

New England Association of School and Colleges, Inc.

Commission on Public Schools



Commission on Public Schools

Report of the Visiting Team for Abington High School

Abington, MA

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**Robert Baldwin, Chair
Mr. Geoffrey Anstatt, Assistant Chair
Jonathan Bourn, Interim Principal**

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

The Town of Abington is located halfway between Boston and Plymouth in Massachusetts's Plymouth County. Abington's school district serves close to 2,117 students. The race and ethnicity of the student population mirror the community. The district's student population is 79 percent White, 11 percent Hispanic, and 10 percent African American, Asian or non-Hispanic/multi-race. English Language Learners make up just under 8 percent of the district while almost 30 percent of students are economically disadvantaged. About 86 percent of Abington High School (AHS) graduates attend college, 75 percent of whom attend four-year college programs. Enrollment has climbed from 520 students during the 2017-2018 school year to 619 in the 2020-2021 school year. There are 39 teachers teaching 192 classes in core academic areas. One hundred percent of the teachers are licensed in their teaching assignments. The high school serves grades 9 through 12.

Abington is a community of 16,436 people with 39 percent of adults holding bachelors' degrees. The median household income is \$99,381. The school district spends about \$1,500 less than the state average in per-pupil expenditure. Until recently, all of the school buildings were more than 50 years old. In 2017, the community built a co-located pre-K, middle-high school. The community has a small group of alumnus families who sustain some programming such as junior varsity athletics and music programming and contribute about \$65,000-\$75,000 in annual scholarships for the 100 to 125 graduates. Alumni also volunteer to serve on decision-making committees and fundraising groups and often come back to speak at special events.

AHS has recently reduced the number of academic levels and increased the number of un-leveled courses. Advanced Placement courses are offered in six disciplines and are offered as open enrollment with few exceptions. Students can enroll in college courses for dual credit. Students are also able to enroll in online courses if the course of interest is not offered at AHS.

From the 2019 Accountability Report:

Drop out rate - 0.6 %

Four-year graduation rate - 96%

Chronic absenteeism rate - 16.9%

Advanced coursework completion - 80%

From the 2018-2019 MA DESE indicators:

Plans of graduates

Four-year college - 70%

Two-year college – 23%

Student to teacher ratio - 15.2 - 1

Staff retention rate - 93%

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

District Mission Statement

The mission of the Abington Public Schools is to provide all students with relevant, challenging educational experiences to prepare them to be engaged, responsible citizens and members of the global community.

District Guiding Principles

We Believe In...

Making decisions in the best interests of students.
Supporting all students in achieving success.
Fostering the physical, intellectual, technological, social, emotional, and artistic development of our students.
Creating a safe, tolerant, supportive, organized, and equitable learning environment.
Providing challenging educational experiences that build character.
Developing self-discipline and personal responsibility.
Promoting creativity, problem solving, effective communication, and critical thinking skills.
Cultivating the educational partnership among home, school, and community.
Nurturing a culture of collaboration, collegiality, and mutual respect.
Encouraging staff initiative and innovation.
Implementing professional development that is essential for effective instruction and improved student learning.
Reviewing and updating curriculum, instruction, and assessment in a regular cycle.
Recognizing that effective and appropriate technology is essential for teaching and learning.
Inspiring all students to become life-long learners.

Vision of the Graduate

CRITICAL THINKER:

- Curiously seeks new knowledge
- Gathers information from a range of perspectives
- Reasons through and weighs evidence before making a decision
- Demonstrates an open-minded thought process
- Constructs arguments/forms conclusions

ENGAGED PARTICIPANT:

- Seeks new knowledge
- Collaborates towards personal and common goals
- Uses feedback to adjust behavior
- Expresses thoughts, ideas and emotions meaningfully and creatively
- Actively involved in school community
- Advocates for self and others
- Perseveres through daily tasks

SOCIALLY COMPETENT CONTRIBUTOR:

- Displays tolerance and empathy
- Learns about and values cultural differences
- Advocates for needs beyond oneself
- Is physically and intellectually present in daily interactions
- Successfully navigates social situations
- Builds and maintains healthy relationships
- Uses technology to enhance learning for self and others

SELF-AWARE INDIVIDUAL:

- Prioritizes and manages time effectively
- Models healthy lifestyle choices
- Manages stressful situations
- Demonstrates resiliency
- Advocates for themselves

- Takes intellectual risks

LEARNING CULTURE

Learning Culture

The school provides a safe learning culture that ensures equity and fosters shared values among learners, educators, families, and members of the school community. These shared values drive student learning as well as policy, practice, and decision-making while promoting a spirit of collaboration, shared ownership, pride, leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement. The school community sets high standards for student learning, fosters a growth mindset, and facilitates continuous school improvement to realize the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

1. The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought.
 - 1a. The school community provides a safe environment.
2. The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.
 - 2a. The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
3. The school community takes collective responsibility for the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.
4. The school community's professional culture demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.
5. The school's culture promotes intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth.
6. The school has an inclusive definition of leadership and provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning.
7. The school culture fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility.

STUDENT LEARNING

Student Learning

The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary to prepare learners for their future. Students are assured consistent learning outcomes through a defined curricular experience and have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a variety of creative ways. Students actively participate in authentic learning experiences while practicing the skills and habits of mind to regularly reflect upon, and take ownership of, their learning.

1. The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success and provides feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress in achieving this vision.
2. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate.
- 2a. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments.
3. Curriculum ensures that learners demonstrate a depth of understanding over a breadth of knowledge.
4. Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
5. Students are active learners who have opportunities to lead their own learning.
6. Learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.
7. Learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum.
8. Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.
9. Learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Professional Practices

The school maintains and implements a school improvement/growth plan, organizational practices, and productive community relationships to meet and support student learning needs. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional development to improve their practice and examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, programs, and services.

1. The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
 - 1a. The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.
2. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being.
3. Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.
4. Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum.
5. School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
6. Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support

The school has timely, directed, and coordinated interventions for all students. The school provides targeted supports to meet each student's individual needs, including counseling services, health services, library/information services, and other appropriate support services to assist each student in meeting the school's vision of the graduate.

1. All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success.
 - 1a. The school has intervention strategies designed to support students.
2. All students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
3. All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
4. All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
5. Identified English Language Learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning Resources

The school has adequate and appropriate time, funding, and facilities to support the realization of its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. The school and school community provide time, funding, and facilities for student learning and support; teacher collaboration and professional growth; and full implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs in the school. The school has appropriate plans, protocols, and infrastructure in place to ensure consistent delivery of its curriculum, programs, and services.

1. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.
 - 1a. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.
2. The school/district provides time and financial resources to enable researched-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services.
3. The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable funding to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
4. The school/district has short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of its building and facilities.
5. The school has infrastructure and protocols in place to ensure effective responses in crisis situations.

Introduction

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 three Commissions: the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS); the Commission on Public Schools (CPS), which is comprised of the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools (CPEMHS), and the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI); and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

As the responsible agency for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public school member institutions, CPS requires visiting teams to assess the degree to which schools align with the qualitative Standards for Accreditation. The Standards are *Learning Culture*, *Student Learning*, *Professional Practices*, *Learning Support*, and *Learning Resources*.

The accreditation program for public schools involves a five-step process: the self-reflection conducted by stakeholders at the school; the Collaborative Conference visit, conducted by a team of peer educators and NEASC representatives; the school's development and implementation of a growth/improvement plan; the Decennial Accreditation visit conducted by a team of peer educators and NEASC representatives; and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-reflection, the recommendations of the visiting team, and those identified by the Committee in the follow-up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school participate in the accreditation process over the ten-year cycle and that it shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit

Accreditation coordinators and a steering committee comprised of the professional staff were appointed to supervise the school's Accreditation process which includes the self-reflection, the Collaborative Conference visit, the development and implementation of a growth plan, and the Decennial Accreditation Visit. At Abington High School, a steering committee, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the Accreditation process.

Public schools seeking Accreditation through the Commission on Public Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's core values, beliefs, vision of the graduate, and unique student population. In preparation for the decennial visit, schools are required to complete a Decennial Summary Report to inform the team about their progress since the time of the Collaborative Conference visit.

In addition, the professional staff was required to read and come to consensus on the summary report to ensure that all voices were heard related to the school's progress on their priority areas for growth.

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of six members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Decennial Accreditation visit to Abington High School in Abington, Massachusetts. The visiting team members spent four days conducting a virtual visit to the school; reviewed the self-reflection, Collaborative Conference report, and Decennial Summary Report documents; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents; and visited classes to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee on Public Secondary Schools' and Public Elementary and Middle Schools' Standards for Accreditation and the degree to which the school is making progress toward their identified priority areas for growth as indicated in the school's improvement/growth plan.

Each conclusion in the report was agreed to by visiting team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting team are included within each section of the report. The report includes commendations and recommendations that, in the visiting team's judgment, will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and implement its plan for growth and improvement. The report also includes an analysis of the conceptual understanding, commitment, competency, and capacity (4Cs), which is a framework used to evaluate the school's ability for continuous growth and improvement as a learning organization.

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Schools, which will make a decision on the Accreditation of Abington High School.

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.1a

Abington High School provides a safe environment. The school community deliberately built and maintains a physically safe environment for learners and adults. The new school building houses an advanced camera system, has automated locking doors, built-in panic buttons at all main entrance offices, and building maps and emergency procedures visible in each room, along with additional security features. There are designated staff and timelines in place for maintenance of the building and grounds. The school community also maintains policies and processes to ensure the physical safety and emotional well-being of learners and adults. The policies are visible and available in the building and online. The safety processes are reviewed regularly during the school year. Communication includes processes for bullying, mandated reporting, and student referrals among others.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.2a

The school has a written document describing its core values and beliefs about learning, in the form of a mission statement available in multiple locations for all stakeholders. In the two years since the collaborative conference, the school has developed a document describing the vision of the graduate. The process by which the vision of the graduate was developed reflects a shared vision of all of our stakeholders. In January 2019, the process began with a survey of the stakeholders: parents, current students, faculty/staff, and community members, as well as recent graduates.

In March and April of 2019, members of the steering committee attended a two-day NEASC seminar on the Vision of the Graduate. The conference focused on how to take the feedback from stakeholders and develop them into four categories that represent the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal competencies that students should have when they graduate. The categories drafted after reviewing the survey results and attending the NEASC seminar are Critical Thinker, Engaged Participant, Socially Competent Contributor, and Self-aware Individual.

The faculty worked to develop related indicators and corresponding rubrics for each competency. The goal is to foster multiple opportunities/pathways for students to develop these competencies. In February 2020, the Abington High School Vision of the Graduate was approved by the school council and presented to the school committee.

The school focused two of their school-wide professional development workshops, as well as multiple common planning time meetings, on topics related to the vision of the graduate. The workshops were, "What are we already doing that supports/nurtures this competency?" "Where can we modify existing practices?" "What do we need to implement?" "For students who are achieving/showing this competency - What does it look like?" "What are their behaviors/habits?" "Things they say, do, etc.?" "For students not quite there yet (either on the bubble or not even in the ballpark), how do we help them develop these habits?"

Discussions continue about including the vision of the graduate in developing the district's vision for 2021 and beyond. District administrators are looking at what these competencies mean/look like at their respective grade levels. Part of the process going forward will be to develop benchmarks and agreed upon measurable outcomes. This will be part of the school's growth plan.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Foundational Element 2.2a

While there is a written curriculum in a consistent format for almost all courses in almost all departments across the school, the school does not yet have a written curriculum for all courses. A template was created for curriculum writing for each unit of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, and skills. There are instructional strategies listed as well as assessment practices on the template. Almost all departments have curriculum written using this template and stored in the curriculum drive. In order to fully implement the Foundational Element, the school has only one department that needs to complete written curriculum in the common format. Curriculum guides do not yet include a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary to prepare learners for their future.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Foundational Element 3.1a

The school effectively engages stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan (SIP), which reflects the school's core values and beliefs about learning. The school has a plan that includes school-specific goals which inform decision-making in the school. The school improvement plan is written by the school principal in conjunction with the school council. It is approved each spring and the creation of goals and implementation is ongoing throughout the school year upon the creation of the plan. The plan is also shared with all stakeholders.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Elements 4.1a - Learning Support

Foundational Elements 4.1a

The school has effective intervention strategies designed to support learners. The school provides a range of intervention strategies for students and a process to identify and refer students who need additional assistance. After receiving input from faculty and staff a tracking icon is made available to specific staff to ensure their awareness of a student who may have a referral for evaluation for a Student Support Team (SST) meeting. This includes but is not limited to the Crisis Team, Student Support Team, Signs of Suicide Program, Language Acquisition Team, special education referrals, Multiple Failure Meetings, and progress report meetings for special education, 504 students, and ELL students. The school has implemented a mentor program, where each member of the faculty mentors 10 students. Once a week, mentor faculty meet with their assigned students, they then refer and assign each of these students for academic and/or social-emotional support during a Bridge Block for enriching students. It is difficult for students to get lost in this school. The strength of personal connection and familiarity with the school community creates a very student-centered culture.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Foundational Element 5.1a

The four-year-old state-of-the-art facility provides a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment for learners and adults. The school building opened in June 2017 and is designed to support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services including a library/media center, science labs, art labs, media production studio, FM systems, zoned lighting, flexible seating, furniture to meet diverse needs, and interactive whiteboards. Classrooms have furniture that can be used as individual desks or easily moved for group work. Areas throughout the school are conducive to collaboration. The multi-functions of the library, the glass classroom within the library, the seminar room, the high-top tables, and the rocking chairs throughout the school are used by students throughout the school day. The teaching staff has access to common spaces that enhance teaching in multiple locations throughout the building. There are two well-provisioned teacher workrooms that are located on each level. There are multiple small conference rooms used for meetings. There are also workspaces for the school nurse, special education staff, maintenance department, athletic department, cafeteria staff, and technology department. The buildings and facilities are safe, secure, and healthy. The building committee supported the building of a safe, secure, and healthy new school voted for by community members. The building includes cameras, locked doors, key fobs for entrance, panic buttons, lock-down keys, and many more safety and security features. The building also has conditioned air, natural sunlight, and zoned lighting in addition to a variety of additional health features. The buildings and facilities are clean and well-maintained by a regularly scheduled maintenance staff. The buildings and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Elements Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Elements	Collaborative Conference School's Rating	Collaborative Conference Visitors' Rating	Decennial School's Rating	Decennial Visitors' Rating
1.1a - Learning Culture	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
1.2a - Learning Culture	Does not Meet	Does not Meet	Meets	Meets
2.2a - Student Learning	Does Not Meet	Does Not Meet	Does Not Meet	Does Not Meet
3.1a - Professional Practices	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
4.1a - Learning Support	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
5.1a - Learning Resources	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets

Priority Area 1

Priority Area

Vision of the Graduate: Develop a vision of the graduate that includes the skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success.

Action, Impact, and Growth

At the time of Abington High School's Collaborative Conference visit, the school did not meet Foundational Element 1.2A in its entirety. However, the school did have a written document describing its core values and beliefs about learning, in the form of a mission statement available in multiple locations assessable to all stakeholders. During the ensuing two years, the school created a document describing the vision of the graduate, which includes descriptions of student performance that indicate success. Abington High School has taken a variety of steps in order to develop the vision of the graduate, which reflects the shared vision of all stakeholders. The work on this began in January of 2019 with a survey of the stakeholders including parents, current students, faculty/staff, and community members, as well as recent graduates. In March and April of 2019 members of the school's steering committee attended a two-day NEASC seminar that dealt with taking the feedback from stakeholders and developing it into four categories that represented the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal competencies that students should have when they graduate. Through this process, the school, in conjunction with multiple stakeholders, crafted a vision of the graduate that focuses on four domains, which include Critical Thinker, Engaged Participants, Socially Competent Contributors, and Self-Aware Individuals. Once established, the school created indicators of proficiency for each domain that students should be able to master through their learning experiences at Abington High in order to be successful in the world beyond high school. This professional collaboration was included in Goal #2 of the school's 2019-2020 school improvement plan (SIP). Subsequently, using two school-wide professional development workshops, as well as multiple common planning time meetings, the faculty identified a total of twenty-five indicators that correspond to the four domains and developed corresponding rubrics for each competency. The proficiency indicators in each domain are framed by the phrase, "I can...." For example, there are five proficiency indicators for the domain of Critical Thinker, which include:

- Seek new knowledge without support,
- Gather information from a range of perspectives,
- Reason through and weigh evidence before making a decision,
- Demonstrate an open-minded thought process, and
- Construct arguments and articulate my own conclusions.

In February of 2020, Abington High School's vision of the graduate was approved by the school council and presented to the school committee. Although the effects of the pandemic dramatically inhibited Abington High School's ability to focus on the vision of graduate during the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, they once again began to regroup and refocus on the vision of the graduate during professional development and common planning time during the 2020-2021 academic year. The impact that the development of the vision of the graduate has had on the school community at large has been very positive. The work to explore the vision of the graduate has helped educators at Abington High School develop an initial shared understanding of the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that will help students to be successful in the world beyond their school campus. Through professional collaboration, educators have begun the process of identifying the learning opportunities that currently exist at the school that align with the intended outcomes of the vision of the graduate. Beyond recognizing the opportunities that students currently have, the school as well as the district, has begun to think ambitiously about learning opportunities they could create to enhance alignment with the vision of the graduate across all grade levels.

The development of the vision of the graduate has brought to light a myriad of potential opportunities for

alignment between current learning practices and the vision of the graduate. Furthermore, it has opened discussions about not only including the vision of the graduate in the district's vision going forward but also discussions among administrators and other stakeholders about what the competencies mean and might look like at all grade levels in a progressive vertical articulation.

Although students do not yet articulate a concrete knowledge of the vision of the graduate, they demonstrate that the concepts of the four domains are very much in place. The words of the vision of the graduate are an integral part of their thinking, social competency, and self-awareness, and embedded in their attitudes. The behaviors of the students are evidence that the domains appear to be very much a part of the school culture. They collectively exhibit behaviors set forth in the core values of the school.

An area for growth, going forward involves the development of benchmarks and agreed upon measurable outcomes vertically aligned at all grade levels. Additionally, this involves the development of a way to convey to students and families individual progress and to community members the school-wide progress toward meeting those outcomes. Further growth as a result of the development of the high school's vision of the graduate may be at the district level since district administrators are looking at what these competencies mean/look like at their respective grade levels.

Recommended Next Steps

Some recommendations for growth that will support Abington High School's in this priority area include:

- Continue to provide opportunities for common planning time and PD time to identify and explore potential opportunities to align instructional focus with the implementation of the vision of the graduate.
- Design and provide formal opportunities for representative members of the school community to review benchmarks and agreed upon measurable outcomes once developed for different levels.
- Develop and implement a communication plan that shares the vision of the graduate with the entire Abington High School community.
- Provide opportunities for professional learning and growth in which educators will explore how to design learning experiences that align with the vision of the graduate and provide opportunities for students to practice the skills in the vision of the graduate and receive feedback on their growth.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- community members
- department leaders
- parents
- priority area meetings
- school board
- student work
- students
- teachers

Priority Area 2

Priority Area

Additional counseling staff to meet the increasing emotional needs of the student population.

Action, Impact, and Growth

Abington High School has increased its social-emotional learning staff through the addition of a half-time School Adjustment Counselor. This counselor is shared with the middle school housed in the same building.

All students are provided with a trusted adult through a mentoring program. Each staff member has roughly ten students with whom they check in weekly. During this weekly meeting, the mentor monitors student grades and uses this information to support the student and to assign them to twice-weekly bridge blocks with any remaining time spent in relationship building. These weekly meetings contribute to developing an ongoing sense of community within the group. The design calls for students to have the same mentor for all four years and the composition of the multi-grade groups changes when seniors graduate and freshmen are included.

The addition of the Bridge Block has provided students with the opportunity for school day access to activities such as extra help, making up assignments or tests, and interventions that would previously have been available only after school. These additional supports lend to more of a sense of agency and confidence in personal control of a student's workload.

The counseling department partners with the health teacher to present the Signs of Suicide curriculum. This two-day presentation is made once during each semester in the freshman health classes. Students are also exposed to this curriculum while in middle school.

The Student Support Team (SST) monitors and provides intervention for at-risk students. This team meets weekly to discuss students currently being monitored as well as the new referrals made by teachers. Each student on the SST caseload is assigned a case manager who is responsible for that student's action plan. In addition to this practice is an icon in the Aspen school information system that identifies students currently being monitored by the SST. In the words of a faculty member, "struggling students don't get lost here".

In the fall of 2020 faculty was provided with professional development training around anxiety. Topics covered in the training were indicators, causes, coping mechanisms, and ways to reach out to students showing signs of anxiety. Students report feeling that the school is a safe environment and that mental health is not a "taboo" subject at Abington High School.

Recommended Next Steps

Plans for summer school in the summer of 2021 are being developed to embrace a summer camp attitude as opposed to the more traditional academic only model. Students with multiple failing grades would be invited to participate in a program that would recover their lost credits as well as provide physical activity, engagement with community partners, and social-emotional support.

Students report appreciating and accessing teacher office hours. However, an increase to these office hours and guidance counselors (i.e. Bridge Block) would enhance a student's ability to access these services.

Abington High School has a caring and committed counseling staff focused on meeting student needs in both the social-emotional arena as well as college and career supports. Presently there is not a tiered system of intervention support with formalized roles and protocols. Developing such a data-driven system with clearly

delineated roles, responsibilities, and responses across all areas of the work may help to alleviate the current perception that they each must wear multiple hats and are not poised to deal with "walk-ins." When teachers, administration, nurses, and counselors all know what should happen next and whose role it is, students will ultimately respond to the underlying sense of order and comprehensive care.

Sources of Evidence

- department leaders
- parents
- priority area meetings
- school board
- school support staff
- students
- teachers

Priority Area 3

Priority Area

Consistently promoting intellectual risk taking.

Action, Impact, and Growth

To consistently promote intellectual risk-taking, the Abington High School administration has begun training staff in what it means to take intellectual risks and its importance to student engagement. They began with professional development days in the fall of 2019 and January 2020. As they were starting to pick up momentum on the subject the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Because of this, the focus has shifted a bit from this priority area it is clear that staff has begun to implement opportunities for students to feel comfortable taking intellectual risks.

In the fall of 2019, AHS built in professional development time and faculty meeting time focused on intellectual risk taking, as well as its relationship to student engagement. Initially, the emphasis was on encouraging faculty members to take some risks in order to help build an appreciation for the emotional, often humbling nature, of pushing oneself out of their comfort zone. During a faculty meeting in the fall of 2019, members were grouped together and tasked with creating videos to explain the benefits of taking risks, as well as the inherent fears and anxieties in trying something new. In addition to the video activities with faculty, the administration presented an article on risk taking and faculty groups had a lesson on Understanding Intellectual Risk Taking. The school recognizes that these faculty training days were an early step and there is still a lot of work to do once things calm down from the pandemic.

It is evident that most staff has been successful in creating a comfortable, safe atmosphere that can help foster intellectual risk taking. Students are willing to have discussions and participate in class, regardless if they know the right answer. Faculty praises students when they make deductions and point out that they understand their thought process. In one class it was observed that students were actively giving each other constructive feedback, "not constructive criticism" as the teacher stated, on a writing project the students had turned in. Students were using technology to read each others' work and provide feedback. Students can feel vulnerable sharing their work so openly, so it's clear that this teacher has made students feel comfortable taking intellectual risks.

Students feel comfortable collaborating and talking through ideas for the most part. Teachers encourage students to take risks, and students feel supported. Teachers often give students options for assessments instead of typical tests. Students can create their own projects which they discuss with teachers for approval before beginning. Students happily report that teachers are welcome and open to students making mistakes, but students often have a hard time accepting "failure" because mistakes come with grades, so it can be hard to balance taking risks and keeping grades up.

Outside of the traditional core academic classrooms, there are countless leadership opportunities where students are encouraged to think creatively and critically to solve problems. One student discussed how excited she was to be a part of a team of students in the National Honor Society who were tasked with putting together the virtual induction ceremony this school year from start to finish. They changed the ceremony to make it more personal by displaying student profiles, which was well received. Students are happy to be given a voice in their academics, leading to more risk taking with support from faculty. The school culture is generally a supportive one. The Bridge Block mentors and teachers assigning during this time drive this culture of self-advocacy, often a risk in itself to students. This safe atmosphere and school culture is a solid base to spring from with intellectual risk taking.

The school board is happy with the leadership roles and risk taking among many of the students at AHS and attributes it to the school atmosphere and beginning stages of promoting intellectual risk taking. They recognize that the school still has work to do in this area, but since they've been in "survival mode" due to the pandemic,

this priority area is still in its beginning stages. The school board would like to see more students feel that it is "cool to be smart." One way the school has started working on this is by promoting academic success by displaying academic banners for student achievement just as they do for athletic achievements. The school board would like to see more of a push like this towards excitement for students' academic achievements.

Recommended Next Steps

Over the next two to five years, AHS intends to plan and implement an academic showcase event. This will be an excellent opportunity to share with the school and community students' development as intellectual risk-takers, as well as their growth related to the vision of the graduate competencies.

The school community would like to see more students feel that it is "cool to be smart." One way the school has started working on this is by promoting academic success by displaying academic banners for student achievement just as they do for athletic achievements. It's recommended that there continues to be more of a push like this towards excitement for students' academic achievements.

Departments will make it standard practice to designate in their common planning time calendar specific opportunities for designing, sharing, and reflecting on risk taking lessons.

Additionally, AHS will promote peer observations/walk-throughs for faculty to continue sharing strategies and inspire collegial conversations about teaching and learning. Currently, teachers report informally observing each others' classes within their departments by physically stepping into each others' classes when possible and by sharing their Canvas online classes with each other so they can see what colleagues are doing and implement similar strategies. It is recommended that AHS build in the opportunity for teachers to specifically do more observations using protocols and providing time for reflection and peer feedback, especially inter-departmentally, to continue a natural flow of ideas and staff collaboration, leading to more opportunities that invite intellectual risk taking by students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- parents
- priority area meetings
- priority area observations
- school board
- school support staff
- school summary report
- student work
- student-led conferences
- students
- teachers

Part 3 - Reflection on Student Learning

Reflection on Student Learning

While instructional practices are designed to meet the needs of each student, there are pockets of classrooms that are quite similar and teacher-centered. The majority of teachers report in the NEASC survey that they set, develop, and implement instructional improvement goals for themselves throughout the school year. Delivery and implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 accommodations are supported, and teachers are provided with snapshot IEPs to assist them in differentiating their instructional practices to meet the learning needs of special education students. Paraprofessionals support instructional practices for students in many level 2 and level 3 inclusion classes. While the school refers to the use of paraprofessionals as co-teaching, licensed special education teachers are used primarily for academic support and in some mathematics classes. All disciplines use formative assessment strategies to support student learning. The school administration evaluates student learning to ensure that students are accessing the curriculum and have the necessary supports available to achieve success and to support teachers. As the school community works together to implement the formal vision of the AHS graduate, a priority of the administration is to ensure that all teachers strategically differentiate, individualize, and personalize instructional practices based on student learning needs.

At Abington High School (AHS), most students are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning, and the school has a plan in place to continue these efforts. Students currently have some opportunities to participate in and direct their own learning in and outside of the classroom. Some examples include virtual learning with online classes, dual enrollment, global education, and independent study. Some teachers allow for student choice in learning and many have made progress in this effort since the collaborative conference. For example, in a social studies class, students are tasked with researching and presenting on an atrocity of World War II. This summative assessment holds students to common skills-based standards while giving them the freedom to research and present on a topic that is interesting to them. Similarly, in an art class, students are tasked with depicting a social issue that is important to them; most effective in this case is the opportunity for students to analyze and give feedback on a peer's piece of their choosing. Moreover, A staff member notes that "This year has expedited [the] process. Many teachers will give a syllabus that covers a few weeks with a few [mandatory] activities and then options for an assessment at the end." These efforts are still happening in pockets, whether with individual teachers or within specific academic departments, and the students of AHS will be best served when, after a return to full in-person instruction, staff and students can make this a priority for growth. AHS makes every effort to strengthen ties with the surrounding community through community service with projects that are often student-initiated and led, though the Covid-19 pandemic has prohibited many of these efforts in the 2020-2021 school year. The recent acquisition of laptop computers and the implementation of Canvas as a learning management system offers students an array of possibilities to lead their own learning. Additionally, the new AHS Bridge Block allows students to schedule time with teachers for directed interventions and make-up that they need.

At AHS, students engage in problem-solving activities and are encouraged to ask questions to clarify misconceptions or to expand their learning on a regular basis. The written curriculum, which school leaders recognize as a work-in-progress, includes opportunities for students to analyze, synthesize, and make connections to understand relationships within each discipline. Departments are encouraged, through professional development offered in the district, to embed critical and creative thinking skills in their instructional practices. The administration has provided professional development programs on Bloom's taxonomy, rigor in the classroom, formative and summative assessments, and reading across content. Furthermore, independence, flexible thinking, and persistence are stressed as important skills and qualities for each student to have. Most importantly, the school community has made the implementation of intellectual risk-taking a priority area for growth. While the pandemic has slowed the progress of this goal, the initial professional development conducted last winter which asked the staff to look at lessons from the perspectives of their students is salient evidence of the faculty's commitment to this important goal, and it is supported in the recently adopted vision of a graduate.

Independence, flexible thinking, and persistence are stressed as important skills and qualities for each student to have.

Students demonstrate learning through some variety of assessment strategies that sometimes informs instruction and curriculum and support student learning. The social studies department and the English language arts department collaborated and developed common writing rubrics. Common summative assessments exist for some courses and in some disciplines; however, their use is not pervasive in all disciplines. Students noted that practices such as discussion boards, essays, quizzes, projects, videos, and practice logs are all types of assessments used within their classes. At AHS, students are able to retake tests to demonstrate improved learning, but this assessment practice varies by department and by teacher. Students report that most teachers allow for some level of “make-up when you are below a certain grade, but the teachers decide themselves what that grade is.” Moreover, some staff noted that in some areas assessments are still used in many cases to assign grades with little or no impact on follow-up instruction. The implementation of the Bridge Block is a positive first step in this regard; teachers now have dedicated time each week for focused academic interventions with the students who need them, however, like many plans for this year, those next steps were halted by the pandemic. Students also demonstrate their learning and transferable skills outside of the classroom. Some examples of these opportunities include art shows, concerts, athletics, community services, theatrical performances, and extracurricular activities. It is of special note that, even during the pandemic, AHS has prioritized these events, holding, performing arts, co-curricular, and sporting events when safe.

Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning. One student remarked that his teacher would never give him a grade without telling him why he received that grade, showing a culture of performance, feedback, and revision. Other students discussed the use of the comment tab in Canvas, the common use of rubrics across all disciplines, and the general culture where students are comfortable approaching and talking to teachers about their own learning as helpful ways they receive feedback on a regular basis. Students also demonstrate learning in a variety of ways. In addition to traditional individual assessments, group work and partner work occur regularly in many classrooms. Since the Collaborative Conference, student choice and voice have become more prevalent for students to demonstrate their learning. Teachers regularly implement formative assessment to ensure that appropriate progress is being made on both individual and group levels. Applications such as Kahoot and FlipGrid, exit tickets, word splashes, and dip-sticking are regular formative assessments used across disciplines. For example, a social studies teacher asks students to “write a 5-7 sentence diary entry from the perspective of a soldier with two ways they experienced racism and a battle they fought.” Formative assessments like this add an authentic component and synthesis of ideas to the formative assessment. Students are kept well-informed of their progress throughout the learning process. Rubrics are provided to students and consistently referred to during the evaluation phase. Further, performance is reported to students and parents alike in both Canvas and Aspen X2. Grades are entered and shared in a timely manner. Supplementing this information are informative comments at the end of each grading period, eight times per year, and additional communications home on an as-needed basis. Most salient in this regard is the implementation of the Bridge Block, which allows students to receive directed and targeted academic intervention and support from their teachers in smaller, focused groups. Finally, flexible make-up policies govern procedures for completing work due to absence. In the event of unsatisfactory results on assessments, some teachers allow students the chance to retest. However, the use of retakes at AHS varies by department and teacher. It is important to note that many teachers use a Microsoft translation tool that is embedded in the Teams platform to enable Portuguese-speaking students to follow along with real-time closed captioning.

At the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, each AHS student was given a laptop computer, providing them with the capability to use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning. As a result, AHS students use technology regularly to improve learning outcomes. Since the Collaborative Conference, the district has also implemented Canvas as a learning management system. Through this platform, students are receiving a more equitable experience from class to class and between departments. This was evident in classroom observations where each class had an agenda, learning plan, and assignments posted to Canvas. Additionally, training in several applications has allowed teachers to maintain continuity of learning during the hybrid and remote learning of the pandemic. While AHS is still in the beginning stages of this integration, they have made substantial progress in the last two years. The mathematics department uses

technology as a way to monitor and check homework rather than using class time for homework review.

Part 4 - Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization

Conceptual Understanding

There is not yet a formal, shared understanding of what optimal or effective learning looks like in the school. Optimal and effective learning is prevalent, however, it occurs based on the unique skills and circumstances of individual staff, versus a planned programmatic approach of best practices. While students are not aware of the vision of the graduate, their behaviors exemplify the graphic that was adopted in February 2020. While there is not a formal plan for the delivery of school counseling services, it is difficult for students to get lost in the school. The staff is incredibly dedicated and caring and works hard to help students meet with success. The faculty and students have proven their ability to pivot, be flexible, and take advice. Their school community is proud of the way they have maneuvered through the pandemic. As a result, there is confidence that optimal and effective learning will be the expectation with an alignment with the Standards for Accreditation. It is the hope of the school that the NEASC Accreditation process can help formalize some of the best practices, interventions, curriculum, assessment, and grading practices that work best for students. The school aims to capitalize on the dedication and care that the staff shows to maximize student performance. It is their intent to shine a spotlight on what the school needs to do collectively. They are interested in creating a culture of high expectations by acknowledging what has to be accomplished with clear accountability and communication.

Commitment

The school council of Abington High School and the Abington School Committee have recently been refocused on the existing vision of the graduate. A survey of stakeholders, including alumni, weighed in on this initiative. A two-day conference in the spring of 2019 was the impetus for a graphic that was developed as well as rubrics and benchmarks. Each of these products was approved by the school council and adopted by the school committee in February 2020. The school focused two school-wide professional development workshops, as well as multiple common planning time meetings, on topics related to the vision of the graduate. The workshops were, "What are we already doing that supports/nurtures this competency?" "Where can we modify existing practices?" "What do we need to implement?" "For students who are achieving/showing this competency, What does it look like?" "What are their behaviors/habits?" "Things they say, do, etc.?" "For students not quite there yet (either on the bubble or not even in the ballpark), how do we help them develop these habits?"

The contents and statements of transferable student skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions in the vision of the graduate are widely accepted as valuable and meaningful endeavors, especially by the faculty of Abington High School, as well as the larger school community. While the vision of the graduate has not yet been the basis of a formal or noticeable change in planning or process, it will begin to play a more prominent role in all future school considerations. Prior to March 2020, the school had momentum on this initiative, whereas, juniors and seniors were part of its development, and the fact that those two grades will be exiting Abington High School, the plan is to de-construct and implement the work with new and current students in the fall of 2021. Further, the central administration and the school committee are planning to use the vision of the graduate as the impetus for a district-wide strategic plan. Specifically, they are collectively looking to determine "what's the vision of the graduate PreK-12." The transition from each grade should be a ramp and not a step up. By developing a vision of the graduate for each grade level in the district that creates a connection from PreK-12. They took the Collaborative Conference report and concluded that they needed to spiral a vision for each grade and just what that would look like. They are modifying the vision of the graduate to fit the needs of students in each grade level. Spiraling one Vision of the Graduate over a 13 year period of time is a clear indication that the school community is committed to alignment with the Standards for Accreditation.

Competency

While the school community does not presently understand and acknowledge the specific changes that need to be made for improvement, they do acknowledge and see that the status quo did not stress-test well under the strain of remote, hybrid, and asynchronous learning, and are welcoming to the pending recommendations from the NEASC visit. The school has a track record of acknowledging needs and addressing those needs through clear communication and accountability. They are not enamored with the adage, "that's the way we've always done things." As a result, they do acknowledge that there is a need for improvement. They are still not clear on what the specifics are, however, the mindset for growth is fertile within the school.

A distinct majority of the professional staff at Abington High School, as well as leadership at the district level, has the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to help students achieve the school's vision of the graduate. The staff members who currently are developing the skills, knowledge, and dispositions, are open to new ways of thinking and are willing to stay open to joining the work of this distinct majority. There is a caring for what is best for the entire school community that is pervasive throughout the school. Once presented with evidence for change and a clear path to fulfilling the vision of the graduate, all staff at the school and district level will work in concert to make the vision of the graduate a reality for the school, and even the entire district.

As the school works to improve curriculum and instruction for all students, a key step will be to identify the mastery objectives for each course. Faculty need to identify and update curriculum with mastery objectives, performance tasks, and the criteria for success necessary to demonstrate proficiency of objectives aligned with the vision of the graduate as well as content standards. Instructional strategies to support the curriculum updates including concentrate on student voice in the classroom and "who owns the learning" will become the focus of teaching and learning. These steps coupled with the implementation of the next steps and recommendations from the NEASC Decennial Report will serve as an impetus for positive change.

The concept of non-negotiable student performance also needs to be developed for the instructional staff. Instituting that a 50 is the baseline grade for an F is a major step in the direction toward more equitable grading practices. If a student can get a zero on an assignment, too many adolescents then choose a zero and do not complete the assignment. By making performance criteria non-negotiable, every student has an equitable opportunity to achieve high and fair standards for performance. This will require some shifts in thinking in how student performance is evaluated and reported. Some of this work has begun in response to the challenges of the past year with single point rubrics and contract grading. This is all evidence that the school gets it and is primed to improve and enhance student learning practices.

Capacity

In the Abington Public Schools, there is a clear delineation between the roles and responsibilities of the school committee, district leadership, and building leadership. This is extremely important in the implementation of recommendations and school improvement. When each of these entities stays in their lanes, students, parents, and educators receive clear direction, communication, and accountability toward common goals. This is a resource that will serve in a positive manner for the implementation of district and school initiatives.

The school incorporates several professional development days throughout the year and provides ample time and budget for scheduling workshops and presenters. This allows for a variety of topics to be covered and revisited throughout the year that are responsive to the evolving needs of the school and students. The school community shows a great deal of support and trust for the high school. One individual stated that "I trust my children in the hands of this school." When looking for support for initiatives, the school community puts its faith in the adults of the school. (This is more about commitment. Does the school

For more adaptive changes related to strategic planning, the school would benefit from providing opportunities for focused work. Educators will need dedicated time, outside of the busy days of teaching and supporting students to learn, reflect, plan, and implement adaptive change. For example, a model of condensed summer workshops.

Additional Information

Additional Information

Standard 1 Principle 2

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: Initiating

School's rating in the Summary Report: Developing

Explanation from the School

Since the Collaborative Conference, our vision of the graduate has been developed and approved.

The process by which the vision of the graduate was developed reflects a shared vision of all of our stakeholders:

January 2019 - We began our process with a survey of the stakeholders: parents, current students, faculty/staff, and community members, as well as recent graduates.

March/April 2019 - Members of the steering committee attended a 2-day NEASC seminar around how to take the feedback from stakeholders and develop them into 4 categories that represent the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal competencies that students should have when they graduate. The categories we drafted after reviewing the survey results and attending the NEASC seminar are:

- Critical Thinker
- Engaged Participant
- Socially Competent Contributor
- Self-aware Individual

We then worked as a faculty to develop related indicators and corresponding rubrics for each competency. As a school/district our goal is to foster multiple opportunities/pathways for students to develop these competencies.

We have focused two school-wide professional development workshops, as well as multiple common planning time meetings, on the following topics related to vision of the graduate: What are we already doing that supports/nurtures this competency? Where can we modify existing practices? What do we need to implement? For students who are achieving/showing this competency - What does it look like? What are their behaviors/habits? Things they say, do, etc.? For students not quite there yet (either on the bubble or not even in the ballpark), how to do we help them develop these habits?

February 2020 - Our vision of the graduate was approved by our school council and presented to school committee.

Discussions continue about including the VOG in developing the district's vision for 2021 and beyond. District administrators are looking at what these competencies mean/look like at their respective grade levels. Part of the process going forward will be to develop benchmarks and agreed upon measurable outcomes. Additionally, we will need to develop a way to convey to students and the community individual and school-wide progress toward meeting those outcomes. This will be part of our 2-5 year school growth plan.

Standard 2 Principle 1

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: Initiating

School's rating in the Summary Report: Developing

Explanation from the School

The explanation for this rating change is the same as the explanation for the Standard 1.2 rating change. The vision of the graduate has been developed and approved since the 2018 Collaborative Conference. Our next 2-5 years will focus on implementation and reporting feedback.

Standard 2 Principle 9

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: Developing

School's rating in the Summary Report: Implementing

Explanation from the School

At the time of the Collaborative Conference, we were a school in the early stages of adopting and embracing technology. Since 2018, we have transformed in many ways. Admittedly, some of these advances in technology have been fast-tracked by the teaching and learning demands of the pandemic, but most of them are substantive and have become standard practice. The faculty was asked to share some ways in which students are using technology to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning. Here's a small sampling of what they shared:

- All lessons and assignments across all departments are fully integrated into the Canvas LMS
- Students in all classes are able to post assignments and receive feedback via Canvas
- Students in all classes are able to share and critique work via Canvas
- Microsoft Teams is universally used by the school community; some examples of ways it is utilized: virtual classes, parent/teacher conferences, student/teacher extra help, team meetings, etc.
- Wellness classes are using a variety of applications (PLT4M, WODIFY, Calm, etc.) to share workouts, track personal progress, practice meditation, etc.
- Art classes are using various applications (Stream, Adobe, etc.) to share demonstrates and enhance the studio experience
- Science classes are using various applications (NOVA, Gizmo, etc.) to conduct labs
- History classes are using Flipgrid to do presentations and OneDrive to do group work
- Math classes are using IXL for adaptive math skill practice as well as for diagnostic purposes
- Music classes are using SMART music as a practice guide as well as a formative assessment tool
- Special Education students are using the tools in Canvas, particularly the calendar feature to track assignments and work on executive function and time-management skills
- Guidance Department has utilized Stream, Teams, Naviance, etc. to engage parents and students and provide important information
- Library Media Center introduced e-books and audiobooks and has increased database usage by 750%

Commendations

Commendation

The monitors and interventions for at-risk students provided by the Student Support Team (SST)

Commendation

The Mentoring Program where each student is provided with the same trusted adult for all four years

Commendation

The addition of the Bridge Block that has provided students with the opportunity for school day access to activities such as extra help, making up assignments or tests, and interventions that would previously have been available only after school

Commendation

The feedback from teachers that provides learners with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning

Commendation

The addition of a half-time adjustment counselor

Commendation

The safe and welcoming culture

Commendation

The promoting of academic success as a priority by displaying academic banners for student achievement

Commendation

The active participation that involves students in decisions that drive the direction of their education

Commendation

The ability to continue to provide opportunities including art shows, concerts, athletics, community services, theatrical performances, and extracurricular activities when safe in the midst of a pandemic

Commendation

The use of the Microsoft translation tool that is embedded in the Teams platform to enable Portuguese-speaking students to participate with real-time closed captioning

Additional Recommendations

Recommendation

Design and provide formal opportunities for representative members of the school community to play meaningful roles in the implementation of the vision of the graduate

Recommendation

Develop and implement a tiered system of intervention support with formalized roles and protocols

Recommendation

Develop and implement a communication plan that shares the vision of the graduate with the entire Abington High School community

Recommendation

Ensure that a formalized teaching and learning plan is executed with fidelity to ensure high quality teaching and learning is embedded within every classroom throughout the school

Recommendation

Promote student voice and choice for learning through continued efforts to promote intellectual risk taking

Recommendation

Formalize a plan that addresses universal instructional practices and common assessment protocols that currently exist throughout the school, but lack consistency

Recommendation

Formalize protocols for academic and social-emotional learning during the Bridge Block

Recommendation

Provide opportunities for professional learning and growth in which educators explore how to design learning experiences that align with the vision of the graduate and provide opportunities for students to practice the skills in the vision of the graduate and receive feedback on their growth

Recommendation

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FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This Initial/Decennial Accreditation Report of the Visiting Team reflects the findings of the school's Summary Report and those of the visiting team. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administrators, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administrators yearly of progress made in aligning with the Standards for Accreditation.

A school's initial/continued Accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing the school's improvement/growth plan based on the Priority Areas validated by the visiting team and recommendations 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, the Commission requires that the principal submit a First Report of Progress and Planning and routine Three- and Six-Year Reports of Progress and Planning describing the school's progress implementing the Priority Areas as well as submitting an updated improvement/growth plan. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards or Priority Areas for Growth are not being met in a satisfactory manner, if additional information is needed on matters relating to the school's alignment with the Standards for Accreditation, or substantive changes occur in the school.

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Substantive Change Policy requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days of occurrence any substantive change which impacts the school's alignment with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Report of Substantive Change must describe the change itself and detail the impacts the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included on the next page. All other substantive changes should be included in the Reports on Progress and Planning and/or the Annual Information Report (AIR) which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed a Self-Reflection that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need, hosted a Collaborative Conference, developed an improvement/growth plan, and completed a Summary Report. The time and effort dedicated to the Accreditation process, school improvement/growth, the Summary Report, and the preparation for the visit ensured a successful Initial/Decennial Accreditation visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Schools

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Robert Baldwin - Fairhaven Public Schools

Assistant Chair: Mr. Geoffrey Anstatt - Plymouth North High School

Team Members

Kathleen Kelly - Southbridge High School

Mr. Thomas McManamon - Falmouth High School

Ms. Coni Moore - Winthrop High School

Stephanie Santos - Wareham High School