The Connecticut Association of Schools

HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENT PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

Prepared by the High School Professional Studies Committee

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Prepared by the High School Professional Studies Committee
of the Connecticut Association of Schools

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The Connecticut Association of Schools provides exemplary programs and services that promote excellence in the education of all children.

CAS High Shool Professional Studies Committee

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INTRODUCTION:

From the CAS High School Professional Studies Committee

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) High School Professional Studies Committee is dedicated to providing information on educational topics to Connecticut high schools. Over the past several years, the committee has published monographs on topics of interest to educators and made the information collected available to professionals in education. This monograph focuses on the Assessment of Student Learning Standard of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation process. NEASC describes assessment as "... 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 their instruction to better respond to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates the growth and competence of students to parents, school officials, and the public. The results of student learning must be continually discussed and used to develop short-term and long-term strategies for improving curriculum and instruction" (Lab at Brown University & NEASC, 2003). The NEASC Teaching and Learning Standard 4: Assessment of Student Learning is comprised of eight indicators that are described in more detail in the monograph. Strategies and practices adopted at area high schools to meet each of the Assessment Standard indicators are featured in this publication.

The committee would like to thank all of the high schools featured in this monograph for responding to the survey and sharing information on assessment practices they have implemented to support student learning. In addition, we would like to acknowledge Janet Allison of the Commission on Public Schools for her contribution to this monograph.

We hope this document provides leaders with ideas from best practices that can be implemented for meeting the goal of the NEASC Assessment of Student Learning Standard.

Linda P. Yankowski, Ed.D., Chair
CAS High School Professional Studies Committee

Reference:
Lab at Brown University & NEASC (2003). High School Accreditation and Restructuring. Retrieved February 6, 2007, from http:www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/neasc/std4.shtml

introduction

INTRODUCTION:

From the New England Association of Schools and Colleges

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools

The Standard for Accreditation on Assessment of Student Learning is one of the Commission on Public Secondary Schools four Teaching and Learning Standards. The design of the Standards for Accreditation purposefully integrates a number of concepts within the other three Teaching and Learning Standards on Mission and Expectations for Student Learning, Curriculum, and Instruction. The purpose of assessment is to inform students of their learning progress and teachers of the importance of adjusting their instructional practices to more effectively meet the needs of students. The Standard on Assessment of Student Learning requires that the professional staff use a variety of assessment strategies/processes to judge, evaluate, interpret, and/or grade student work. In addition, the Standard calls for collaborative discussion by the professional staff to develop short-term and long-term strategies for improving curriculum and instruction using assessment results/data.

A member school is required to develop and implement a formal process to assess individual student and school-wide progress in achieving the academic expectations as stated in its mission and expectations for student learning document, using school-wide rubrics that identify the various levels of achievement. While a writing assignment used by teachers in particular courses will vary, the appropriate school-wide rubric should be used by all teachers assessing an identified academic expectation. This practice provides students with a sufficient number and variety of opportunities to practice and achieve an academic expectation across curricular areas and builds their understanding of the use of rubrics in assessing their academic progress. As students' use of the school-wide rubrics increases, the Standard on Assessment requires that they have opportunities to self-assess their work to further understand the extent to which they are achieving each academic expectation. Classroom teachers must also be using course-specific rubrics to assess student achievement of course-specific learning goals. Teachers should clarify for students what they are expected to know, understand, and be able to demonstrate in meeting the school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals being assessed.

As well, the school must adopt social and civic expectations as part of its mission and expectations document for which the school has identified benchmarks to assess/measure how well it is accomplishing these expectations. Assessment data gathered from these benchmarks may be used to review attendance and tardiness rates, disciplinary records, community service projects, and co-curricular participation rates to prompt some changes in related policies and procedures and also guide program revision and curriculum design. Schools are not required to use rubrics to assess the social and civic expectations.

The Standard on Assessment of Student Learning further requires that teachers use a variety of assessment strategies, both formative and summative, in evaluating student work and assessing student growth over time. The glossary of terms located on the website at Brown University www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/neasc provides definitions of authentic, alternative, portfolio, and performance assessments. Included in the variety of assessments teachers may use are: research papers; student projects/exhibitions; individual student presentations; group presentations; Power Point presentations; student portfolios; and quizzes and tests. A number of schools are currently using senior projects as a culminating, summative assessment of student performance on multiple school-wide academic expectations for student learning. Sound assessment processes call for a school to regularly gather, examine, discuss, and share student work for the purpose of modifying/improving curriculum and instructional practices both short-term and long-term. The website www.lasw.org may be useful to schools that are in the initial stages of developing protocols for examining and discussing student work.

Finally, the Standard requires that a school regularly communicate to students and their parents individual student progress in achieving each of the school-wide academic expectations for student learning based on the use of the school-wide rubrics and aggregate data on the school's progress in achieving the academic expectations using locally developed assessments. The school's progress in achieving its social and civic expectations must also be reported to the public on a regular basis.

Janet Allison
Deputy Director, Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Some of the information used in this document is taken from the website at Brown University cited above and the Commission's Guide to Developing and Implementing the Mission which is located on www.neasc.org in the CPSS homepage.

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD 4:

Assessment for Student Learning

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

1. The school shall have a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics. (pages 5, 8, 13, 17)

2. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations. (page 18)

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. (pages 5, 17)

4. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics. (pages 5, 17)

5. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time. (pages 5, 12, 15)

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. (pages 5, 9, 10, 14, 19)

7. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. (pages 5, 20)

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. (page 11)

BRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Last NEASC Visit: 2006

Assessment Standard Indicators: #1, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

Program Description:

Branford High School is a student-centered, learning-centered school with a clear mission and high, well-articulated academic expectations for all students. BHS has been developing and revising its academic, civic and social expectations since the early 1990's and now has in place a focused mission statement and twelve performance based graduation requirements (PGR's) - two each in reading, writing, math, and science; one each in fine and practical arts, technology, community service, and an independent senior project/presentation. *(See Appendix A for B.H.S. mission statement)*

Each PGR has a rubric with descriptors of varied levels of quality - performance standards. Almost all courses taught at BHS are aligned with one or more of the Performance Graduation Requirements (PGRs). While there is no PGR for world languages, that program has its own set of academic expectations and performance standards. The PGRs aligned with each course are presented to the members of the community in a variety of manners, including the school's Program of Studies and teacher course descriptions handed out at the beginning of each semester and at parent conference nights. Using the school-wide rubrics, teachers assess their students' progress in achieving the learning expectations defined in the PGRs. At the end of each semester, these ratings are sent home on a PGR report card in addition to and separate from the traditional grade reports. The data from these reports is used to adjust curriculum and to foster professional collaboration about what is "quality" student work as well as to share instructional and assessment strategies.

Branford High School provides the needed support to help all students achieve the school's high expectations. The student assistance team uses attendance, behavioral, and academic data to identify students who are experiencing difficulty and for whom intervention may be needed. There is a very successful alternative learning program, Horizons, for students who experience difficulty in the "regular" classroom and these students are held to the same standards - PGRs - as every other student. They participate in all student activities and take some courses in the regular program. Co-teaching is a common practice at BHS and while the special education population has grown significantly, the number of specific special education classes/sections has remained constant. 90% of students with special needs are enrolled in standard core courses and receive support through co-teaching and/or paraprofessionals. BHS also has a weekly advisory program. During this time, small groups of students meet with a faculty advisor to review various topics depending on grade level and time of year. Tutors are available to students throughout the school day. The Branford Youth Mentoring program provides mentors for "at-risk" students.

The pervading belief in BHS is that all students can learn. For the most part, students in grades 9 and 10 are in heterogeneously grouped classes. Less than 1/3 of freshmen take "accelerated" courses - e.g. geometry/biology - in place of Exploratory Science and Algebra I. Freshmen and sophomore classes are kept purposefully small so the teacher gets to know the student both as a student and an individual. The small, heterogeneous classes require diversified and personalized instructional techniques, active and collaborative learning, and a positive sense of community both within each classroom as well as throughout the school.

With all 9th and 10th grade classes being heterogeneous, differentiated instruction is a common characteristic of classes throughout the school. Students are actively involved in the learning process with teachers acting more as coaches than "sages on the stage". Collaborative learning, project and performance-based learning, with high levels of integrated technology are common throughout the school. Significant professional collaboration within and across departments is embedded in the school's culture and schedule through goal focused professional improvement teams, department meetings, the monthly professional development hour, and weekly collaboration periods. Almost all this collaboration time is focused on how to adjust curriculum, share instructional strategies, develop common assessments and, as a result, improve student learning. Student performance data - CAPT, SAT, SAT 2, AP, ACTs, PGRs, and departmental assessments - are used to assess strengths and areas in the educational program as well as to identify students in our school who need additional attention. For example, this year 40+ freshmen were identified through 8th grade CMT scores as performing below proficiency in reading. A

BRANFORD, cont'd

plan was developed and implemented for five two-hour training sessions involving more than 20 volunteer teachers across disciplines to learn and share instructional strategies that foster increased reading comprehension. Recognizing that the PGR rubrics inhibited clear communications with students and effective use in the classroom, 18 teachers also volunteered to be trained in a workshop to run an all day professional development program to lead the faculty in revising these rubrics and to broaden teacher understanding of how to more effectively use analytic versus holistic rubrics. Two years ago, almost 20 teachers volunteered to be trained and, in turn, to be trainers for their peers on differentiated instruction techniques. The New Teacher Orientation program is extensive, beginning before school opens and continuing into February, meeting approximately 3 times per month. Beyond learning the practices and policies of the school, new teachers share their concerns, learn collaboration protocols, conduct peer observation, and share lessons and student work.

Students are respected as responsible young adults and the faculty as true professionals dedicated to improved student learning. Students and teachers surpass those expectations. The incidents of physical conflict among students are extremely low, less than 4 or 5 times a year. Vandalism is minimal. Average daily attendance is around 95%. Students organize a wide variety of activities from a school-wide picnic, concerts, dances, blood drives, fund raising for a variety of causes, etc. Participation in sports and activities is very high despite the large number of students who work during the school week.

Parents and students are involved in the school process in a variety of ways. Like teachers, they are members of the school's Academic Standards Committee which oversees the entire educational program for BHS. Parents and students are always asked to join special study committees, as well as to participate in the hiring of new teachers. Parents and students meet individually with their guidance counselor to select next year's courses and to identify future goals. Frequent and varied communications are used to keep parents knowledgeable of school and their students' progress. Some of the venues include: phone messages; emails from both teachers and the school itself; newsletters, class coffees; special guidance programs; booster clubs; periodic surveys; parent conferences; and individual course registration conferences with parent, student and counselor.

Teachers are involved in revision and adjustments to the curriculum as well as most major decisions about the operation of the school. Through collaboration within departments, membership on system and school committees, as well as membership on the BHS Academic Standards Committee, the faculty makes the difference both in and outside the classroom. Through these experiences and materials provided by the school administration, teachers are kept abreast of "best practice" and curriculum updates. The school's leadership team consisting of the department chairs and the principal collaborate on all the issues that impact the educational program. The team adjusts the school's professional calendar, identifies professional development needs, plans programs, and, through the Academic Standards Committee, sets the school's academic policies. An example of this work was developing school-wide course prerequisites that provide all students the opportunity to gain admission to higher level courses even if they did not achieve the stated grade prerequisite.

The professional evaluation process begins with teachers identifying goals aligned with the system and school-wide goals for improved student learning. Teachers participate in "professional improvement teams" or "peer observation groups" to share their efforts in achieving those goals. The observation process requires teachers to identify course and unit goals, to describe the learning activities and transitions of the class to be observed, and to evaluate how they will assess student learning and understanding during instruction. After the administrative observation the teachers bring samples of student work related to the lesson, write a reflective essay, and discuss how well the students achieved the lesson's objectives. The process also requires that teachers reflect on what they might do differently next time/next lesson. At the end of the year, teachers submit a log of their collaborative meetings and report on the impact of their efforts to achieve their goals on student learning. One expectation is to identify data that demonstrates improved student learning. That data can include course assessments, departmental assessments, PGR ratings, CAPT, SAT, SAT 2, ACT, AP scores as well as other relevant evidence of student learning. Also, at the end of the year, each teacher submits a reflective essay on his/her efforts to achieve their professional goals.

BRANFORD, cont'd

Outcomes and Benefits:

Evidence of continuous improvement includes the following statistics:

- BHS identified as one of 4 high schools in CT to show the largest increase in students achieving Goal on CAPT
- Students from the class of 2005 had the highest SAT verbal scores in BHS history
- Students from the class of 2005 had the second highest SAT math scores in BHS history
- BHS currently has the highest percentage of their graduates going on to post-high school education in BHS history
- BHS currently has the highest number of students taking AP tests in BHS history

Out of approximately 160 CT high schools, comparing 2001 to 2005's percent of students achieving the demanding "GOAL" Standard, while 2 high schools demonstrated the most increase on all four components of the CAPT tests, 2 other high schools achieved the largest increases on three components of the CAPT. Branford High School was one of those latter two schools. Thus, in terms of the increase in the percent of students achieving the goal standard on the CAPT, Branford High School is one of the four most improved high schools in CT.

In summary, Branford High School is a real community, with high levels of mutual respect and trust, with a climate that enables both students and teachers to feel they are important members of that community, and that has clearly set high academic expectations for every student. The school's mission and twelve performance graduation requirements drive everything that happens in this unusual school community. Despite the extreme diversity of the socio-economic make up of the town and school, all members of the school community are respected and the students' academic performance continues to improve each year. Improved Learning for Everyone is the BHS motto and it is not only said, it is truly believed and lived.

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EAST HARTFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Last NEASC Visit: 1999

Assessment Standard Indicator: #1

Program Description

School-wide Learning Expectation Rubrics were developed by the faculty based on the school's mission statement. The five learning expectations include:

1. Learn to write effectively.
2. Learn to speak effectively.
3. Learn to locate, analyze, and evaluate information in order to solve problems and make intelligent decisions.
4. Learn the skills required for productive use of technology.
5. Develop skills for success in the workplace.

The rubrics for each learning expectations describe achievement at four levels: Exemplary, Proficient, Developing, and Not Acceptable.

On four occasions each year, at a time coinciding with issuance of progress reports, student-teacher conferences are held to evaluate student progress relative to the learning expectations. Each teacher participates in this process, and documents student progress on a Learning Expectations Evaluation Sheet. During the conference, the student self-assesses his or her progress towards each of the five Learning Expectations based on the appropriate rubric. The teacher offers an assessment of progress, as well. Comments from the conference are recorded on the evaluation sheet. The evaluation sheets are kept in student files which are maintained in each department. Department data is collected by the Data Team representative to contribute to the overall assessment of the school in meeting student learning expectations.

Outcomes and Benefits

The process of meeting with the student offers an opportunity to review performance in the classroom that both the teacher and student may not have the chance to do otherwise. The personalization component builds trust between student and teacher while offering students a chance to reflect on their learning, their needs, their successes and how they see themselves in the total picture of their education.

This process also reinforces and lends focus, support and purposefulness to their instruction. For example, science students analyze data gathered from lab inquiry in problem solving and these rubrics clearly indicate level of achievement in looking at the results.

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JOEL BARLOW H.S., REDDING

Last NEASC Visit: 2004

Assessment Standard Indicator: #6

Program Description:

Over the past three years, Joel Barlow's administrative team has conducted an annual calendar review of the meetings scheduled for standing committees throughout the coming school year. Each committee is then asked to donate a portion of its meeting dates for the purpose of clearing calendars for "no meeting days." These freed dates are then transformed into "departmental collaborative days" on which teachers convene to examine student work. Knowing how difficult it is to continue adding expectations and responsibilities without looking creatively at the precious resource of time, the entire faculty has embraced this practice and has supported its continuation.

Outcomes and Benefits:

The outcomes of teachers' collaborative efforts include common assessments, revised curricula and new instructional strategies. Other outcomes include course-embedded tasks and support lab packets to address Public Act 01-166 requirements.

In the Humanities Department, study teams have formed to examine the connections that students make in interdisciplinary tasks for integrated courses such as Art History. In Science, teachers look at graphing assignments and lab reports to establish common expectations across courses. In the area of Technology Education, Graphic Arts teachers meet to share and evaluate student portfolios.

A longstanding practice at Joel Barlow is the junior writing portfolio. Each year, along with outside scorers, members of the school's faculty convene to be re-calibrated and then to score junior writing portfolios. As part of compliance with Public Act 01-166, it is a preferred expectation that all students achieve a score of four on the school's nationally recognized writing rubric. After the careful assessment of junior portfolios, several opportunities for portfolio re-construction in the school's Writing Center with professional tutors and during Summer Academy enrichment with peer tutors are provided to students. In the 2004-2005 school year, the Writing Center staff held a total of 1176 individual appointments with students over the first 156 days. In March of that school year, twenty-four assessors evaluated the portfolios of 238 juniors. The overall average was 4.0 before portfolio rebuilds. After thirty students completed the re-construction process, the overall average increased to 4.1, resulting in 86% of the class scoring at or above the "effective" writer's level.

A third example of collaborative teacher practices related to assessment of student work is the senior synthesis paper and oral exam. In January of 2006, 201 students prepared individual synthesis papers and then sat for individual interviews with 4 teams of English IV teachers. The English discipline meets annually to review and revise its protocols for the assessment of papers and the extensive interviews conducted with students at the end of the first semester. In addition to refreshing teachers on process and expectations for student performance, these meetings inevitably lead to candid and productive conversations about the syllabus, the cognitive levels and efficacy of interviews, and the classroom teaching/learning practices most conducive to this rigorous culminating event. In the course of the debriefing process this year, the team discussed how to better meet the needs of students who seem disenfranchised by the current curriculum. In addition, conversations developed about methods and strategies for teaching poetry to adolescent learners. Collaborative discussions like these over time have allowed the English discipline to refine its curriculum and better meet the instructional needs of all learners.

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GRANBY MEMORIAL H.S.

Last NEASC Visit: 1997

Assessment Standard Indicator: #6

Program Description:

As part of the school's commitment to implementing the principles of a Professional Learning Community (PLC), in 2003/2004 Granby Memorial High School instituted a one-hour weekly late arrival at the start of the day every Thursday morning to provide teachers with time to collaborate on student learning . This weekly time provides all teachers with the opportunity to share student work, develop and administer common assessments, and align curricular and instructional practices. All teachers are involved and are members of collaborative teams that are designed around shared students. Each PLC team writes a SMART (Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Results Orientated, Timely) goal that guides their work. Many professional development opportunities were provided to the staff on professional learning communities and on how to run productive meetings that focus on student learning.

Some Logistics about the late arrival:

Students take the bus at the normal time or make their own arrangements to arrive to school for 8:30. Students may elect to arrive late and in time for their first period class. The following are the types of supervised activities that are available for those students who arrive at 7:30 a.m:

- Band, chorus, & drama practices
- Computer research/writing labs
- Media center for research.
- Art rooms for project work.
- Weight room.
- Developmental guidance programs
- Tutoring & Homework assistance is available in the Learning Center.
- Drama Club will run different activities (auditions, rehearsals, etc.).
- Student government and some clubs meet.
- The commons for relaxation and quiet study.
- Two gyms are available for recreational use.

What procedures are in place for student safety and accountability during the late arrival?

- Teachers are on duty in the normal areas as the students arrive at 7:30 off the buses and when students arrive in time for their 8:35 class.
- Administration and support staff supervise (teaching assistants, auxiliary staff) the activities.
- Attendance is taken in each activity by 7:45 a.m.
- Students cannot leave campus once they arrive on campus.
- Student movement around the building is only permissible with a pass.
- Students who arrive between 7:30 and 8:15 must report to the office for a late pass to an activity.
- Students arriving in time for the first class of the day should arrive to school after 8:15.

GRANBY MEMORIAL, cont'd

Outcomes and Benefits

The PLC late arrival has become part of the normal practice of the school and is fully supported by staff, parents, and the Board of Education. The faculty and staff's commitment to the values of a PLC and its ability to function as a PLC is the school's long-term plan for sustained and systemic school improvement. Three years later, there is much evidence and achievement data (CAPT, SAT, AP) to suggest that good things are happening at the school as a result. Benefits also include a commitment to strong and timely support system for students that are learning, data & technology is used to measure student performance and to make instructional decisions, school pride, teacher efficacy and recruitment of new faculty.

Assessment Standard Indicator: #8

Program Description:

This indicator requires all schools to regularly report on students' individual progress in meeting the school's academic, civic, and social learning expectations. Granby Memorial High School first started to report this information on report cards at the end of the 2006 school year. The students' and school's progress in meeting the learning expectations are now reported at the end of each semester on each student's report card.

In addition to a student's academic grades, a student's progress in meeting the academic and civic expectations are reflected on the report card along with the school's performance in meeting the social expectations, and in our case, the performance standards for graduation. The rubrics for the academic and civic expectations are printed on the back of the report card. A separate rubric exists for the social expectations. This is also sent home with the report cards as there is not enough room to print it on the back of the report card. *(See Appendix C for rubrics)*

Outcomes & Benefits

The process for reporting is not cumbersome. As you may notice, the actual reporting takes the place of the second comment on the report card that teachers sometime report to parents. This was our initial attempt to report out the performance of our students and school in meeting the academic, civic, and social expectations, in a way that did not generate a lot of additional work for teachers and staff. Parents relatively understand the reporting system, recognizing its pros and cons.

This is by no means a perfect system, but it may serve as a useful starting point for schools that are struggling with the reporting requirement associated with student learning expectations and this indicator. See the sample report card that follows.

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HILL REGIONAL CAREER MAGNET H.S.

Last NEASC Visit: 2000

Assessment Indicator: #5

Program Description:

In the fall of 2001, Hill Regional Career Magnet High School was one of the first schools in Connecticut to undergo accreditation utilizing NEASC's new Standards. In addressing this indicator in the two-year self study, the Assessment Standards Committee created a systematic process for teachers to discuss analyze, and implement changes based on assessment data related to the school's mission statement and stated learning objectives for all students. This was generally facilitated in department meetings with some feedback to general faculty. These "data" findings focused generally on standardized test results - i.e., the CMT, PSAT, CAPT, CTE (Connecticut Technology Education), SAT I and II, AP, and ACT scores; system-provided common Mid-Year and Final Examinations, with some limited additional focus on school-based student report card/transcript records.

The post-visitation report provided us with a small series of recommendations, one of which indicated we needed to enhance and expand the assessment database, our teachers' use of and involvement in compiling and analyzing data and our utilization of the critical information it provided us.

We immediately began to address this recommendation and, with the support of the Assessment Committee and the Steering Committee, planned and began implementing what became a continuing series of revisions and initiatives in this area. We constantly analyze and address this area as we have found that it affords us salient and extremely valuable data that we use to make adjustments and improvement to our already successful curriculum and magnet program offerings and strategies on how to maximize student outcomes.

Outcomes and Benefits:

Within the past year, we established, trained and supported five in-school Data Teams regarding provision and access to all standardized test data, analyses, charts, etc., from the Central Office's Data Center and the NHPS Evaluation Specialist. The teams include an administrator, and have cross-curricular representation from each department in the school, inclusive of guidance. Each team's task is to address data using the following 5 step process: Collect and Chart Data and Results; Analyze Strengths and Obstacles; Establish Goals; Select Instructional Strategies; and Determine Results Indicators, and periodically report on all available student assessment data and outcomes defined and projected, based upon the five step process. Included in our definition of "available student assessment data" are the following: school-based placement tests for incoming ninth graders, standardized test scores (see above list), report cards, system Data Center generated report card statistics; school wide rubrics based upon the school's school-wide Academic Expectations as sanctioned by NEASC; standards-based, teacher made quarterly examinations in each discipline; Mid-Year examination data, and even individual teacher-made tests (if necessary or requested) to faculty.

Whole staff training was provided at a series of faculty meetings last year to which we invited the system's Data Supervisor who provided large and small group workshops on data disaggregating, data analysis, and data presentation and had faculty work together on analyzing and manipulating the various data. As an outcome, data is regularly discussed, analyzed in departmental meetings and then in faculty meetings. Outcomes and recommendations are tabulated and charted (generally, we compile a series of formal data charts - departmentally - twice a year) and necessary changes are implemented after analyzing the data from a wide variety of sources. Administrators gather, compile, chart and analyze school-wide performance and behavioral data. As data identifies status and traces trends, often, in analysis, the need for change is identified and addressed. All changes (curricular and procedural as these relate to assessment and assessment strategies) are processed through the school's curriculum committee, the Educational Leadership Team (ELT), itself a cross-curricular, representative team comprised of teachers, guidance counselor, library media-specialist, an administrator and the school's PTSO parent liaison.

The school is in full implementation, but we see this as a process that, by its very definition must itself be constantly assessed, analyzed and adjusted to afford our program and students maximum outcomes.

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LITCHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Last NEASC Visit: 2004

Assessment Standard Indicator: #1

Program Description:

Litchfield High School has worked to improve reading comprehension over the past three years. More recently, the connection between reading and writing has advanced.

During the self-assessment phase leading up to the NEASC visit, a school committee established school-wide rubrics for each of the expectations for student learning.

At the end of the 2002-03 school year, the Litchfield Board of Education established a district-wide goal to improve reading comprehension.

In an effort to build capacity among teachers, the principal suggested focusing efforts on the Reading Rubric for all teachers. In this way, professional staff had time to work on one area, rather than multiple areas all at once. During the school year, all departments adapted the criteria of the reading rubric to their own area. Based on CAPT data, the science teacher knew that some students struggled with reading, interpreting, and drawing conclusions form data tables, charts, and graphs. They addressed these needs as they adapted the reading rubric to their area. Math teachers saw that students struggled with reading open-ended, constructed responses. Other departments made similar adaptations relating to reading.

During the 2004-05 school year, with the Board of Education reading goal still in place, each classroom teacher was asked to personalize their evaluation goal around reading. Teachers met in departments to work toward a common approach to the reading goal. In moving to the assessment piece, students would write about their understanding, interpretation, and critical stance from a reading assignment. By the end of the year, it became obvious that writing to address higher order thinking tasks was a challenge unto itself.

At the beginning of the current school year, at the suggestion of the department leaders, John Collins was invited to address the faculty at a professional development day about the impact of writing as a way to express the thinking process of a reading assignment. John Collins is a well-known consultant who has outlined five types of writing. The school was somewhat familiar with his writing strategies, and wished to develop them further. The Collins method capitalizes on focus, correction areas (FCAs) as a way to developmentally advance higher order thinking. Teachers would find FCAs from the reading rubric. In this way, strategies can be developed that address strength/weaknesses from student writing. The goal for the school year was expanded to address reading comprehension as expressed in essay writing.

Outcomes and Benefits:

Following the Collins method, each teacher uses essay writing to assess important reading skills and collects student work in a folder. Periodically, the principal will ask to see samples of scored student work, and review it with the department leader.

For all of this to work, the majority of all faculty meetings for the past three years, have been professional development workshops for teachers. The administrators, department leaders, reading consultant and media specialists jointly plan the staff meetings to advance the district, school, department, and teacher goals to improve reading.

Our attempts continue to be a work in process. Time at department meetings is devoted to looking at student work, and helping each other advance the department goal in regards to reading and writing. By the end of the school year, teachers will have collected data to support their efforts and will bring this data to an end of the year conference with the administrators. The school has a unified approach for all personnel to work toward an attainable school goal.

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NEW FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Last NEASC Visit: 1997

Assessment Standard Indicator: #6

Program Description:

One of the goals of New Fairfield High School's school improvement plan for the past two years has been to develop professional learning communities. During the 2004-2005 school year the faculty members received professional development in six student work and problem solving protocols. A Critical Friends group was also formed last year, consisting of teacher volunteers who met to analyze student work by applying the protocols and training received.

One way we are trying to meet expectation six of the assessment standard and also address the school improvement plan at New Fairfield High School this year is through monthly department meetings. Our departments serve as content-based learning communities. One of the two monthly department meetings is devoted to reviewing essential student learning through student work; developing common instructional strategies, assessments and rubrics; analyzing current levels of achievement; setting new achievement goals; assessing teacher results and then adjusting teacher lessons with regard to the results.

To accommodate all of these goals, the six protocols are used: consultancy, tuning, collaborative assessment conference (CAC), ATLAS (adapted from the CAC), describing student work, and charrette. Each one of these protocols has a different function, ranging from helping the presenter think more expansively about a problem s/he is facing to helping educators determine why student work has not reached predetermined goals or standards.

At New Fairfield High School teachers may work individually or with colleagues to present student work using a protocol. All teachers present a lesson to their colleagues using one of the protocols at least one time during the school year. Teachers have appreciated the feedback, and departments and teachers have made changes to improve student learning.

Outcomes and Benefits:

An example of a suggested improvement that resulted from the application of the tuning protocol is modifying the final assessments in some science courses. The exams will be performance-based learning activities. The monthly application of protocols to showcase successful assessment strategies and to assist instruction will definitely continue at New Fairfield High School. Every month at a faculty meeting, a faculty member discusses a promising practice with the staff, which has resulted in an increased interest and participation in interdisciplinary collaboration. There has been and continues to be an increasing amount of analysis of student work which drives instruction and curriculum changes. The school is now in the discussion phase of developing a plan for student-led conferences to replace their present Fall and Spring parent/teacher conferences. The goal is to have students meet with the parent & teacher at the conference and present their work and progress.

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NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL H.S.

Last NEASC Visit: 2002

Assessment Standard Indicator : #5

Program Description:

Northwestern Regional High School is a learning community committed to researching, developing and implementing the best curriculum, instruction and assessment possible. As a staff, we are committed to cooperatively exploring ways to best assess the learning of our students; we genuinely care bout "what our students know".

Prior to our 2002 NEASC evaluation, there had been much discussion about assessment strategies and the utilization of assessment as a teaching and learning tool. We realized that for meaningful assessment to occur, we first had to identify the essential understanding for each curriculum area and link them to our graduation standards. After these learnings were identified, we proceeded to research assessment strategies that would allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and construct meaning from their course work. Discussions at the department level focused on gaining an understanding of the characteristics of good assessment (i.e. communicating objectives, developing clear criteria for quality work and student success, and providing instrument models whereby students and parents understand the attributes of high-quality performance), in other words, rubric development.

The administrative team, including department chairmen, played a vital role in fostering discussion among the staff during department and faculty meetings about assessment strategies. In-service sessions, conducted at the department level, were devoted solely to improving the assessment strategies in all discipline areas. Thus, prior to the arrival of the NEASC committee, much work had been done in the area of assessment throughout the high school community. The visiting committee concluded that our teachers implement an "array of classroom assessment procedures to assess student knowledge, skills and competencies". In addition to the traditional homework assignments, quizzes, and lab write-ups, our teachers employ performance-based assessments, portfolios, projects, and student presentations. The cornerstone of these efforts is the use of individualized rubrics to guide standards in every course.

Currently, Northwestern Regional High School is continuing to work on developing quality rubrics to assess student work across the curriculum. This year, we undertook and initiative focused on improving Reading in all discipline areas utilizing a school-wide rubric in every course we offer. Currently, we also are engaged in a similar initiative in Writing and plan to create formalized assessments for civic and social expectations. At Northwestern Regional High School, we are passionate about developing a wide-range of assessment techniques in each course in order to give all of our students the opportunity to truly "who what they know"!

Outcomes and Benefits:

As Northwestern Regional High School has begun to implement rubrics to assess students work across all curricular areas we have observed a higher level of communication among teachers about the content and curriculum they are delivering. Discussions among staff at the department level has centered around ensuring that the rubrics that were developed have clearly defined standards of performance and expectations that are aligned with National, State and Departmental Standards. During the development of these rubrics rich discussion occurred that was focused on what the essential and enduring understanding and skills were that we wanted all students to possess when they had completed a course. The hard work of developing these rubrics has served to increase the coherence and organization of each curricular area and has led to the development of a common language through which to view each course offered by a department. This process has required that

NORTHWESTERN REG., cont'd

teachers teaching the same course have the opportunity to meet and rigorously discuss their curriculum on a regular basis. We have also integrated the departmental rubrics into our school-wide expectations for student learning in order to reflect our vision of the attributes of an educated person.

Thus, through this process we formulated a vision of the enduring understandings and skills that a Northwestern Regional High School student should possess upon graduation. As our curriculum evolves we continue to reflect on what we want our students to know and how best to measure their performance level.

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RHAM HIGH SCHOOL, HEBRON

Last NEASC Visit: 2004

Assessment Standard Indicators: #1, 3 & 4

Program Description:

The RHAM High School faculty has developed school-wide rubrics for each of our expectations for student learning. Teachers are responsible for using the rubrics and assessing students in at least two of the expectations. Each department is responsible for addressing at least two of the expectations. The English, social studies, math and science departments have identified specific assignments that are aligned with the expectations they are responsible for and the associated rubrics. These assignments are placed into each student's portfolio. Each student reviews and culls their portfolio each year. If a student fails to score proficient or better on one or more sections of the CAPT, they must use the work in their portfolios to demonstrate that they have met RHAM's academic expectations. *(See Appendices D-H)*

A graduation committee composed of faculty members developed the process. The committee was responsible for developing and coordinating the school-wide rubrics with our expectations for student learning. Each of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges standards committees was responsible for developing a rubric aligned with one of the learning expectations. These rubrics were edited by the graduation committee and presented to the faculty for final approval. Graduation committee members also meet with each senior who most use his of her portfolio for graduation.

The implementation of school-wide rubrics has resulted in a great deal of focused discussion regarding academic rigor and the development of essential questions. Teachers are more focused on providing students with rich assignments that are aligned with the school-wide expectations and that are reflective of our graduation requirements. Although defending a portfolio can be stressful, our students have risen to the occasion and have done an exemplary job of discussing their work with graduation committee members. Students are asked a series of focused questions and typically do an impressive job of explaining how they approached each assignment and how they might use the skills they have acquired beyond high school. The process has been so successful. We have developed and are currently implementing a formal demonstration portfolio requirement for all graduating seniors.

Outcomes and Benefits:

The implementation of school-wide rubrics has resulted in a great deal of focused discussion regarding academic rigor and the development of essential questions. Teachers are more focused on providing students with rich assignments that are aligned with the school-wide expectations and that are reflective of our graduation requirements. Although defending a portfolio can be stressful, our students have risen to the occasion and have done an exemplary job of discussing their work with graduation committee members. Students are asked a series of focused questions and typically do an impressive job of explaining how they approached each assignment and how they might use the skills they have acquired beyond high school. The process has been so successful; we have developed and are currently implementing a formal demonstration portfolio requirement for all graduating seniors.

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SUFFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Last NEASC Visit: 1997

Assessment Standard Indicator: #2

Program Description:

Suffield High School considers student involvement in activities relating to the school's civic and social expectations as critical in order to improve the climate of the school.

Detailed indications, which include demonstrating a spirit of volunteerism, respect for environment, awareness of the school's role in the community, understanding American systems of government, appreciation of diversity and respectful behavior, are used to identify the success of the school's civic and social progress.

Information about dropout rates, attendance, tardiness, suspensions, awards and community service hours are located in the guidance office and all disciplinary files are located in the vice principal's office. These figures are reviewed by the guidance department and the administration to identify at risk students and calculate student achievement. Results are often used to make changes in the school wide expectations if necessary.

Outcomes and Benefits:

Suffield views student involvement in activities relating to the school's civic and social expectations as critical in improving the climate of the school. As a result of these activities, more opportunities are provided for teachers and students to cooperate with each other outside of the classroom. The student-teacher relationships at Suffield benefit from having positive interactions away from the traditional classroom setting. This atmosphere provides opportunities for communication to occur between the students and teachers that enhance the overall positive learning environment at Suffield High School. According to the Endicott Survey, over 70% of students feel comfortable going to a teacher if they have a question or need help.

Objective assessment information on student's dropout rates, attendance, tardiness, suspensions, awards and community service hours are kept on file. This allows staff and administration to have assessable data to profile a student that might be at risk. This data also allows administrators and teachers to help push those students that might be on the bubble for recognition i.e., honor roll, scholarships, NHS.

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TRUMBULL HIGH SCHOOL

Last NEASC Visit: 2003

Assessment Standard Indicator: #6

Program Description:

The teachers meet monthly by level of courses taught within their departments where several activities related to curriculum and assessment are addressed. For example, teachers of level one world language classes met and selected the topic "Using the present tense verbs in reading and writing activities." The results of these discussions are used to monitor and adjust the curriculum. The staff also brings a collection of short and current samples of student work to these meetings to discuss, analyze and validate the success of the assessments. These tasks are both teacher generated and text book ancillary materials and many are performance-based such as a writing activity based on a topic where students are prompted to respond to open-ended questions. Rubrics for all assessments are reviewed and/or modified when necessary. Teachers also share and highlight successful instructional strategies they used leading up to these assessments. The group documents the successful activities and this is shared with the entire department. All of this information is shared with the curriculum writing committee and used during the curriculum writing and revision cycles.

The departments met bi-monthly and to comply with this NEASC indicator, one of these meetings has been devoted to teacher team meetings by level of courses. All faculty members are involved in level meetings within their departments. The department leaders have coordinated how this time is used.

Outcomes and Benefits:

The work that teachers do in the level meetings is a year-long process that leads towards specific recommendations for improving the curriculum. The information is used to drive changes in the curriculum and to share instructional strategies. In addition, some interdepartmental collaboration and sharing of ideas has been a result.

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WESTON HIGH SCHOOL

Last NEASC Visit: 2003

Assessment Standard Indicator: #7

Program Description:

The district administration and the building administration of Weston High School continue to support a variety of professional development opportunities focusing on assessment. With input from staff surveys, the professional development committee designs ongoing training to promote the development and use of the Concept-based Curriculum. This includes using differentiation, critical friends groups, the tuning protocol, inter-departmental and departmental assessment sessions, holistic scoring training and best practices in general. Highly successful and worth noting is the teachers-training-teachers model. It has been very effective because it builds relationships, develops unofficial mentors and promotes ongoing conversations about teaching and learning. The staff was also involved in critical friends activities that included looking at student work such as assignments and assessments, incorporating authentic problem solving, and using rubrics and portfolios in their courses.

A survey was developed for the staff to respond to what would interest them in developing their teaching and assessment practices and it solicited teachers who would like to share their expertise in future workshops. This information guided the programming of the in-house professional development opportunities throughout the following year.

The established curriculum development process with a focus on concept-based components requires formulating essential questions, planning unit organizers and assessment tools to address higher order thinking. Teachers' interests were generated as a result of the need to have this curriculum format in place and implemented. Training on writing the Concept-based Curriculum is provided throughout the school year and into the summer and these intense training sessions also set the stage for department-level collaboration on significant assessments. These significant assessments have fostered some interdepartmental collaboration such as common expectations on research skills.

Staff input and their interests helped guide the professional development committee in the programming of professional development opportunities. A significant contribution was made by individual staff members who shared their expertise with their colleagues using the teachers-training-teachers model.

In the summer, an intensive training session on using the Concept-based Curriculum led by an outside resource person was offered to new teachers and other teachers who wanted a refresher. One professional development focus for the district this year is reviewing K - 12 learning objectives and assessment practices. This work is done by teachers in vertical teams within departments. In addition, significant professional development time has been dedicated to teachers working on developing, evaluating, and analyzing data from benchmark assessments

Outcomes and Benefits:

As a result of staff input, staff interest, workshop choices, workshop content, the teachers-training-teachers model, a dedicated professional development committee and a supportive administration, teachers and learners are benefiting.

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APPENDICES

appendices

APPENDIX A

BRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL:

Mission Statement & Expectations For Student Learning [1]

The mission of BHS is to foster academic and personal excellence. To this end, we join with the home and community to cultivate skills, attitudes, and talents that will prepare our graduates not only to succeed in college and careers, but also to become informed, responsible citizens who respect diversity, value lifelong learning and lead fulfilling lives.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS [2]
The Branford High School graduate is able to:

- Read non-fiction actively and critically for a variety of purposes
- Write using standard English for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Convey ideas and/or feelings through a chosen area of the fine and practical arts
- Use technology to find, organize and communicate information
- Utilize evidence to formulate, support, and present positions
- Understand and appreciate texts from many literary periods and cultures
- Communicate mathematically
- Use mathematical reasoning in problem solving
- Demonstrate an understanding of and apply the basic principles of biological, earth and/or physical science
- Identify and design techniques for solving problems in science or technology
- Design and execute a major project that fulfills the student's own stated purpose

CIVIC AND SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS
The Branford High School students demonstrate:

- The ability to be contributing members of their community
- Respect for themselves, their fellow students, the faculty, staff, as well as their school and community
- A recognition and an understanding of the benefits of diversity in their school and community
- Integrity while participating in all academic and social activities
- An understanding of the life-long value of personal physical fitness and good health

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[1] Unanimously approved by the BHS faculty in June 2003 and the Branford Board of Education in August 2003.
[2] Expectations in bold are Branford High School's Performance Graduation Requirements that apply to members of the Class of 2006 and on.

APPENDIX B

BRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL

2006-2007 Performance Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2006 and on "IMPROVED LEARNING FOR EVERYONE"

Branford High School is committed to "Improved Learning For Everyone." In pursuit of that goal over the last dozen years,, the BHS faculty, Branford Board of Education and Branford High School Community, developed seventeen Performance Graduation Expectations (PGEs) to identify clearly what ALL students should know and be able to do when they graduate from BHS. Those PGEs were derived from Connecticut's Common Core of Learning.

As a result of a new state law effecting the graduation requirements for the Class of 2006 and on as well as the need for the high school to begin to prepare for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation process, the Branford High School Community is in the process of a significant change from those seventeen PGEs and forty-odd 'learner outcomes'.. Over the past two years, BHS has revised its mission statement and has identified twelve Performance Graduation Requirements that meet both the expectations of the law and the NEASC accreditation standards.

BHS's Performance Graduation Requirements identify the key skills and concepts that every graduate is expected to achieve. Accordingly, the high school's educational program focuses on students acquiring and demonstrating those expectations as they progress towards graduation. They include a requirement that BHS students demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency in reading, writing, math, science, technology, civics, the fine and/or practical arts, technology, community service, and independent learning.

The PGRs are the focus of courses in which students are expected to develop and demonstrate how well they have achieved the requirements aligned with the given course. Students earn a rating based on the quality of their work as assessed with a set of "performance standards" developed for the given PGR.

"Performance standards" describe the various levels of quality work. The performance standards ratings include a '5', considered to be a "Superior" performance, a '4' is "Excellent", a '3' is "Proficient", a '2' rating is "Basic", needing improvement, and a '1' is 'Deficient'. Students can also use these performance standards to assess their own work and to determine what they need to do to improve their performance to a higher level.

It is important to remember that the mid-standard, a 'proficient' rating of '3', is what is expected of a high school graduate. Thus, it is possible for a freshman to earn a good grade in a course while not achieving a 'graduate' level performance on a specific PGR.

To graduate from BHS, the students are expected to earn the required credits as well as achieve an average rating of '3' on each of the twelve PGRs. The traditional courses, grades, transcripts and evaluations of student learning will continue to be used throughout the high school experience. When the student graduates, the school transcript will record those courses and grades as well as the highest rating a student received on each of the PGRs. Earning a 'proficient' rating on each and the PGRs is a significant achievement indicating that the student is an "autonomous learner" -- able to learn on their own and thus be successful in the rapidly changing world in which they will be living, working and raising a family. They understand the concepts and have demonstrated the skills expected of a BHS graduate.

The most significant result of the process of developing and revising the Performance Graduation Requirements has been an increased understanding by faculty, parents and students of what high school graduates should know and be able to do and how specific courses and assignments support the achievement of those goals. Also, there has been a higher quality of work expected of and delivered by all students as well as an increased consistency in how student work is assessed among teachers and departments.

There are other very significant results that the BHS Community points to with pride:

- An almost 60% increase in 4 year college admissions
- Record numbers of students taking SATs
- Average SAT scores are highest in the school's history
- Increasing SAT 2/ Achievement test and AP test scores
- Average CAPT scores increasing to their highest levels

Certainly, there can be no question that the efforts of the Branford High School Community have resulted in **Improved Learning For Everyone**.

APPENDIX C

GRANBY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Student Expectation Rubrics

Literacy Rubric

Students will evidence proficiency and fluency in reading and writing.

5 Above expectation	Student demonstrates outstanding achievement through the production of above-average written texts that develop, interpret, analyze, and support exploration of the literature. The student is able to demonstrate perceptive and insightful reading of texts through the completion of teacher-generated written assignments that display above-average interpretation, analysis and evaluation. In his/her writing, the student is able to provide abundant, specific and relevant information pertaining to the selections read.
3 Meets expectation	Student demonstrates acceptable achievement through the production of average written texts that develop, interpret, analyze, and support exploration of the literature. The student is able to demonstrate competency in the reading of texts through the completion of teacher-generated written assignments that display adequate interpretation, analysis and evaluation. In his/her writing, the student is able to provide some specific and relevant information pertaining to the selections read.
1 Below expectation	Student demonstrates a lack of achievement through the production of poorly written texts that demonstrate his/her lack of or limited ability to develop, interpret, analyze, and support exploration of the literature. The student is unable to demonstrate competency in the reading of texts through completion of teacher-generated written assignments. Evidence from completion of teacher-generated paper assignments indicates marginal interpretation, no analysis, and limited or no evaluation. The student is unable to provide specific and relevant information from selections read.

Numeracy

Students will evidence knowledge, skills and appreciations needed for understanding and utilizing mathematical ideas, techniques, and applications.

5 Above expectation	The student demonstrates a complete understanding of concepts and processes needed to analyze problems, make reasonable conjectures and evaluate results. The student is independently able to consider multiple strategies for problem solving, to support the chosen approach with sound mathematical reasoning, and to communicate the results to the full extent required by the specific task. The student demonstrates special aptitude for and interest in learning sophisticated concepts and theory.
3 Meets expectation	The student shows an acceptable understanding of concepts and processes needed to analyze problems, make reasonable conjectures and evaluate results. Reasoning skills are best demonstrated with teacher direction. The student has a clear understanding of problem solving strategies, but he or she does not always provide enough support of his or her reasoning. Student work may show slight errors in judgment and have minor inaccuracies.
1 Below expectation	The student shows limited understanding of concepts and processes needed to analyze problems, make reasonable conjectures and evaluate results. The student usually communicates with limited accuracy and reasoning. The student's analysis may lack depth, and the problem solving approach is often one-dimensional. The student work shows some mathematical understanding and skill, but the student often has difficulty applying the learning. Reasoning skills are demonstrated with teacher direction. The student seldom provides enough support for his or her reasoning and often makes computational errors.

Science

Students will evidence knowledge of the basic concepts and interrelationships between the life and physical sciences, and be able to apply scientific skill, processes, and methods of inquiry to real-world settings.

5 Above expectation	The student identifies and explains in-depth complex scientific concepts and principles from all areas of science (biological, physical, and earth) using examples, models, and/or scientific problem solving techniques. The student can analyze a problem, state a hypothesis, and effectively develop an experiment to test the hypothesis. The student can draw valid conclusions from experimental data.
3 Meets expectation	The student identifies and explains scientific concepts and principles from several areas of science (biological, physical, and earth) using examples, models, and/or scientific problem solving techniques. The student can develop a hypothesis from a stated problem, and effectively conduct an experiment. The student can draw valid conclusions from experimental data.
1 Below expectation	The student is unable to explain scientific concepts and principles from one area of science (biological, physical, and earth) using examples, models, and/or scientific problem solving techniques. The student has difficulty following directions in laboratory procedure, and has difficulty drawing conclusions from data.

Technology

Students will identify capabilities and limitations of contemporary and emerging technology resources and be able to apply and manipulate these systems and services to address personal, lifelong learning and workplace needs.

5 Above expectation	The student shows exemplary understanding of technology resources and consistently demonstrates an understanding of the tools available for skill development, reasoning powers and problem solving. The student consistently utilizes technology efficiently and effectively to gather and share information. The student understands the influence of technology as well as its impact on society, culture, and the environment. The student demonstrates an awareness the ethical and legal issues involved in the use of technology.
3 Meets expectation	The student shows acceptable understanding of technology resources and an understanding of the tools available for skill development, reasoning powers and problem solving. The student generally utilizes technology efficiently and effectively to gather and share information. The student generally understands the influence of technology as well as its impact on society, culture, and the environment. The student generally demonstrates some awareness of the ethical and legal issues involved in the use of technology.
1 Below expectation	The student shows limited understanding of technology resources The student is inconsistent in his/her utilization of technology for efficiently and effectively gathering and sharing information. The student demonstrates limited awareness of the influences of technology as well as its impact on society, culture and the environment. The student demonstrates limited awareness of the ethical and legal issues involved in the use of technology.

APPENDIX C, cont'd

GRANBY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Student Expectation Rubrics (cont'd)

The Arts

Students will create, perform, and respond with evidence of understanding to one or more art forms.

5 Above expectation	Student expresses personal feelings, beliefs of opinions with a strong sense of individuality, personal style and creative problem solving. Student uses expressive techniques with sensitivity and sophistication. The student shows exceptional effort in terms of patience, practice of skills, personal challenge and level of involvement in the creative process.
3 Meets expectation	Student demonstrates basic understanding of artistic/musical concepts and their connections to historical precedence. Student expresses feelings, beliefs or opinions with a generalized sense of style, not highly individualized. Student uses expressive techniques with adequate proficiency. The student demonstrates effort in terms of patience, practice of skills, personal challenge and level of involvement in the creative process
1 Below expectation	Student demonstrates limited understanding of artistic/musical concepts and their connections to historical precedence. Student expresses feelings, beliefs or opinions that could be considered cliché or inappropriate, lacks stylistic attributes, and are not clearly articulated. Student does not attempt to use expressive techniques. The student shows insufficient effort in terms of patience, practice of skills, personal challenge and level of involvement in the creative process

Health and Wellness

Students will exhibit evidence that promotes lifelong health and physical fitness.

5 Above expectation	The student has engaged in physical activity and demonstrates an understanding of the effects of activity and inactivity upon the body. The student has established personal goals for fitness and physical well-being, and has maintained a record of his/her progress. The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of how foods and proper nutrition affect lifelong wellness.
3 Meets expectation	The student has generally engaged in some physical activity and has a basic understanding of the value of physical activity. The student has outlined personal goals for fitness and well-being. The student has an acceptable understanding of how foods and proper nutrition affect lifelong wellness.
1 Below expectation	The student has been unable to demonstrate an understanding of the value of physical activity. The student has not designed personal goals for physical fitness or physical well-being. The student shows a deficient understanding of how foods and nutrition affect lifelong wellness.

Global Awareness

Students will evidence knowledge of diverse cultures and world issues.

5 Above expectation	The student is able to communicate effectively in a wide variety of situations. The student, utilizing their knowledge of history and world language, demonstrates sensitive understanding of other cultural perspectives and traditions, and is able to make extensive connections between cultures. The student can draw upon a broad spectrum of historical knowledge to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of critical issues. The student can discern the credibility of sources, leading to meaningful oral and written expression of social studies concepts.
3 Meets expectation	The student is able to communicate adequately in everyday situations. The student, utilizing their knowledge of history and world language, demonstrates an appropriate understanding of other cultural perspectives and traditions and is able to make some connection between cultures. The student can draw upon an adequate spectrum of historical knowledge to demonstrate an understanding of critical issues, yet may lack in-depth understanding. The student can usually discern the credibility of sources, leading to acceptable oral and written expression of social studies concepts.
1 Below expectation	The student is able to communicate in a limited variety of situations or partially in a few basic survival situations. The student, utilizing their knowledge of history and world language, demonstrates a basic or superficial understanding of other cultural perspectives and traditions and is able to make or recognize few connections between the cultures. The student cannot draw upon an acceptable spectrum of historical knowledge to demonstrate an understanding of critical issues. The student can rarely discern the credibility of historical sources, leading to insufficient oral and written expression of social studies concepts.

CIVIC EXPECTATIONS

Community Involvement

Students will participate in civic activities through the fulfillment of community service requirements.

5 Above expectation	Student participates in 40 or more hours of community service and successfully completes a reflection paper and accompanying documentation.
3 Meets expectation	Student participates in 15-39 hours of community service and successfully completes a reflection paper and accompanying documentation.
1 Below expectation	Student does not complete community service, participates in fewer than 15 hours of community service, or does not complete the reflection paper and accompanying documentation.

American Political System

Students will demonstrate an understanding of democratic/constitutional principles and practices of American government, and will demonstrate knowledge of the processes required to take action within a political system.

5 Above expectation	Student successfully completes the Civics course by attaining a grade of B or better, and has participated in civic extracurricular activities involving school, local, state, or federal civic groups.
3 Meets expectation	Student successfully completes the Civics course.
1 Below expectation	Student does not successfully complete the Civics course.

APPENDIX D

RHAM HIGH SCHOOL:

Mission Statement

We believe our role as educators at RHAM High School is to provide all students with the foundation upon which to develop academic integrity, intellectual vitality, emotional maturity, personal wellness, cultural respect, global awareness and personal character. It is our goal that all students will develop into life-long learners who possess the essential core knowledge and the critical, creative, analytical and reflective skills necessary to think, listen, collaborate and communicate effectively.

To achieve this, we are committed to working with the community to provide the curricular and co-curricular opportunities necessary to meet the academic, social, emotional, artistic, physical and vocational needs of our students. We are committed to providing instruction which will address differing ability levels, learning styles and interests, and which incorporates task appropriate tools. Additionally, we are committed to providing an intellectually, emotionally and physically safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

Student Expectations - the student will demonstrate the following.

Academic:
- skills in reading and writing.
- skills in speaking and listening.
- skills in problem solving and logical thinking
- skills in creative expression.
- skills in applying technology and information processing.

Social:
- understanding of the importance of respect for self and others.
- understanding of the importance of appropriate decisions.
- understanding of the importance of personal wellness.

Civic:
- understanding of cultural diversity.
- understanding of civic rights and responsibilities.

APPENDIX E

RHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Guidelines for Assignments Aligned with the School-Wide Rubrics

- Every teacher must assess students on at least two different school-wide standards at some point during each of their courses
- Assignments aligned with the school-wide rubrics must be placed in student portfolios
- Reading, Writing and Problem Solving and Logical Thinking in Math and Science rubric assignments will be used by students to demonstrate proficiency of any area of the CAPT on which they fail to score Proficient or above
- Students defending their portfolios must achieve a minimum score of 2 on assignments aligned with RHAM High School's school-wide rubrics
    - Teachers of Language Arts and World Languages must use both the reading and writing rubrics
    - Teachers of Social Studies must use both the speaking and writing rubrics
    - Teachers of Math, Science, and Family and Consumer Science must use problem solving and logical thinking in addition to one additional school-wide rubric
    - Teachers of Music and Art must use creative expression in addition to one additional school-wide rubric
    - Teachers of Technology Education must use applying technology and information processing in addition to one additional school-wide rubric

APPENDIX F

RHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Portfolio Process Timeline

Freshmen year -

- Each student must submit two pieces of work that are aligned with the school-wide rubrics from each course
- Guidance counselors contact teachers with list of students who are at-risk for not scoring proficient on one or more sections of the CAPT
- Freshmen math CAPT practice tests will be submitted to each student's portfolio
- Math CAPT practice questions will be submitted to each student's portfolio

Sophomore year -

- Each student must submit two pieces of work aligned with the school-wide rubrics from each course
- Guidance counselors contact teachers with list of students who are at-risk for not scoring proficient on one or more sections of the CAPT
- Math CAPT practice questions will be submitted to each student's portfolio

Junior year -

- Each student must submit two pieces of work that are aligned with the school-wide rubrics from each course
- Students who do not achieve a score of Proficient or above on one or more sections of the CAPT will be assigned to an Academic Lab or Study Skills Course
- Academic Lab/Study Skills teachers will:
  - Monitor student progress
  - Structure study of CAPT preparation books
  - Communicate with academic teachers
  - Review portfolios with students at least once during each quarter
- Math CAPT practice questions will be submitted to each student's portfolio

Fall of senior year -

- Each student must submit two pieces of work that are aligned with the school-wide rubrics from each course
- Guidance counselors will work with students who require a portfolio review for graduation to review portfolios and determine if the include sufficient samples of work. If sufficient samples are not present or if they represent scores below 2 on the school-wide rubrics, counselors will help students develop a a plan for completing additional samples of work. Counselors will also consult with subject area teachers in order to help the student develop a plan for successfully defending their portfolio

Throughout the Senior Year -

- A committee of teachers meet to assess student portfolios/work

APPENDIX G

RHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Minimum Requirements for Meeting School-Wide Rubrics

Student Expectations - the student will demonstrate the following.

Academic

- Skills in reading and writing
- Skills in speaking and listening
- Skills in problem solving and logical thinking
- Skills in creative expression
- Skills in applying technology and information processing

Minimum requirement for assignments aligned with RHAM High School's Writing and Reading Rubrics

- Minimum of 3 to 5 page paper
- 12 point font
- double spaced
- 1 inch margins
- Paper must be analytical
- Non-fiction (not creative writing)
- Must be based upon full-length text, such as a novel, or a minimum of three shorter sources, such as journal articles

Minimum requirements for assignments aligned with RHAM High School's Speaking Rubrics

- Presentation by single individual
- Minimum of five minutes
- Topic must be aligned with curriculum/topic of study

Minimum requirements for assignments aligned with RHAM High School's Listening Rubric

- Successful completion of RHAM High School's graduation requirements as described in the RHAM High School Program of Study

APPENDIX G, cont'd

RHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Minimum Requirements for Meeting School-Wide Rubrics (cont'd)

Minimum requirements for assignments aligned with RHAM High School's Problem Solving and Thinking Rubric

Science and Technology Education -

- Written format
- Non-fiction
- Must include each step of the scientific method:
  - Purpose
  - Hypothesis and/or prediction
  - Procedure
  - Data presentation
  - Analysis
  - Conclusions
  - Self-reflection on process and results

Math -

- written format
- must include the following components:
  - Identifies problem
  - Procedure
  - Data presentation
  - Analysis
  - Conclusion
  - Self-reflection on process and results

Minimum requirements for assignments aligned with RHAM High School's Creative Expression Rubric

- Media appropriate to the area of study to be addressed (examples include)-
  - Pictures of drawings, paintings 3D works of art
  - Audio recording of a vocal performance
  - DVD recording of a visual performance
  - PowerPoint/electronic presentation
- Problem appropriate to the area of study to be addressed (examples include) -
  - Color theory
  - Elements and principles of design
  - Movement of space
  - Creation of depth
  - Use of proper playing techniques
  - Application of music theory

Minimum requirements for assignments aligned with RHAM High School's Applying Technology and Information Processing

- Utilizes some form of technology
- Demonstration of technology used in locating information
- Self-reflection on process and product

APPENDIX H

RHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Graduation Portfolio Questions
2005-2006

Science

1. When you do an experiment, why do you think it is important to write down the purpose of the lab?
2. Why is it important that your procedure gives step-by-step instruction for how you performed the experiment?
3. Why should the conclusion part of your lab report include both the hypothesis and the data you collected during the lab? What does it mean when you look for reliability in the results of your experiment?

Writing

1. Describe the process you use to write an essay. How does this writing process connect to practical areas of your life?
2. How has the writing process helped you to think about the topic/issue in question?
3. How has your writing about literature increased/improved you appreciation and understanding of texts, in and outside of the classroom?

Persuasive Essay/Research Paper

1. What type of sources have you used and which are examples of primary sources and which are secondary sources? Why are both types of sources important to research before forming an opinion?
2. How do you determine whether an opinion that you might use for research is biased?
3. Demonstrate how you clearly stated your opinion or point of view -- or, if you did not, how could you do this more effectively?

Math

1. Algebraic Reasoning: Patterns and Functions

   Use the "Speeding Ticket" problem to explain how Algebraic Reasoning in the form of patterns and functions help us describe data and physical phenomena and help us to solve a variety of problems.

2. Numerical and Proportional Reasoning

   Choose the "Ratio and Proportion" problem and/or the "Adding Signed Numbers" problem to explain how quantitative relationships can be expressed numerically in multiple ways in order to make connections and simplify calculations to help us solve a variety of problems.

3. Geometry and Measurement

   Choose the "Cereal" problem and/or the "Tile" problem to explain how geometric relationships and/or measurements help us to solve problems and make sense of our world.

4. Working with Data: Probability and Statistics

   Choose the "Test Score" problem and/or the "Student Gender and Hair Color" problem to explain how collecting, organizing and displaying data can help us analyze information and help us make reasonable predictions and informed decisions.

5. How might you connect the problem solving techniques you have demonstrated through your portfolio to problems you will encounter outside of and beyond high school?