students carry a load of just three or four courses each semester to facilitate and encourage more focused learning. An hour-long X-block on Wednesdays gives students an opportunity to engage in an activity of particular interest while allowing the faculty to meet in PLCs. Modifications to the 4X4 block schedule have been implemented to further refine the schedule to meet individual course and student needs. The schedule at DISHS is driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and supports the effective implementation of the

curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (self-study, principal, teachers, leadership team, students)

The development and adoption of standards-based diploma requirements is an example of a collaborative and inclusive process that actively engages students, parents, and faculty in meaningful decision-making and ownership. Others include student course evaluations, freshman entrance and senior exit interviews, student council, PLCs, and the leadership team. The school committee has two student representatives as part of that governing body as the result of collaborative efforts by student representatives and the school committee to increase student involvement in decision-making. The principal actively encourages student, staff, and community participation through an open-door policy. Examples of welcomed participation include students' requests to increasing passing time between classes and, most recently, holding a pep rally for the girls' and boys' soccer teams and acknowledgement of the accomplishment of the school's golf team. The principal acted favorably on both, validating those students' voices in affecting decision-making in the school. While some formal roles in the decision-making process are provided for students and professional staff, there is a continuing need to widen the framework of participation, especially for the support staff and for parents. (self-study, panel presentation, principal, teachers)

With an overall student ratio of 10:1 and average student load for teachers of 39:1, DISHS enjoys favorable class sizes that generally enable teachers to meet the learning needs of the individual students in their classes. Such favorable student-teacher ratios and student loads are essential to helping and supporting students meet the school's academic expectations and fulfill their graduation requirements. (classroom observations, students, teachers, self-study)

An advisory program has been in existence at DISHS since 1988-89, "ensuring that students are surrounded by adults who inspire them to achieve and encourage them to take

positive risks and to learn from their mistakes.” Indeed, on the most recent DISHS survey, 71% of the students responded favorably to the statement, “I feel like there is at least one adult at my school, in addition to the guidance counselor, that I can talk to if I have a problem.” Every student is assigned an advisor upon entering the high school, and, whenever possible, the student and advisor remain together throughout the high school years. However, in interviews with students and teachers, there was agreement that the advisory program functions inconsistently and lacks clarity of purpose and function. Some students do not regularly attend their daily 15-minute advisory period, and some teachers do not take full advantage of that scheduled time to meet with their advisees in a meaningful way. There is a clear need for more specific direction and definition of this program. (self-study, Endicott and DISHS Surveys, students, teachers)

Collaborative practices are becoming established at DISHS and include all members of the leadership team and nearly all faculty members. With the impetus of the mission and vision statement and the strategic plan, there has been greater collaboration in the development of school-wide expectations and place-and project-based teaching and learning. The formation of professional learning communities makes it possible for all full-time staff members to work collaboratively. Several groups of teachers are engaged in team teaching projects, most notably with the CREST program, applied physics, and boatbuilding. (teachers, staff members, leadership groups, classroom observations, self-study)

The DISHS teachers and staff are involved in numerous, varied, and productive ways to support students’ learning and general well-being. Teachers and staff members serve on committees and task forces such as the student assistance team, graduation requirement workforce, community service opportunities, and the development of X-block activities, all of which are dedicated to student support and school improvement that are central to student success. They take their direction from the school's mission statement and school-wide

expectations and are important to the way the school is run. Students and parents report that all students can seek help from teachers and that teachers are willing to arrive early or stay late to meet with students. Parents commend teachers and staff members for their accessibility via personal contact, e-mail, and phone, and regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences. More than half of students responded that “my teachers spend one-on-onetime with me if I need it,” “my teachers are aware of my learning needs,” and “teachers are concerned about my learning.” (teachers, principal, students, parents, Endicott and DISHS Surveys, self-study)

Student success at DISHS is recognized in a variety of ways. An awards ceremony at the end of each semester recognizes student accomplishment in academic and co-curricular activities. An honor roll is published in the school paper, and student art and class projects are displayed throughout the school as well as on the school website. Student art is exhibited in an annual art show and at local galleries. The newly developed senior exhibition allows students to present their chosen projects to the community. Some students and teachers express concern that athletic accomplishments receive disproportionate recognition and value as compared with academic achievement. While student success at DISHS is acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed in a variety of forums, it could be done more equitably and frequently. (teachers, students, school tour, self-study, student shadowing)

School climate has been a central focus of the principal and faculty and staff members. DISHS policies are designed to recognize and support the dignity and potential of every student. Attendance and disciplinary policies are clearly set out in the student-parent handbook. Improvement in the overall school climate is noted by all stakeholders. Student and teacher responses on the Endicott Survey reflect continued concern about respect for teachers and - among students - respect for each other. Fewer than half the students report feeling safe at school. The principal is enforcing a code of conduct and using a discipline ladder centered on

personal responsibility and accountability that has resulted in increased disciplinary consequences including suspensions and expulsions for unacceptable behavior. However, there were numerous instances where student negative behavior went unaddressed as several members of the visiting team observed them. Whether this was an oversight by the teachers or intentional disregard is uncertain. However, continued improvement in the climate can only take place when all teachers consistently enforce the behavioral expectations and all students know that this will occur. The present focus is incrementally yielding a positive shift in school climate toward a sense of mutual-respect, pride, and ownership. (self-study, administrators, teachers, students, student shadowing)

The school committee has made “explicit and emphatic commitment to support the implementation and assessment” of the school’s mission and school-wide expectations for student learning. In 2007, it adopted a comprehensive strategic plan for CSD #13 calling for the annual review of the progress in achieving and implementing the seventeen strategies identified in the plan. Earlier this year, it approved the initiative for a standards-based graduation diploma policy beginning with the class of 2013. The school committee's commitment to its strategic plan and the school's mission and school-wide expectations for student learning are essential to continued and on-going school improvement at DISHS. (self-study, administrators, teachers, self-study, students)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The principal as the driving force for school improvement
2. The willingness of the staff to respond positively to improvement initiatives
3. The principal who provides steady, focused leadership with respect to the school’s objectives for student learning

4. The participatory leadership structure for teachers and administrators
5. The school's organization and programs that promote its mission and expectations
6. The increasing efforts to involve students and staff members in the decision-making process
7. The collaborative efforts by students and school committee members to increase student involvement in decision-making
8. The overall student-teacher ratio of 10:1 that enables teachers to meet the learning needs of students
9. The PLC structure that focuses on teacher collaboration for improving student learning
10. The noticeable progress in creating a safe, respectful, positive school climate
11. The steps taken by the school committee to support the implementation of the mission and expectations for student learning
12. The small school/close knit community that allows teachers and staff to know students well and support them

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue and expand the efforts to improve school climate by all faculty and staff members taking shared responsibility for enforcing student behavior expectations
2. Ensure effective training and resources for all advisors for full implementation of the advisory program to best meet the needs of all students
3. Expand and strengthen participatory leadership structure to include all stakeholders
4. Increase staff training in collaboration and team teaching within and among departments (including more meeting time) to better meet the school's mission in regard to its expectations for student learning

5. Work to promote equity of representation by gender and socio-economic background of students in honors classes and vocational programs.

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 school resources for learning 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 law.

CONCLUSIONS

“Deer Isle-Stonington Schools: launching life-long learners and responsible citizens able to keep our island vital.” The school's student support services reflect the mission and vision statements and expectations for student learning. The guidance department develops a master schedule to meet the students' needs in addition to providing individual and small group counseling to meet students' emotional and social needs. The library media specialist delivers training in database searching, website evaluation, and a curriculum-driven library collection. The special education department develops lessons using the mission statement and expectations for student learning as their guide. They support students through individualized educational plans (IEPs) and accommodations. The school nurse provides emergency care for all students and staff members, ninth grade student screenings for vision and scoliosis, as well as mandated staff trainings. (support staff members, teachers, self-study)

The school allocates adequate resources, programs, and services in some but not all areas so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. The self-study revealed that the guidance department with a staff of 1.2 counselors for 165 students conducts freshmen interviews, provides for post secondary planning, college visits, job shadowing opportunities, internships, individual counseling, and oversees the administration of PSATs, SATs, ASVABs. In addition, it assists with college search strategies, college applications, and scholarship information. Students have access to many clubs, organizations, and sports activities. However, the absence of a late bus prevents some students from receiving individual help after school and keeps some students from participating in co-curricular activities.

Health services at the high school are minimal. The Endicott Survey revealed that 42% of parents feels that preventative health initiatives are satisfactorily provided and 21% of the staff feels that health services are sufficient. The nurse is scheduled to be on the premises for 1.5 hours daily and is available for emergency care. The library media program and materials align with the curriculum. The library has a website with links for recommended reading, websites for research, information for citing sources and new

book lists, and posts the hours that the library is open to students and to the community. The state audit indicates a strong special education program. Limitations in after school transportation and sufficient personnel for health services do create inequalities in the school's delivery of services to fulfill its mission. (self-study, survey, parents, support staff members)

Programs and procedures are in place for student support personnel to enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff members, and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. Community volunteers serve as college career mentors by helping students write college essays and complete applications. Procedures are in place for formal and informal referrals for students who are at risk for failing or for those in emotional distress. Student referrals are handled by the school student services personnel, school nurse, or student assistance team who contact the appropriate services in school or off-island. These services include private therapists in Blue Hill, the Open Door Recovery Center for Substance Abuse in Ellsworth, Family Preservation, Community Health and Counseling, The Downeast AIDS Network, and the Penquis Dispute and Resolution Center. The library media specialist supports teachers and students by assisting in developing plans to prepare students for college, work, and community life.

Together, the library media specialist and teachers develop challenging lessons and/or projects using library resources and technology. The school nurse oversees the required blood borne pathogens training for the staff as well as arranging for CPR and AED training with the help of community resources. The school health coordinator promotes and provides wellness information on a variety of topics to students and staff and community members. The school health coordinator is involved in grant writing to promote wellness. Special education staff members coordinate IEP services as well as provide a list of accommodations to teachers. The two special education teachers and five educational technicians facilitate mainstreaming and ensure success by working in small groups in the resource room. Special education works with students and the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation to help with the transition to adulthood.

Other services available in the community include Island Family Medical Center, Kidspace, Blue Hill Memorial Hospital, and private mental health professionals. (self-study, teacher, students)

The principal evaluates student support services personnel. The staff members within the programs informally evaluate the programs themselves. The special education program is audited every five years by the Maine Department of Education, most recently in 2008. The audit indicated that the program provides adequate services and is compliant with state and federal laws. Student support service programs need to be evaluated by key school personnel and those whom they serve and revamped to support the school's mission. In the absence of such program evaluations, the school has no formal means to determine the extent to which these programs help the school fulfill its mission. (self-study, support staff members, principal)

There are systems in place 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. Communications include a weekly article in the local newspaper, informational letters from student services, e-mails from staff, the school website, and Edline. Edline is an Internet-based program for student grades, attendance, and class assignments that can be viewed by parents and students online. Other websites include the library media center and the high school sports network. The school nurse communicates by phone to parents regarding specific medical issues with their child and sends follow-up letters after screenings. All classrooms have telephones with voice mail to facilitate communications between school and home. (self-study, parents, community members, students, teachers)

Student records are maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law. All academic files are kept in the student services office in locked, fireproof cabinets. Health and immunization records are kept in a non-fireproof file cabinet in the nurse's office. Because health and immunization records are not totally secured in a fireproof environment, student records could be destroyed.

(self-study, support staff members, teachers)

The student support services personnel are certified/licensed to provide effective counseling, health services, special education, and library media services. The library media specialist and two special education teachers are state certified in their fields. The two counselors are LCSW certified. The student services director has taken additional coursework in college career preparation. The student services director works .8 full-time equivalent while the elementary school LCSW provides .4 full-time equivalent at the high school. This totals 1.2 full-time equivalent student services personnel. The school nurse is a registered nurse. (self-study, support staff, principal)

Deer Isle-Stonington High School provides 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; and appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students. The student services director meets with all seniors to explore college and career options. The student services office has the full-time equivalent of 1.2 counselors and .8 secretarial assistance. A referral process is in place for any student in need. Student services and the principal meet with each teacher/department annually to systematically review and revise course offerings and build a master schedule to meet these needs. The student services department is part of the 504 referral process. The student services staff is a part of special education department team. Student services personnel make referrals to off island mental health agencies. According to the Endicott Survey, 85% of parents trust that their children's guidance needs will be met. The Union 76 counseling/guidance program k-12 document provided does not meet the specifications to meet the guidelines under 071 State Board of Education/Commissioner of Education Chapter 125: Basic Approval Standards: Public Schools in School Administrative Units. In the absence of an approved comprehensive guidance plan/program, students'

social, emotional, and academic needs are not fully being addressed as outlined in Chapter 125. (self-study, survey, support staff, students, documents)

Deer Isle-Stonington High School's Health Services provide direct intervention services, mandated services, emergency response mechanisms, and ongoing student health assessments. The school nurse is shared with the elementary school and is scheduled to be at the high school 1.5 hours daily. Limited time means the school nurse is unable to provide preventative health services. The school nurse is on-call for emergencies. Therefore, students are unable to develop on-going, personal, trusting relationships with the school nurse. (self-study, support staff members, teachers)

The library/ information program is not fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. According to the self-study, integration of the library information program takes place approximately 10% of the time when teachers and the library media specialist collaborate on a unit. The library media specialist teaches information skills and provides instructional assistance on obtaining quality information on an individual basis approximately 90% of the time. The Endicott Survey indicates that 30% of students in grades 9-12 reports using the library often during class and that 44% reports that the library has materials they need. Additionally, 62% of the staff reports consulting with the library media specialist when developing or revising curriculum. Fifty-eight percent of the staff reports that their formal curriculum includes a library information services component. Not utilizing a fully integrated library/information program negatively impacts student learning and does not support the school's mission. (self-study, Endicott Survey, support staff members)

Library/information services personnel are knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation. The Endicott Survey finds that 62% of teachers reports using the library to develop lessons and use library information sources. Ninety-two percent of the staff reports the library media specialist is knowledgeable to assist them in their curriculum and instructional needs. (self-study, Endicott Survey, support staff members, teachers)

A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population is available to students and faculty members, and utilized to improve teaching and learning. The library has an adequate range of materials both in topics and reading levels. The library collection reflects local interests such as commercial fishing, books on “green” marine practices, and subscriptions to national art magazines. Videotapes and DVDs on curriculum related topics are available to students and faculty members. Audiobooks are available for students to borrow. In the initial survey, 60% of the faculty feels that student learning has been hindered by the unreliable and inconsistent availability of technology. Gains have been made since the spring of 2009 to provide better service. The school's technologies are improving, but to better serve the needs of students, more professional development time is needed to contribute to the full integration of technology into the classroom. Computers and technology needs are currently being assessed. In the absence of professional development, some staff members are unable to utilize technology effectively to support student learning. (self-study, Endicott Survey, support staff members)

Students, faculty, and support staff members 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. The library is open 7:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday – Friday. Students have access to the library during study halls, before and after school, and often during designated class time. There are twelve computer stations in the library for student use and eight study tables with 21 chairs for studying. Although the library loft area does not meet ADA codes or fire codes, students are still allowed to go into the area to get books. Students with disabilities cannot access the loft area, and if a fire were to take place, students would be in danger. (self-study, observation, Endicott Survey, support staff members)

The library/information services program fosters independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty members to use various school and community information resources and technologies. Students and staff are taught how to access online databases such as MARVEL, Maine's virtual library, for research

and inquiry. The library staff does book talks and requests items through interlibrary loan. Public service announcements, new book lists, and contests promote the library/information services program. (self-study, support staff members, students)

The school board has approved policies for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet. The Endicott Survey indicates that 66% of students reports knowing the school's policy about using the Internet. Library/information resources are selected with input from teachers and students and with the use of professional tools in support of the curriculum and reading interests. A formal policy in adherence with American Library Association guidelines is in place for the selection and removal of materials. (self-study, survey support staff members)

Deer Isle-Stonington High School provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. A 2008 state audit reports that the school provides a strong special education program. The Endicott Survey indicates that 40% of the staff is satisfied with their relationship with special education services. There is, however, a philosophical difference between regular education teachers and special education teachers as to how IEP strategies are developed and the manner in which they are carried out. The differences deal with the degree of support needed for particular accommodations. Because of this philosophical difference, some special education students receive mixed messages throughout the day, which may impact their performance. (self-study, Endicott Survey, teachers)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The variety of student support services to meet the needs of all students
2. The variety of activities and programs for students and the willingness of staff members to provide supervision for them
3. The amount of community support for activities that address the academic, social, emotional and

physical needs of students

4. The breadth of materials available in the library
5. The library hours for students and the community from 7:15 am to 3:00 pm Monday – Friday
6. LCSW counselors who are available to address the emotional and social needs of students

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure that all students have the opportunities to participate in after school programs and activities
2. Ensure that school support programs are being evaluated
3. Ensure that all student records are secure and safe
4. Ensure that health preventative services are available to all students
5. Ensure sufficient time for the nurse to be available at the high school to meet the Commission on Public Secondary School guidelines on health services
6. Ensure that the library's information program is integrated into the school's curriculum
7. Address the safety and ADA regulations for use of the library loft
8. Ensure that all teachers consistently implement required special education accommodations and that they comply with state and federal guidelines
9. Develop and implement a comprehensive guidance plan compliant with Chapter 125

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 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.
17. Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

The faculty at Deer Isle-Stonington High School has created an environment that encourages the involvement of parents and families in their

student's education. The high school website provides news and information about events going on within the school. The Edline Portal, which can be accessed from the website, provides the most current academic information for individual students and clearly states the school's mission statement. Deer Isle-Stonington High School provides opportunities for communication with parents with individual telephone extensions in each classroom that have voicemail capability and e-mail addresses for the teachers. Parent conferences are offered in both the fall and the spring. These efforts result in a positive relationship between school and home and allow DISHS to realize its vision that sees the school as "...a magnet for students and families..." (self-study, teachers, parents)

DISHS has fostered partnerships with businesses, institutions of higher education, and the community to create opportunities that enhance student learning. The CREST (Community for Rural Education, Stewardship, and Technology) and the marine resource programs develop skills and relationships between students and businesses in the community. The school-to-work program provides students hands-on, real-life work experience through work placements and job shadowing opportunities. Deer Isle – Stonington High School hosts representatives from different colleges and has made the opportunity for students to visit colleges a priority. The Island Education Foundation (IEF) promotes community involvement within the school through staff development opportunities, renovation projects, and extra-curricular academic projects through the provision of grants. IEF grants have been used to provide new science laboratory space (complete with locked storage areas, a vented fume hood, and work counters) and as a funding source for a variety of senior exhibition projects. The Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, the Deer

Isle – Stonington Historical Society, and other organizations have participated in class instruction and provided mentoring opportunities in the community. Annually, students attend an on-site three-day residency at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, which supplies the funding for this educational opportunity. The island community has provided funds for the creation of the Reach Performing Arts Center and the construction of a modern tennis facility that serves students and community members. Additionally, a local community member volunteered to provide input to the accreditation process. Deer Isle – Stonington High School has successfully fostered community relationships that support student learning. (self-study, school committee, students, teachers)

The Deer Isle–Stonington High School site and plant supports most aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. The renovation project, which was completed in the summer of 2007, improved the facility. A new roof was installed on three quarters of the school, a fire sprinkler system was installed, and the suspended ceiling and heating and ventilation systems were updated. During this school year, more improvements have included the installation of a modern boiler and hot water systems. An aging backup generator system is in place to power the heating plant during any power outage. The library has adequate spacing, lighting, and resources to support student learning. The marine trades and industrial arts spaces are suitable to meet the needs of current programs. The industrial arts facility has seen major improvements and constant maintenance that is sometimes turned into a personal learning experience for students. The 1,200 person capacity gymnasium with recently upgraded lighting is sufficient to meet the needs of the school and the community. The Reach Performing Arts Center located at the nearby elementary school is a state-of-the-art community

funded facility that provides performance space for a variety of high school activities such as the visual and performing arts as well as community performances. The Stonington Opera House works with participants from the community, elementary school, and high school to present theatrical shows during their Cabin Fever drama productions. Recently the Reach Center hosted a two-day residency with Zumix, a hip-hop group that facilitates a workshop that includes poetry writing, music and performances. Community-driven fundraising has allowed the on-site installation of tennis court facilities for physical education classes, athletics and community use. However, the condition of the surrounding athletic fields that have uneven bare and rocky ground continue to minimally meet the requirements for academic and athletic competition use. The modular building used for band and chorus classes is barely adequate for the 15 students currently taking courses in that program, but space limitations will severely impact any future growth of that program. The incoming middle school band and chorus students number 41 students who certainly will be adversely affected by the limited space. Creative organization has temporarily alleviated inadequate storage in the art room, but fixing one problem can create others. For example, teacher interviews reveal that art supplies are stored in the teacher's common area, decreasing available space that is intended for a different, specific purpose. Similar storage problems are present in other areas of the school. Graduation equipment and prom decorations are stored on the gymnasium stage and limit access to the office of the nurse. DISHS is an aging facility that is in need of routine maintenance, preventive maintenance, and reparative maintenance. Efforts have been made to increase the "curb appeal" of the facility by replacing and/or painting some of the siding on the building. However, during close examination of certain

areas such as door frames and trim work by the boiler rooms, the team saw fresh paint over wood that was beginning to rot and decay. The site and plant meet most of the requirements of the educational program and support services for student learning, but the generator system is aging and provides only backup for the heating system, the athletic fields minimally meet the safety requirements of academic and athletic events, classroom space for the music program meets present needs but limits growth, and the storage space for art and physical education causes clutter in the classroom and prevents use of the stage while hindering access to the nurses office. (teachers, gym tour, self-study)

The Deer Isle – Stonington physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. State fire marshal and OSHA inspection certificates of compliance are on file and posted where appropriate. 2007 renovations such as the installation of fire sprinkler systems have brought the facility into compliance with state and federal codes. Although drinking water is tested and found to be potable, students and teachers refrain from drinking it because of poor taste. Students and staff members rely on bottled water. Locker room showers are utilized seldom due to the reputation of the odor of the water. Plumbing infrastructure has seen recent improvements, but issues with backed-up plumbing and leaking fixtures that are original to the building continue to plague the system. The loft in the library is limited to one access route. In order to maintain compliance with state codes student access is restricted. The sidewalk leading to the music modular building is deteriorating and lacks railings to prevent persons from stepping off steep sides. The water and

plumbing issues affect school climate and proper function of the facility that sometimes results in school closure. The library loft is a potential safety liability, and student use has been restricted. The walkway leading to the music modular is a safety concern. Deer Isle – Stonington High School provides adequate, sometimes aging equipment to support student learning. The dishwasher in the cafeteria is in need of replacement but manages to get the job done. (teachers, students, self-study, principal, facilities tour)

Individual educators are responsible for informally inventorying within departments and budgeting for new equipment. The maintenance and replacement of equipment is not always preventative but takes place rather on an as-needed basis. 2009 boiler and hot water system replacements were done out of necessity rather than as a planned system for improvements. The boiler had been repaired on multiple occasions and failed recent inspections. The cost of repair on the existing boiler, (estimated \$12,000) justified spending for the new equipment. An area needing immediate attention is the routine general cleaning of the facility. During the visit, the building appeared to be freshly cleaned. There were no visible signs of graffiti; floors were cleaned and free of litter; restrooms and public areas were tended to appropriately. However, discussions with students, teachers, and administrators clearly show that such preparation was well beyond the normal care given to the facility during any given week. Currently, there are two custodial shifts during the day, with one custodian on site per shift. The custodial staff does not have its own storage and equipment areas and must sometimes rely on equipment from the industrial arts program in order to accomplish routine assigned duties. The custodians may be given a weekly “chore list” that specifies cleaning of certain areas, but that list fails to identify on which day of the week a particular area is

to be cleaned. During the review of such a list, the cleaning of the library was handwritten in with a question mark beside it. Custodial staff members are evaluated on a yearly basis, but they clearly lack direction on how they can improve in their assigned tasks. With lack of accountability for supervision and evaluation, inadequate supplies and materials, and an absence of specific directives, the improvement of the appearance and cleanliness of the facility is left to chance, and pride in the facility declines rapidly. (self-study, tour of facility, teachers, students)

Deer Isle–Stonington High School has a strategic plan that addresses enrollment changes, staffing, and future programs from 2007 through 2012. The strategic plan accounts for budgeting concerns during this time frame. The technology committee reviews the technology plan on a three-year basis. The most recent technology committee revision was in June 2009. The strategic plan does not take into account long-term capital improvement needs. The 2007 renovation project allowed for a new roof on three quarters of the building, but no plan exists to finish the remaining quarter. Funds were raised through the community to construct new tennis courts, but no plan exists for maintenance of that facility or additional improvement of grounds or athletic fields. In the absence of plans to maintain current facilities and new facilities, increased deterioration will result in added costs in the future. (school budget, self-study, support staff members, teachers)

Despite tough and uncertain times for the local economy, the communities of Deer Isle and Stonington have continued to produce a budget that continues to meet the needs of the students. The three year trend from the 2007-2008 school budget to present shows that the state share of the budget decreased by 7.38% and the local share increased by 7.38%. As state funding decreases, the

community increases financial support to ensure the success of the high school. The budget for the upcoming school year starts by looking at curriculum needs. The teachers provide the initial budget based on classroom needs by department. Initial budgets go to the principal who ensures that monies are supporting the implementation of the strategic plan before combining with the administrative budget. The budget then makes its way to the superintendent where it is combined with the budget of other buildings in the district and the budget for the physical plant. The administrative staff then revises this version before it is sent to the school committee. School committee budget workshop meetings are open to the public as the proposed budget is explained. This approved budget is then presented to the public in the form of a referendum vote. Proper identification of classroom needs followed by consensus evaluation of proper allocation of funds promotes efficient use of community resources. (teachers, administrators, budget, self-study)

COMMENDATIONS

1. The opportunities for the parents and families to be involved in the education of their children
2. The community partnerships that are vested in the education of the children through the learning opportunities that they provide to area students
3. The financial support by the community
4. The availability of the marine trades program and facility to enhance student learning and to provide a close connection to the communities
5. The collaborative use of recent structures that improve educational opportunities for students

6. The funding provided by the community for a budget that increases or remains flat even though state contributions are declining
7. The strategic plan for school years 2007 thru 2009, which addresses the budget necessary to support future programming, enrollment changes, and staffing
8. The intimate involvement on the part of the faculty and administrators which results in the production of and revision of the budget required to maintain a suitable atmosphere for students to learn and prepare for life after Deer Isle – Stonington High School
9. The very noticeable improvements to and ongoing maintenance of the industrial arts facility that creates a viable and valuable learning environment for students

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Address the aging back-up generator system for the heating plant
2. Undertake an assessment study of athletic fields to ensure safety
3. Undertake an assessment study of the physical plant to ensure safety
4. Undertake an assessment study of student support services facilities to determine adequacy
5. Ensure the overall cleanliness of the building on a daily basis
6. Provide a detailed plan for completion of assigned custodial duties
7. Provide ongoing feedback to the custodial staff to ensure that duties are carried out completely and satisfactorily
8. Provide proper resources for custodial staff members to complete assigned tasks

9. Address and correct safety issues within and around the building
including the library loft and walk way to music modular building
10. Provide a detailed plan for building and facility maintenance
11. Develop both long-term and short-term capital improvement plans
12. Develop and implement a plan to alleviate school storage space concerns
and classroom space to allow for future growth of student programs
13. Expand the resources available to the technology committee to ensure
continued growth and development of the technology available to students
and staff to support learning

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This comprehensive evaluation report reflects the findings of the school's self-assessment 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 Deer Isle-Stonington High School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should also 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 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 Deer Isle-Stonington 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 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 of any substantive change which negatively impacts the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive changes 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 97. 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.

Appendix A
Visiting Committee Roster

Stephen MacDougall, Chair
Retired Principal
Lewiston, Maine 04240

Barney Hallowell, Asst. Chair, Principal
North Haven Community School
North Haven, ME 04853

Martha Stamp, Special Education
Searsport District High School
Searsport, ME 04974

Edward Disy, Science
Robt. Wm. Traip Academy
Kittery, ME 03904

Michael Cowing, Math
Bucksport High School
Bucksport, ME 04416

David Hanc, Guidance
Rockland District High School
Rockland, ME 04841

Susan Abel, Media Services
Dexter Regional High School
Dexter, ME 04930

Steve Belyea, Tech. Ed.
Sumner Memorial High School
Sullivan, ME 04664

Bethany Harrington, Business
Bonny Eagle High School
Standish, ME 04084

Ken Baker, Science
Mt. Valley High School
Rumford, ME 04276

Margot Dudley, Social Studies
Leavitt Area High School
Turner, ME 04282

Mary Beth Tietgens, World Languages
Biddeford High School
Biddeford, ME 04005

Toby Stinson, Social Studies
Massabesic High School
Waterboro, ME 04087

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

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- Elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- Diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- Significantly decreased funding
- Cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- Cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- Cuts in the number of support staff
- Decreases in student services
- Cuts in the educational media staffing
- Increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- Changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated; e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency
- Identification by the state as an underperforming school
- Takeover by the state
- Inordinate user fees