New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Public Schools
Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

John F. Kennedy Middle School

Enfield, CT

October 25-28, 2015

Ann Galvani, CHAIR

Susan Schroeter, ASSISTANT CHAIR

Steven Sargalski, PRINCIPAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS
The Distribution, Use, and Scope of the

Visiting Team Report

The Commission on Public Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of John F. Kennedy Middle School to be an important document submitted to the school principal, the superintendent of schools, and the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. Distribution of the report within the school community is the responsibility of the school principal. The final visiting committee report must be released in its entirety within sixty days (60) of its completion to the superintendent, school board, public library or town office, and the appropriate news media.

The prime concern of the visiting team has been to assess the quality of educational programs at John F. Kennedy Middle School on the basis of the school's own self-study and in terms of the school's stated Mission and Expectations and the Association's seven Standards for Accreditation for public schools. Neither the total report nor any of its subsections are to be considered an evaluation of any individual faculty member but rather a professional appraisal of the school as it appeared to the visiting committee.

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 four Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE); the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS); the Commission on Public Schools which is comprised of the Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS); and the Commission on International Schools (CIE).

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

> Teaching and Learning Standards
> > Mission and Expectations
> > Curriculum
> > Instruction
> > Assessment of Student Learning
>
> Support Standards
> > Leadership and Organization
> > School Resources for Learning
> > Community Resources for Learning

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Committee's visiting team, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Committee in the follow-up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every 10 years and that the school shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At John F. Kennedy Middle School, a committee of 7 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of John F. Kennedy Middle School extended over a period of 18 months school months from September of 2013 to June of 2015.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, John F. Kennedy Middle School reflected on the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of 10 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools to evaluate the John F. Kennedy Middle School. The team members spent four days in Enfield, Connecticut, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school aligns to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public school teachers and administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of John F. Kennedy Middle School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials

- 25 hours shadowing 10 students for a half day

- a total of 12 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)

- numerous informal observations in and around the school

- tours of the facility

- individual meetings with 49 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning

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

- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

This report of the findings of the visiting committee will be forwarded to the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of John F. Kennedy Middle School.

School and Community Profile

John F. Kennedy Middle School (JFK) is located in Enfield, Connecticut, 18 miles north of the city of Hartford and 8 miles south of Springfield, Massachusetts. Enfield is also centrally located between Boston and New York City, and a 15-mile drive from Bradley International Airport. Enfield's location, transportation access, quality work force, land, infrastructure, and business services have attracted many first-rate corporate citizens. The town has a tradition of diversified commercial/industrial base of manufacturing, research, engineering, distribution, service, and retail facilities, including Hallmark Cards and LEGO.

Enfield has a population of 44,699. The community is ethnically diverse with 87 percent Caucasian, 6 percent African American, and 7 percent other/multi-racial. English is the primary language spoken in the homes of students. A small population of students has parents that speak Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese. The median family income in Enfield is $74,685, while the State of Connecticut has an average family income of $81, 246.

Enfield's educational system services children in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. The schools are governed by a nine-member local board of education elected by the community. Enfield school system consists of four K-2 schools, three 3-5 schools, one middle school, and two high schools. Enfield public schools offer Pre-K and Head Start programs. The Enfield Montessori School (Pre-K-6), the CREC Public Safety Academy (6-12), Enfield Transition Learning Academy, and St. Martha and St. Bernard parochial elementary schools are located in Enfield.

JFK houses grades 6-8 with a current student population of 1,065 and a faculty of 92 teachers, creating a student to teacher ratio of approximately 12:1. Teachers can carry a caseload of 90-115 students with average class size of 22-25 students. Sixth grade students are placed on one of four heterogeneous teams concentrating on the five core academic areas of English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and reading. The two levels of mathematics classes are honors and average. Reading classes are leveled by ability. Sixth graders are required to take physical education, computers, art, health, and music. The sixth graders' fifth period class is band, orchestra, or chorus. The seventh grade consists of four heterogeneous teams. The eighth grade consists of three heterogeneous teams, due to temporary decrease in enrollment. Seventh grade students are placed on teams where academic area teachers of math, science, social studies and English language arts, and typically loop with the same students through grade eight. Each core subject has two levels including honors and average. Seventh and eighth graders are required to take reading or a world language and one semester of physical education each year. Students may also choose electives such as family and consumer science, art, music, technology education, band, chorus, and orchestra. Compared to Enfield's district average student absence rate of 10.1, JFK had an average student absence rate of 10.7 days last year.

The Enfield School District is ranked in the lower 15 percent of school districts in the state in terms of per pupil expenditures. The Enfield per pupil expenditure is $13,572 compared to the state average of $15,354 per pupil in 2013-2014. The Enfield Board of Education receives 52.83 percent of the Town of Enfield budget. Currently, the town of Enfield has a 6.5 percent poverty rate.

The Enfield Board of Education has established partnerships with local businesses, which include LEGO and Massachusetts Mutual. In addition the JFK Guidance department organizes a career fair for eighth graders, which in the past has included presenters from the Enfield Police and Fire Departments, Urgent Care, financial advisors, lawyers, television and radio, ESPN, hairdressers, cartoonists, and published authors. Students are provided a list of suggested questions but are encouraged to engage in conversations with professionals from these careers.

There is a partnership with Asnuntuck Community College, in which seventh and eighth grade students enrolled in technology education classes, have the opportunity to work once a week with an educator from the college. Students work on computers to design three-dimensional (3D) projects through computer-aided design (CAD). After their project is designed, students have the ability to create their design on one of many 3D printers. The work of students in the music and arts programs in grades K-12 is celebrated by the community in the yearly ARTS Festival sponsored by the Enfield Women's Club.

Students participate in many clubs and activities run by the faculty and staff. Clubs such as Rachel's Challenge, Jane's Team for cancer research, Robotics, Creative Writing, and the Nosotros Club, a club for Spanish speaking students, meet after school on scheduled days. Late buses are provided on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Students that become part of these clubs also have the opportunity to participate in community activities such as a pancake breakfast, a kindness carnival, Relay for Life, robotic competitions, and parades. There are also many activities offered to students such as dances, a Turkey Trot fundraiser, intramural flag football, and school athletics, which include basketball, baseball, softball, field hockey, and boys' and girls' soccer and track.

Grade level field trips are scheduled annually and are partially funded by the parent-teacher organization (PTO). Grade 6 students were rewarded with a trip to Sonny's Place, a recreational activity center located in Somers, CT last year. Grade 7 students attend the Hartford Stage presentation of "A Christmas Carol" in December and a reward trip to Lake Compounce in June. Grade 8 students are rewarded with a full-day trip to High Meadow Recreational Center at the end of the year. The Drama Club students have attended Broadway performances. Band students have participated in state and regional competitions at the University of Connecticut (UConn) and the University of Massachusetts (UMass).

Students are recognized for their accomplishments through JFK Patriot Pride awards. Each month, faculty and staff award students that demonstrate perseverance, ambition, trustworthiness, responsibility, independence, optimism, thoughtfulness, politeness, respect, integrity, dependability and encouragement with a certificate at a Patriot Pride breakfast. Teachers regularly recognize students' achievement, accomplishments, and positive behaviors with Patriot Praise postcards which are mailed to their homes. Each quarter students who have earned academic Honor Roll are honored with a bumper sticker and notification in websites and local newspapers. Patriot Pride tickets are given to students who demonstrate the four Rs of respect, responsibility, readiness, and positive relationships. Each month these tickets are entered into a prize drawing. In the spring, eighth graders that demonstrate academic excellence, service, leadership, character, and citizenship are inducted into the National

Junior Honor Society. At the end of each athletic season athletes are recognized with an awards ceremony and celebration.

John F. Kennedy Middle School
Mission Statement

The mission of John F. Kennedy Middle School is to provide a secure, nurturing, and academically rigorous environment that meets individual needs. We prepare students to become college and career ready citizens who can contribute responsibly in a global society.

This mission empowers students:
- to become compassionate, productive, and ethical members of the community
- to be resourceful thinkers who independently and cooperatively strive to solve complex problems
- to develop fluency in the use of technology in all disciplines

We recognize that this endeavor is the shared responsibility of student, home, school, and community.

Commission on Public Schools
Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools

Middle School Teaching and Learning Standards

Mission and Expectations
Curriculum
Instruction
Assessment of Student Learning

1 Mission and Expectations

The mission statement describes the school's role as an integral part of the educational community. The mission statement emanates from the school's beliefs about education and its purpose, and leads to a set of expectations enabling the school and its community to assess its effectiveness.

1. The school has a mission statement, which addresses the school's beliefs about teaching and learning and reflects the character of the school, the unique developmental characteristics of the middle level child, and the values of the community and its educators.

2. The school has high, clearly stated, and measurable expectations for academic achievement for all students. These expectations include a description of the different levels of performance as well as indicators of the successful attainment of each.

3. The school has high, clearly stated expectations for social behavior, which are developmentally appropriate and address the needs of the middle level child.

4. The school community establishes, accepts, and supports the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement and social behavior.

5. The school provides observable and measurable examples of adherence to the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement and social behavior.

6. The school sets a clearly defined cycle for the review and revision of the mission statement and expectations to ensure that they adapt to the changing needs of the students and the educational community.

Conclusions

The school has a mission statement that addresses, to some degree, the school's beliefs about teaching and learning and reflects the character of the school, the unique developmental characteristics of the middle level child, and the values of the community and its educators. Students are grouped in teams which for the most part are housed in adjacent classrooms. To address the unique character of the middle school child, teams loop from 7th to 8th grade. However these teams are homogeneously grouped, which does not support the mission. Although there is some evidence of student pairing, cooperative grouping, projects, and performance tasks, there are many teacher-centered, instructional practices, which do not address the unique needs of the adolescent. Student demonstrations and presentations using power point, and podcasts reflect the increasing value placed on technology throughout the community and local industry. The school's mission focuses on a safe and nurturing environment. Within the building, there is a strong and palpable sense of family. John F. Kennedy is a secure building, where the students feel safe. There are also approximately 40 after school clubs, which meet students' individual needs and personal interests through co-curricular activities. Some of these clubs are student initiated. When the practices and beliefs about teaching and learning are reflective of the mission statement, the unique development needs of the middle level child will be supported. (students, parents, Standard committee, student handbook, classroom observations)

Currently, the school does not have high, clearly stated, and measurable expectations for academic achievement for all students. Because there are no expectations, there is no description of the different levels of performance as well as indicators of the successful attainment of each. Although the school has content-based academic expectations from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), state and national standards, there is no list of over-arching academic expectations that all students will attain by the time they complete their education at the JFK. The school improvement plan, which is currently being developed, will address measurable expectations for academic achievement through the subsections of math, reading, and English language arts. The date for completion of this school improvement plan will be set soon. When the school creates high, clearly stated, and measurable expectations for academic achievement, with descriptions of different levels of performance and indicators for successful attainment, then the school will be able to measure progress for all students. (Standard committee, student handbook, school leadership)

The school has informally stated expectations for social behavior, which address the needs of the middle level child. The school implemented the "4 Rs," which are respect, responsibility, relationships, and readiness. There is a focus on one of the "4Rs" per month. Although the implementation of the "4Rs" is part of the school climate

initiative, it is not yet aligned with the mission statement. The alignment will be included in the future school improvement plan. When all social expectations are defined and measurable, then stakeholders will be able to determine the extent to which they have been met, in order to maximize their implementation. (student handbook, classroom observations, Standard committee, students)

The vast majority of the school community establishes, accepts, and to some degree supports the mission statement; however, there are currently no formal expectations for academic or social behavior. The mission statement was created by a committee of teachers. They researched mission statements from other Connecticut schools before creating the JFK mission statement. This committee received feedback from the administration, board of education, teachers, and some parents via email. Teachers voted to accept the mission statement. It was then sent to the board of education (BOE), which accepted it on October 14, 2014. However, students were not included in this process. Guidance counselors work with students on a career unit, career connections are also made in the food lab classes, technology and computer lab courses, and the drama club, all of which support the mission and focus on preparing students to become career ready citizens. The mission statement is posted in most classrooms. However educational decisions, such as leveling students, instructional practices, and assessment practices are not based on the mission statement's focus of an "academically rigorous environment that meets individual needs." Although the vast majority of the school community establishes and accepts the mission statement, when there are clearly established academic and social expectations and all actions are guided and supported by the mission, then the mission and expectations will be fully embedded in the school culture. (students, classroom observations, teachers, parents, Standard committee, student handbook)

By design, the school provides observable and measurable examples of adherence to the mission statement for social behavior. The newly hired principal reads the mission statement daily during morning announcements including examples of how one or two students displayed respect, responsibility, relationships, or readiness. Students who display the "4Rs" through their actions are recognized through the Patriot Pride program to reinforce expectations for social behavior in a positive way.   When students are referred to the office for discipline, the report has a section to cite which part of the mission statement was violated and for the teacher to explain the action taken. In some English classes students rewrite the mission statement in their own words to gain a better understanding of its meaning. When the expectations for social behavior are observable, measureable, and are completely implemented, then they will ensure adherence to the mission. (students, teachers, parents, school leadership, mission statement, beginning-of-the year packet, classroom observations)

The school does not have a clearly defined cycle for the review and revision of the mission statement and expectations to ensure that they adapt to the changing needs of the students and the educational community. Although the school did review and revise its mission in 2014, there is no clearly defined, regular cycle. When the school has a clearly defined cycle for the review and revision of the mission statement and expectations, then it will better adapt to the changing needs of the students and educational community. (Standard committee, teacher interviews, principal interview, parent interview)

Commendations

1. The core values represented by the "4 Rs"
2. The safe and secure environment for both students and staff
3. The sense of family that is pervasive throughout the building

Recommendations

1. Create and implement high academic and social expectations, aligned to the mission statement, that are clearly stated and measurable
2. Develop and implement a description of the different levels of performance for academic and social expectations and the successful attainment of each
3. Ensure all stakeholders and actions taken support the mission and expectations
4. Create and implement a clearly defined cycle for the review and revision of the mission statement and expectations

2 Curriculum

The curriculum is the formal plan designed by the school to carry out its mission statement and to meet its expectations for academic achievement and social behavior. The curriculum links expectations for student learning to instructional and assessment practices. The strength and effectiveness of the curriculum are dependent upon the commitment of the school and district to a continuous process of implementation, review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum which leads to improved student learning.

1. The school's formally written and implemented curriculum is aligned with the school's stated expectations for students' academic achievement and social behavior.

2. Each curriculum area has clearly articulated learning standards that support the school's academic expectations.

3. The content of the curriculum is intellectually challenging, respectful of diversity, and allows for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.

4. The curriculum includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school approved educational experiences which meet the needs of the middle level child.

5. Effective curriculum coordination, integration, and articulation exist between and among all subject areas within the school as well as with all receiving and sending schools.

6. There is an ongoing process for curriculum review and revisions which actively involve the school's faculty and takes into account the stated academic expectations and assessments of student performance.

7. The written curriculum incorporates classroom and school-wide library resources.

8. The written curriculum incorporates classroom and school-wide technological resources.

9. The school provides sufficient staffing, time, professional development, fiscal resources, materials, technology, and supplies to implement and support the written curriculum.

Conclusions

The school's formally written and implemented curriculum is not yet aligned with the school's expectations for students' academic achievement and social behavior. The school does not currently have stated over-arching expectations for academic achievement and social behavior. However, the curriculum is aligned with the Common Core State Standards along with state and national frameworks. The school improvement plan will divide the academic expectations into subsections of math, science, English, social studies, and reading. Also, the school is in the process of developing formally written expectations for social behavior. Currently the school uses a structure of 4Rs, which stand for Respect, Responsibility, Readiness, and Relationships to guide student behavior. The implementation of this social behavior program is evidenced in some of the curricula. In physical education, the 4Rs are woven into the Touhkball game, when regular education students mentor special education students throughout a learning activity. In an eighth grade honors U.S. history class, students studied the platforms of republicans and democrats in order to become informed citizens.   Currently, the neither the 4Rs nor expectations for social behavior have been formalized into the written curriculum. When the written curriculum is aligned with the expectations for academic achievement and social behavior, then the school will be better able to carry out its mission statement and meet its academic and social expectations. (facility tour, school leadership, school website)

Most curriculum areas have clearly articulated learning standards; however, they do not support the school's academic expectations, as there are no clearly stated school academic expectations. English, reading, and math curricula are aligned to Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Science curriculum is based on the state standards as well as Connecticut Core Standards for Literacy. Teachers are currently preparing to incorporate the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) into the curriculum upon the release of the 2015 NGSS. In addition to the Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework, the social studies curriculum incorporates national social studies standards as its basis and is still in the process of being written. Technology education teachers use the International Test and Evaluation Association Standards for Technological Literacy. The basis for the visual arts curriculum is the

Connecticut State Standards. World language curricula and units of study are designed around the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages national standards. Teachers designed their own standards for family and consumer science. The music department uses state and national standards to design curriculum concepts. Health teachers use state standards. Physical education teachers use the National Standards for Physical Education and the Connecticut Healthy and Balanced Curriculum Frameworks. When the school's curricula can clearly articulate learning standards based on defined and written academic expectations, then the curriculum can support and link expectations for student learning to instructional and assessment practices. (district administrators, school website, central office personnel)

The content of the curriculum is inconsistently intellectually challenging; however, it is respectful of diversity, and allows for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. Throughout classrooms, there are some instances of rigor. English teachers incorporate intellectually challenging content into a comprehensive structure of unit plans. Within units of study, students are encouraged to employ higher order thinking by analyzing text explicitly and making inferences. In seventh grade honors math classes, students are given intellectually challenging opportunities in the curriculum through the use of a textbook entitled "Big Ideas." However, this resource is not available to students in average level classes. The music teachers assure that the curriculum is challenging to students by reviewing data from assessment and to inform curriculum revision, thus providing appropriate levels of difficulty. In technology education classes, students are challenged to brainstorm multiple designs for a bridge and then select one to engineer. The completed structure constructed out of balsa wood is then tested for its weight bearing capacity. For the social studies curriculum, which is currently in draft form, teachers designed essential questions that align with curriculum frameworks. These questions demonstrate evidence of intellectual challenge and provide opportunities for higher order thinking. However, curriculum in average classes often lacks rigor, which include whole class novels. In addition the lack of intellectual challenge has a negative impact on students by creating a division between the honors and average classes. Students in the average level are not being asked to meet higher expectations. The curriculum is respectful of diversity. A unit of the social studies curriculum focuses on current social, economic, and political issues facing Sub-Saharan Africa. The seventh grade reading curriculum encourages respect for diversity by incorporating units and reading materials on the Civil Rights Movement and the Holocaust. When conducting research while reading in the classroom, eighth grade students are offered many options that support diversity, including books about Harriet Tubman, women scientists, black scientists, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Anne Frank. In addition, the reading curriculum provides a multitude of opportunities for authentic application of knowledge. Units of study include topics that are very relevant to middle school students such as bullying, healthy choices, complicated family units, and overcoming obstacles. Sixth grade social studies participates in a town-wide candidate night during which time students ask candidates questions to determine if the candidates will be good leaders. Students design questions for the candidates based on curriculum that teaches qualities of good leadership, thus encouraging them to become active citizens. Students are also encouraged to become active citizens in the eighth grade social studies curriculum as they evaluate their personal political leanings

using real world examples. The eighth grade English curriculum allows for authentic application of knowledge by asking students to develop a position and apply argumentative writing skills in an essay explaining their opinion on the content and requirements of physical education class in school. In addition, the seventh grade math curriculum offers students opportunity for authentic application of skills and concepts. Sample word problems are oriented to topics that middle level students are familiar with and create interest, such as a cell phone bill, or a youth group trip. Although diversity is respected and students are able to authentically apply their learning experiences, it is only when rigor is embedded into the curriculum, then the curriculum will be intellectually challenging and students will be able to unlock their learning potential. (classroom observations, school website, student shadowing, teachers, Standard committee)

The curriculum often includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school approved educational experiences which meet the needs of the middle level child. Students have opportunities to make choices and engage in coursework and co-curricular activities that are both engaging and worthwhile. Students may choose from electives including: technology education, visual arts, music, family and consumer science, physical education, computer technology, and either French or Spanish. In seventh grade English classes, when studying informational text, the curriculum guide provides for student choice regarding the text to use for the assignment. They are also allowed to choose the topic and they may choose from several options for the format of their assessment, thus providing students with a sense of autonomy in their academic work. In a composer interview assignment, students in music class are given clear directions and as well as scaffolding, but are required to write their own interview questions for the composer. In an art class, students were provided information, patterns, and models of cultural masks and then were challenged with creating their own mask. In both of these classes students are encouraged to practice self-direction and independence while supports are provided during the creative process. JFK middle school offers co-curricular activities that meet the needs of a middle level child by offering many specialized programs throughout the school. A robotics course which provides an exploratory learning experience as students build robots with the direction of and support from teachers and LEGO. JFK Middle School offers many opportunities to meet the needs of middle level children through their extra-curricular activities. Rachel's Challenge gives students a structure for an opportunity to improve their school and participate in community service. There are approximately 40 clubs that are provided by teachers after school. Students are given opportunities to participate in activities such as: the digital newspaper, sports, drama, crafts and meditation. Suggestions by students are also taken into account, offering additional opportunities for student directed activity and social support. Because JFK Middle School includes many diverse opportunities coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school approved educational experiences, the needs of the middle level child are better met. (school website, students, Standard committee, teachers)

Sometimes there is effective curriculum coordination, integration, and articulation between and among all subject areas within the school; however, by design, it is effective with all receiving and sending schools. Teachers have opportunities to coordinate curriculum during department meetings for academic subjects, which take

place two times per month on Tuesday afternoon. In addition, teachers have at least one half day of professional development available during each month of the school year. However, the use and structure of professional development is inconsistent between and among departments. Teachers do not have opportunities to coordinate curriculum within the academic subjects over the course of a typical school week. As a result, some curriculum coordination takes place after the school day or during personal planning time. Due to the scheduling structure, teachers of the same subject in the same grade level, are not currently able to meet at a designated time during the school day. However, students in the sixth grade participate in an interdisciplinary unit conducted by a theatre group from the Hartford Stage. This unit incorporates English and social studies for a week-long study of The Diary of Anne Frank. Seventh grade students integrate subjects in a project that combines science and social studies. Students create an imaginary continent, predict the climate and culture of the continent based on the information and skills that they have learned in the science and social studies content areas. Though there were some examples of integration across curriculum, they were not the norm. The extent to which teachers discussed the integration of curriculum is often limited to checking in during weekly team meeting times. Curriculum coordination is done at the district level. Currently there are district coordinators for grades 6 through 12 for: mathematics, family and consumer science, English, science, social studies, special education, and world language. These coordinators facilitate vertical articulation between the middle and high school. In addition, they have also worked to integrate the curriculum between departments, including: argument writing across social studies and the English classes; also projects were created between the science and technology education departments. The humanities and science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) coordinators meet with department chairs and at times attend department meetings. However, with the loss of the building department heads, the horizontal and vertical articulation within the school has been negatively impacted. Teachers are now working independently by grade to align curriculum with new standards and frameworks. As a result, it is difficult to align curriculum vertically within the building. Many of the most current revisions of the curricula were posted over the summer of 2015, with the exception of science which was posted in 2014. The extent to which the curricula were articulated and the format in which they were presented was inconsistent. The English department curriculum contains complete unit plans with planning calendars; whereas, the draft of the social studies curriculum consists of essential questions and supporting questions that are aligned with state standards. The math curriculum outlines units and includes formative assessments to be given throughout the unit. When the coordination, integration, and articulation of curriculum are comprehensive and consistent throughout the school, students will have a common experience with an effective curriculum. (team meetings, school leadership, district administrators, Enfield Forum)

In most cases, there is an ongoing process, for curriculum review and revision, which actively involve the school's faculty and takes into account the stated academic expectations and assessments of student performance. The curriculum of the academic subjects at JFK Middle School undergoes a seven-year revision cycle that is mandated by the state of Connecticut, unless revision is needed sooner due to changes in standards or indicated by results of assessments. The majority of the revisions to the

school's curricula take place during the summer and is completed by teachers who are asked to participate by district coordinators. The most recent revision of the academic curriculum was in social studies, which began over the summer of 2015 as a result of newly released social studies state frameworks. Essential questions were created, but unit plans have yet to be completed. Curriculum is developed by teachers and district coordinators under the guidance of curriculum coordinators during professional development time on early release days and summer workshops. District coordinators and teachers also meet during department meetings, which take place twice per month. District coordinators and curriculum coordinators work together throughout the school year to review and revise curriculum. The science curriculum at JFK is planned to be revised following the release of Next Generation Science Standards, which is expected in November of 2015. The music curriculum in grades 6, 7, and 8 has been aligned with state standards. Grade 6 was revised in the fall of 2014, and grades 7 and 8 were revised in the summer of 2015. At the same time, the English curriculum for grades 6, 7, and 8 was aligned with state standards. While most curriculum areas are continually reviewed and revised, some areas do not undergo this process consistently. The visual arts department has not thoroughly been revised since 2003. Additionally, the French curriculum, which was revised in 2001, states that teachers are to incorporate the use of tapes, video, and transparencies. Teachers and district coordinators at JFK use assessment and student performance to review and revise the curriculum of academic subjects. After reviewing Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) results, the math department has begun to review its curriculum as part of the on-going cycle of revision based on assessment data. The English department has also determined a need for revision as a result of student performance on assessments. Following the SBAC test, the English department found that students had deficits in argumentative writing skills, as a result, the Lucy Calkins Writing Units of Study were implemented through the writers' workshop model. The social studies department is also adopting elements of argumentative writing into their curriculum during their revision process. When all curriculum areas at JFK middle school implement an ongoing cycle for curriculum review and revision, which actively involve the school's faculty, then educators will be able to deliver an up-to-date curriculum that is informed by academic expectations and the data from assessments of student performance. (team meetings, district administrators, school website)

The written curriculum does not incorporate classroom and school-wide library resources. In order to deliver many elements of the curriculum, teachers utilize the library to varying degrees. In order to develop fluent readers, the seventh grade English teachers bring students to the library to select a book that is of personal interest. The sixth grade reading unit, Reading Informational Text, requires the use of library materials such as magazines and newspapers. However, the written curricula does not document explicit use of library resources. Written curriculum documents lack specific resources that are available in the library and within classrooms that can be used to support standards and objectives contained in each unit of the written curriculum. When the use of library resources is incorporated into the written document, then resources will be available to bring consistency and rigor to the written curriculum. (Standard committee, self-study, central office personnel)

The written curriculum extensively incorporates classroom and school-wide technological resources. JFK embraces technology and is in the process of incorporating the technology into the written curriculum. The seventh grade English curriculum contains research requirements, which are fulfilled by using school computers both in the library and on portable carts. In the educational technology class the written curriculum requires students to conduct mini-research projects that align with core content area knowledge and publish their findings in a variety of ways including Excel spreadsheets and/or charts, Microsoft word tables, visual aids with captions, short PowerPoint presentations. The seventh grade reading unit, Reading Informational Text, requires the use of library materials such as magazines and newspapers. The eighth grade science curriculum incorporates technology in a unit of study that focuses on the connection between science, technology, and engineering. The eighth grade reading curriculum requires students to integrate the use of multimedia and visual displays to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence and add interest. Seventh grade math students utilize statistic functions in graphing calculators or spreadsheets for calculations with larger data sets or to check their computations, graphing calculators are available to students in the classrooms. In reading class book trailers with accompanying music along with information about characters and plot were created in the Innovation lab to entice students to read the book. Students in eighth grade music class composed an 8-bar 2-part melody and chord progression. In technology education, students demonstrate the use of computer-aided design (CAD) programming to incorporate it into a material processed product using a three dimensional (3D) printer. Because the written curriculum incorporates technology in a wide variety of practices, students' educational experience is broadened and enhanced through the use of 21st century tools. (school website, team meeting, Standard committee, teachers)

The school to some degree provides sufficient staffing, time, professional development, fiscal resources, materials, technology, and supplies to implement and support the written curriculum. Due to budgetary conditions, JFK middle school has lost important staffing hours and positions. Because there is not a full-time sixth grade reading teacher, sixth grade students receive reading instruction from one of their core academic teachers, who are not a reading specialists. This staffing shortage results in larger class sizes for sixth grade reading classes, thus limiting support of the reading curriculum. Additionally, English language learner (ELL) staff hours have decreased. Currently one ELL, non-certified tutor is in JFK for one day per week to assist students, whose primary language is not English with classroom work, homework and translation. However, these students are not assisted in the classroom but rather on a pull-out basis. Currently, there is not a full-time professional library/media specialist on staff at JFK Middle school. This has resulted in the loss of: instruction on research skills; support and integration of library resources into curriculum documents; and the timely selection and/or removal of materials. In several instances, teachers have requested professional development time for revision of the curriculum that has been denied or significantly reduced. A request for 160 hours for revision of the reading curriculum was reduced to a grant for 20 hours. The music department also requested time to revise the curriculum to accompany the state and national standards, which was denied, although the curriculum currently in use was revised in 2014. Because there was not time

available during the school day to collaborate with teachers of the same grade level and academic subject, the development of unit plans to support the 2015 social studies curriculum frameworks has been delayed. Teachers are provided with professional development opportunities throughout the year. English teachers have received training in Lucy Calkins writing model. In addition, humanities staff has been trained with the inquiry based learning. Staff receive at least one half day of professional development during regular school hours each month. Some content areas are given opportunities to develop curriculum during this time, others have training sessions relevant to their subjects. Staff also receive professional development during afterschool department meetings. While social studies used this time for developing curriculum and reviewing data, other subject area teachers did not see that the given activities were relevant to their developmental needs.

Insufficient fiscal resources have also had a negative impact on the support of curriculum at JFK Middle school. After five years of level funding for the school budget, $2.7 million was cut in the last fiscal year. As a result, teachers who retire have not been replaced; class size increased, which, in turn, impacted the implementation of the curriculum. The four eighth grade teams were reduced to three, thus increasing class size across the grade level. However, teachers are often able to receive the supplies they need to support the curriculum. Updated textbooks and materials are provided for English and math on a yearly basis. When teachers need resources or supplies to support the curriculum, they place a request through their designated district coordinator, the district coordinator evaluates the need and, if it is determined to be a valid need, it is submitted to the curriculum coordinator for final approval. Because the process for ordering supplies is seen as time consuming and inconvenient, many teachers choose to purchase their own.

While there are many technological devices for student use, there are also many needs for the use of these devices. Although there are three laptop carts and iPad carts available for use in the classroom, these are utilized to their full capacity on a daily basis, which results in an extended wait time for a cart to become available. While the technology that is available to students in the classroom is limited at times, there are also examples of opportunities for the use of advanced technology. Five 3D printers were donated by Asnuntuck College. There are 45 seats for the solid works software, which is used in CAD. Asnuntuck also donates plastic for use in the 3D printers. Teachers also use web sourcing donation sites to collect donations of technological materials to support the curriculum. These opportunities support many needs of the curricula of technology based classes; however, the core academic subjects struggle to have their daily technology needs met on a consistent basis. When adequate staffing, time, professional development, fiscal resources, materials, technology, and supplies are provided, the ability of the school to implement and support the written curriculum will be enhanced. (budget, teachers, central office personnel, team meeting)

Commendations

1. The consistent alignment of written curriculum to Common Core and state standards
2. The meaningful incorporation of student assessment data into the curriculum revision process

3. The abundant opportunities for authentic application of skills and knowledge embedded in the curriculum
4. The multitude of co-curricular activities available to students, that support the curriculum while meeting the individual needs of the adolescent
5. The integration of technology into the curriculum
6. The integration, coordination, and articulation of curriculum between sending and receiving schools

Recommendations

1. Align all curricula with the expectations for academic achievement and social behavior
2. Ensure that each curriculum area has learning standards that are aligned with the academic expectations
3. Design and implement curriculum in all subject areas that is intellectually challenging for all students
4. Review and revise all curriculum on a regular basis
5. Ensure that effective curriculum coordination, integration, and articulation exists within the building
6. Ensure that that effective curriculum coordination, integration, and articulation exists within the building
7. Ensure that there is sufficient staffing and time to support the curriculum

Teaching and Learning Standard

3 Instruction

Effective instruction is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning. It is aligned with the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement and is the connection to curriculum and assessment, as well as student

performance. It takes into account individual student needs, learning differences, interdisciplinary activities, and student engagement in a variety of ways. Self-reflection and interactive dialogue with colleagues is necessary to ensure success.

1. Classroom instruction is based on current research and embodies the school's stated beliefs about teaching and learning.

2. Classroom instruction is designed to enable all students to meet the school's high expectations for academic achievement.

3. Instruction facilitates learning by including practices that are personalized, exploratory, self-directed, authentically-based, reflective, and integrated across the curriculum.

4. Instruction ensures the development and application of higher order thinking skills and problem solving abilities.

5. Instructional strategies incorporate various technologies to improve student learning.

6. The school provides sufficient staffing, time, professional development, fiscal resources, materials, technology, and supplies to support effective instruction.

7. Ongoing discussion of improving instruction as it relates to student learning is a significant part of the professional culture of the school.

8. Teacher supervision improves instruction and enhances student learning.

Conclusions

At times, classroom instruction is based on current research and embodies the school's stated beliefs about teaching and learning. In an eighth grade adaptive physical education class, scaffolding, technology integration, multi-model instruction, and respect for the diversity of the students is employed. The class begins with a short, whole group discussion about the game Tchoukball, which is a game of physical skill

and strategy without any defense or aggression. Students watch a brief movie demonstrating the rules being applied then break into two different groups: with all boys; and the other with volunteer eighth grade "helpers" and their intensive needs "friends." After practicing the skills, students are more able to transition at their own pace into playing the game. In an eighth grade French class, active learning, scaffolding, and multi-model instruction are used. After reading a French novel, students design their own piece of clothing, which was described in the novel. The results are shared with the class. Throughout the school, learning objectives are displayed and sometimes referenced during instruction. Some teachers refer to the learning objectives. In one eighth grade classroom, students are broken up into pods or small, heterogeneous groupings. Students have different jobs within the group. Each pod works on a different activity and the pods rotate daily. There is a great deal of student choice, collaboration, and respect for student diversity in this setting. However, direct instruction with a teacher-centered approach and students in straight rows, is pervasive throughout the school. The vast majority of instruction begins with a "do now" or whole group prompt followed by a task that is individual in nature. Although there is some emphasis to integrate technology and career readiness into the curriculum through Innovation and technology labs along with the six 3-D printers that the school has acquired through grant funding and Asnuntuck Community College, there is limited differentiation, project-based learning, Socratic circles, student-led instruction, "pods" or learning stations. This teacher-centered approach does not fully support the school's mission of providing an "academically rigorous environment that meets individual needs."   Some assignments are presented to both honors and average levels with honors asked to write in paragraph form while the average level is asked to write in bullets. Infrequently, students work in collaborative groupings that allow for limited peer interactions. In addition, flexible groupings with teachers moving students in and out of ability groups or guided groups with the teacher providing direct instruction to a small group of students in order to reteach or clarify student understanding are used. There is little use of the gradual release of responsibility model, where the teacher models then students in groups practice and finally students independently practice a skill or concept. When classroom instruction is based on current research and best practices, teachers will be more able to maximize instructional time and meet the individual needs of students. (classroom observations, students, teachers, student work)

Some classroom instruction is designed to enable all students to meet high expectations for academic achievement, although there is no formal document outlining the school's high expectations for academic achievement. In a seventh grade honors math class, students in pairs were challenged with a scavenger hunt, which incorporated movement and multiple intelligences. In seventh grade science, students create continents with the corresponding climate. This standards-based assignment integrated both geography and science. In a sixth grade computer class, students were learning how to program using Dory, Nemo and Bruce, as the teacher employed the gradual release of responsibility model. Although teachers asked students to record their thinking, this was not followed up with tiered questioning techniques and in many classes, teachers employed only the lowest level of Bloom's Taxonomy when questioning. In most classes teachers believe that differentiation and individualized instruction is subsumed in the leveled classes and further differentiation is not required.

When classroom instruction is designed to enable all students to meet high expectations for academic achievement, then the instructional shift will support students in meeting the high standards.   (Standard committee, student handbook, teachers, classroom observations)

Sometimes instruction facilitates learning by including practices that are personalized, exploratory, self-directed, authentically-based, reflective, and integrated across the curriculum. In some areas, instruction is personalized. In a strategic reading class, students are asked to apply the unit theme of identity by answering the question, "Who Am I?" From there, the student composes a coherent and organized expository essay. In a seventh and eighth grade reading class, students create a personalized "totem" after reading the whole class novel, Touching Spirit Bear. Students utilize and share many aspects of their own lives to create this visual representation. There are opportunities for exploratory learning, especially in science and technology classes. In sixth grade science, the Penny Lab Extension is a scientific investigation that asks students to make predictions about an outcome, evaluate the success of this prediction, and then conduct another experiment and try to make a more accurate prediction. In a sixth grade technology class, students use Alice software to animate a movie. They also work with Scratch software for computer programming. Instructional design encourages students to attempt to create, make errors, and revise their original trajectory. In seventh grade science, students are tasked with researching genetic diseases and exploring both the genetic and environmental reasons for developing a genetic disease poster featuring their topic. Students can investigate their own hereditary line, as well as hypothetical situations. Sporadically, students act as self-directed learners. In the visual arts class, seventh and eighth grade students take part in "Masterpiece Monday".   Students participate in a five- to ten-minute informal and student-led conversation about a work of art. They critique the work and speak about technique. The piece that students discuss is a schema activator and leads directly to what will be studied in class. In a math intervention class, students work together in pairs or trios to solve ratio/rate concepts in a concrete way by using manipulatives of their choosing. Some instruction is authentically based. In seventh grade science, all students practice taking their own pulse and explore how different activities change heart rate. This leads to discussion on how a person can raise heart rate for optimal health.   In the past, guidance also worked with eighth   grade students and advisory teachers to conduct a career day. Students explored 35 different careers ranging from firefighter to cartoonist. Students were encouraged to interview community members to gather information about any careers that interest them. There is limited student reflection incorporated. In an eighth grade reading class, a student completed a Today's Teaching Tweet, designed to let the student summarize her learning at the end of class. The tweet contains one thing the student learned, one thing that is confusing, and one thing that the student still doesn't know. A few classes require an exit ticket. Occasionally, students are asked to reflect either orally or through a check list. In some cases, as with a seventh   grade science class, students reflect on their performance on a story writing project by filling out a self-grading sheet. Infrequently, instruction is integrated across the curriculum. In seventh grade, students in a science and geography class research, design, and create their country, working for three weeks in the Innovation Lab. There is a chance to self-reflect and share their creation with others

in the classroom community. In sixth grade art, students take part in an Egyptian Clay Sarcophagi unit that is concurrently taught with the Ancient Egypt unit. As a result, students are better able to make interconnections between the visual arts and other disciplines, as well as their daily life. However, in most classes, instruction is based on a traditional teacher-centered approach rather than the use of developmentally appropriate practices that addresses both the cognitive and affective needs of the adolescent. When a middle school facilitates learning by including practices that are personalized, exploratory, self-directed, authentically-based, reflective, and integrated across the curriculum, instruction will nurture cognitive and intellectual development. (students, teachers, classroom observations, student work)

In a limited way, instruction strives to ensure the development and application of higher order thinking skills and problem solving abilities. In sixth grade honors science, students work with slides and microscopes in order to qualitatively and quantitatively report on what they observe. The students classify slides and create visual representations of what they see. Observations are discussed collaboratively. The teacher scaffolds this microscope work culminating with live protozoa that students have to "capture" with cotton and then examine under the microscope. In a chorus class, the teacher records the students singing and then the students listen to their own voices and use the recordings to assess areas in need of improvement. In Spanish 1a and French1a, there is an expectation that all students will be able to understand vocabulary and structures of an entire novel, which will be read by all students. However, there is a lack of consistent higher order thinking expected in much of the instruction. Many assignments are on the lowest level of Bloom's taxonomy requiring students simply to remember, understand, and apply rather than the synthesizing and analyzing of information. In some classes, all students read from their textbooks and copy vocabulary in order to define the terms. There was little evidence of multiple representations designed to align with multiple intelligences. In addition, there was minimal evidence of project-based learning that focused on the concepts to be learned, which in turn energized new learning, rather than the final project. When instruction strives to ensure development and application of higher order thinking skills and problem solving abilities, students will develop strong critical thinking skills and be more prepared for the rigors of 21st century learning. (student work, classroom observations, teachers)

Some instructional strategies incorporate various technologies to improve student learning. The technology department has partnered with Asnuntuck Community College (ACC) to expand instruction on their three dimensional (3D) printers. Two instructors from ACC come in to the middle school twice a week to assist with the technology classes. Students also benefit from this link to the world of programming they may want to explore as a future area of study or career path. In orchestra, instruction includes technology to tune instruments. In a special education class, iPads are used to help students with severe speech issues to communicate vocally and demonstrate their knowledge. In a strategic reading class, students work in the Innovation Lab to research and create first person narrative survival stories. Once the stories are written, students create a three to five minute narrated film demonstrating understanding of the event. A seventh grade science teacher has a flipped classroom, a teacher created web site, and a flat screen television to project instruction for the

students. All of this technology, however, was purchased and set up by the teacher. This level of technology is not the norm throughout the school. While technology education classes benefit from instruction using the technology labs, other disciplines have trouble accessing technology, either the labs or technology on the carts, to support and enhance instruction. During testing weeks, all technology is reserved to serve that need. There are two iPad carts that belong in the classroom of a sixth grade English teacher and an eighth grade science teacher, as a result of grant. The grant specifies that these carts can only be used in these classrooms. There is an additional iPad cart along with two lap top carts that can be signed out online by teachers. Many teachers do not know how to sign out these carts and have not been trained in the use of this technology. This creates an avoidance of technology on the part of teachers. There are still teachers using overhead projectors due to a lack of screens. For those teachers who feel comfortable with technology, the demand outweighs the supply. The Innovation lab is a 21st century instructional resource for teachers to utilize as students virtually discover concepts through technology.   Unfortunately opportunities in the lab are drastically limited, which results in not enough technology to meet the student need. At times, lesson plans have to be modified or completely omitted due to a lack of technological support. When instructional strategies incorporate various technologies to improve student learning, then students are better prepared for a changing and complex global society. (classroom observations, teachers, self-study, student work)

In some areas, the school provides sufficient staffing, time, professional development, fiscal resources, materials, technology, and supplies to support effective instruction. Although class sizes are manageable, there are some significant staffing issues including the loss of a team, 1.5 math interventionists, and in-house department heads. In addition English language learner (ELL) tutor hours have been cut to one hour a week for all JFK students in need of these services. Some ELL students have limited command of the language and the contact with tutors is not enough to help them access instructional strategies in class. Tutors do not have time to consult with teachers or to make significant progress helping students prepare for their class responsibilities. In the area of pupil services, only one full-time and two part-time social workers serve a vast need. While many teachers collaborate with colleagues "on the fly", after school, or in the hallway between classes, this is not the ideal way to talk meaningfully about best instructional practices. By design, professional development is tied to district initiatives and some teacher needs-based requests. Recent professional development for math included information on differentiated instruction as well as student-centered instruction.   However, there is a pervasive feeling among staff that professional development is a largely prescribed delivery of a series of disconnected initiatives and "wastes of time." Often the prescribed plan does not meet the perceived teacher needs. Teachers will informally design and seek out their own opportunities outside the district or through book studies and educational articles. There are funds and a process to follow for any teachers who want to pursue outside professional development that may enhance instructional practices. The funds are based on need and there is no guarantee that the request will be granted. Due to limited space and budgetary issues, some off-team teachers are on carts moving to different classrooms for some or all of their instructional time. These teachers are not able to access instructional materials in a timely manner, which negatively impacts time on learning.

Basic materials that are needed for instruction, including colored pencils or markers, crayons, glue and paper are, at times, purchased by the teacher. Donor's Choice is utilized by some teachers to fill a need that the teacher may anticipate. Though Donor's choice has resulted in a technology teacher receiving a document camera, Kindles, and other materials and supplies, it is not a guaranteed source of materials. Limited technology resources impede instruction. A reading specialist applied for a grant from Donor's Choice for Kindles to enhance her small group reading instruction. Often, teachers cannot access the Innovation lab because it is signed out for testing or class projects. The iPad and laptop carts do not cover the instructional needs of the teachers and students. When adequate staffing, time, professional development, fiscal resources, supplies, and materials are adequate to meet the needs of teachers and students, there will be increased opportunities for learning. (central office personnel, teachers, team meeting, student work)

Ongoing discussion of improving instruction as it relates to student learning is a significant part of the professional culture of the school in a limited way. Informally, teachers talk about their instructional strategies. They reflect informally in hallways, at shared lunch breaks, and at mutually agreed upon times that are not during school hours. However, there is no formal time for collegial conversations. There are allotted times during the month for a series of prescribed professional development opportunities which may address instruction. As a result, teachers have limited time to discuss their instructional strategies with colleagues. When ongoing discussion improving instruction, as it relates to student learning, becomes a significant part of school culture, then teachers will be able to explore a variety of strategies to further support student learning. (teachers, team meeting, central office personnel)

To a limited degree, teacher supervision improves instruction and enhances student learning. There is a schedule for teacher evaluation and this depends on whether the professional is in group A, B, or C. Group A has one formal observation a year, while groups B and C have three informal observations. Teachers receive feedback from these observations and are encouraged to contact any administrator if more observations or feedback are desired. All staff must set one student learning objective (SLO), which must be met by the end of the academic year. In order to meet the goal, a professional growth plan is mapped out with methods and strategies that the teacher will utilize in order to meet their student learning objective. Teachers also receive feedback and guidance on their SLO goals.   However, the feedback from the observation, or on an SLO, it is a piece of anecdotal evidence and is not a significant tool for the teacher to use in informing future instruction. When teacher supervision focuses on improving instruction, then student learning will be enhanced. (teachers, school leadership, self-study)

Commendations

1. The initial stages of employing instructional practices that are based on current research
2. The exploratory and authentically based learning employed by some professionals
3. The early stages of incorporating technology with instruction to improve student learning

4. The creative strategies teachers employ to procure instructional materials overcoming fiscal obstacles

Recommendations

1. Ensure all instruction is based on current research and supports the school's mission
2. Ensure classroom instruction is designed to enable all students to meet the school's expectations for academic achievement
3. Devise and implement a plan to ensure equity with the availability, training, and use of technology resources
4. Provide adequate staffing, technology resources, and supplies to meet the instructional needs of students
5. Devise and implement a plan to ensure collegial discussions regarding instructional best practices are a significant part of the school culture
6. Ensure that teacher supervision improves instruction and enhances student learning

Teaching and Learning Standard

4 Assessment of Student Learning

Effective assessment practices ensure that student progress is measured in relationship to the school's stated academic expectations. Assessment also provides teachers with opportunities to evaluate and adjust instructional practices to improve student learning. Assessment and its analysis provide the opportunity to develop long and short-term strategies to improve curriculum and instruction across the school. Assessment results inform the school community about school progress.

1. The school utilizes an ongoing assessment system that embodies the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement and measures progress in meeting those expectations.

2. Classroom assessment strategies, reflective of current assessment research, are integrated with instructional practices.

3. Student assessment results are analyzed, discussed, and used by the faculty and administration in the review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum and the improvement of instructional strategies.

4. Students are active learners who reflect upon and assess their own learning.

5. The assessment of student learning is communicated regularly to parents through a variety of procedures.

6. There are identified learning standards for each subject area which are the basis for grading and reporting.

7. The school provides sufficient time, staffing, professional development, fiscal resources, materials, technology, and supplies to support effective assessment procedures.

8. The school systematically interprets and reports assessment results to the community.

Conclusions

To a limited degree, the school utilizes an ongoing assessment system that embodies the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement and measures progress in meeting those expectations. As of yet, there is not a balanced assessment system, which includes mandated accountability tests, district benchmarks, summative, interim and daily formative assessments, which are designed to provide a picture of student achievement and where gaps may occur. All students complete multiple assessments during the school year. In addition to a few nationally normed standardized assessments, students complete a large variety of teacher created and implemented assessments, of which a few are identified as common district assessments. If teachers see the need for more specific testing to have a clearer picture of a student's academic capacity, then additional testing can be administered. There are district mandated accountability and benchmark assessments, which measure and assess what students know and are able to do. The Gates MacGinitie Reading Test is administered three times a year to all sixth graders and some seventh and eighth graders, who are at grade level or slightly below grade level. Nonfiction and fiction reading assessments are given three times a year. The Woodcock Johnson reading assessment is given by reading specialists to readers significantly below grade level to assess their skills in this area. In math, seventh and eighth grade students complete the Math Concepts and Applications assessment (MCAP) three times a year to measure growth from fall to spring by receiving a baseline and then two follow-ups. Benchmark scores for the follow-ups are determined by the district. There is a goal that students perform at or above the 50 percentile of nationally normed scores. For those who score below, intervention classes are provided. Students who receive math intervention complete the Aimsweb testing to monitor progress. These results are also compared to national norms. Additionally, math intervention students complete the Math Computation (MCOMP) to assess math computation skills. When math

intervention units are finished, and students are doing well in regular math classes, students are dismissed from intervention. Science assessments include three district-created common inquiries to assess student skills with experimental design and three science literacy tasks which include eight multiple choice questions and one open-ended item after reading a science article. Social studies classes assess concept focused argumentative writing with the use of a rubric modified from the Lucy Calkins writing program. This collaboration with the English department allows students an opportunity to use writing skills addressed in English class during the narrative and informative writing units. Another component of an ongoing assessment system is a common teacher-developed interim, which evaluates student progress in relation to standards, given prior to a common summative assessment. The data derived from the assessment is designed to inform instructional decisions in order to improve student learning. However, at this time, these standards-based interim assessments are not being administered frequently enough to impact instruction; monitor student learning for both student and teacher; be a significant part of professional learning communities (PLC) teacher-led discussions; or inform teachers when re-teaching time is needed. Scattered use of formative assessments clarify the learning purpose, which means that students understand the purpose of the lesson. This type of assessment, which is imbedded in daily instruction, provides a basis for teachers to evaluate student understanding through effective questioning techniques. Formative assessments include: teacher check-ins; exit tickets; or short summaries. Mostly, assessments demonstrate student compliance with teacher expectations on assignment completion rather than proficiency on learning standards. When the school fully utilizes an ongoing assessment system that embodies the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement and measures progress in meeting those expectations, then students and teachers are provided a valid picture of student achievement. (Standard committee, curriculum coordinators, teachers, classroom observations, student work, teacher-generated assessments)

To a limited degree, classroom assessment strategies, reflective of current assessment research, are integrated with instructional practices. Teachers are able to check for understanding and gather evidence of learning when applying formative assessment strategies. Basic formative assessment strategies are scattered throughout classrooms. Teachers monitor student work by walking around the classroom and checking for student understanding by correcting mistakes or misconceptions as needed. In a few classrooms, teachers checked for understanding by having students complete exit tickets, summarize the day's learning with discussion at the end of class, or identify understanding by recognizing class participation. In math classes, opportunities for independent practice were given during and after lesson delivery. Some teachers posed oral questions to check for understanding. With this evidence, teachers were able to modify instruction so that students could gain a clear understanding of what was being presented. However, only questions based on the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy were asked. Scaffolding questions in order to generate discussions and encourage higher order thinking was used occasionally. With some classroom tasks, students were given an opportunity to self-assess on a teacher-created rubric and then reflect on their own performance. However, there were a variety of interpretations of a rubric. Some were step-by-step instructions with ideas

given for successful completion of items within the task. Several rubrics did not contain scoring criteria nor were they standards-based. When classroom assessment strategies are reflective of current   adjust instruction so students can better move along the learning continuum. (team meeting, classroom observations, teachers, rubrics)

Student assessment results are occasionally analyzed, discussed, and used by the faculty and administration in the review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum and the improvement of instructional strategies. Through department meetings and team meetings, teachers are involved in the process of revising instructional strategies or writing assessments on a limited basis. Some assessment results are reviewed by teachers during team meetings. The assistant principals meet weekly with all of the teams in their house to discuss behavior needs and at-risk students. While this was referred to as a data team meeting, the data being used was anecdotal and team-based. Department meetings occur twice a month, but only are attended once by the coordinator. In the absence of the coordinator, a task is provided to the group to complete. Academic Achievement Meetings are held three times a year to review baseline data, to determine interventions, and to inform teacher instruction. An Academic Achievement Meeting held in February 2015 provided data for the review of writing, science, and social studies assessments, STAR reading and math tests, MCAP results and student absenteeism reports. Those in attendance analyzed the data and outlined a detailed course of action for improvement. A plan is currently in development for the school administrators to meet with the two science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) coordinators and humanities coordinator to create a plan in which the individual curriculum coordinators will work with departments to review and analyze data. However, the data to be used was not thoroughly identified. All sixth grade students complete diagnostic testing by completing the Gates MacGinitie reading test on iPads. The Woodcock Johnson Reading Mastery Test results are analyzed by the grades K-12 reading coordinator and the certified reading consultants. Readers who perform at or almost at grade level are placed in strategic reading groups to receive supplemental reading instruction. In these groups, seventh and eighth graders work on improving reading skills as this serves as a type of tier II intervention. Assisted reading groups work with certified reading consultants to receive intense reading assistance as a type of tier III intervention. Students completed the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) testing twice. A pilot year was completed before the testing was implemented school-wide. Data from common district assessments is analyzed, discussed, and reported by administration. As a direct result of the SBAC scores, the math department is beginning to implement a content-based assessment in addition to the skills assessment. Common district assessments connected to Connecticut Common Core and Frameworks have not been developed in all departments. Upcoming professional development days may be used by departments to continue to develop curriculum and common assessments. When student assessment are systematically analyzed, discussed, and used by the faculty and administration, then the results will inform instructional strategies and curriculum revision. (school leadership, district administrators, curriculum coordinators, assessments, team meetings, teachers)

Occasionally students are active learners who reflect upon and assess their own learning.   In some classes, students are encouraged to reflect on their learning in order to identify: new understanding; questions still to be answered; and information to be

clarified. In a math class, students in small groups compared answers to Jeopardy question. If answers were different, then students were able to debate and defend why one was the correct answer. The group answer was then shared orally, allowing other groups to self-correct as well. In a chorus class, students listened to an audio recording to self-assess their singing performance and determine where improvements needed to be made in their voice. Success was demonstrated as the next attempt was improved. In a writing class, students needed to identify a writing strength and a writing target after reviewing peer edits. This allowed students to recognize what they did well and where they need to include more evidence. In social studies, students self-assess their work on an essay with a three-part argumentative writing rubric. In their art journal, students reflected on their work by looking at areas where they were successful and identifying where improvements needed to be made. However in most classes students were not assessors of their own learning, had little ownership of their learning, and were not resources to other students. When the students are active learners who consistently reflect upon and assess their own learning in a variety of ways throughout the curricula, then they are able to see how where they are successful and where they need to add to their learning schema. (students, student work, teachers)

By design, the assessment of student learning is communicated regularly to parents through a variety of procedures. There are four academic quarters in the school year with academic performance reported twice each quarter. At the midpoint of the quarter, interim progress reports are generated. At the end of the quarter, report cards are published, which include grades, teacher comments, as well as the student's grade point average. One copy of the report card is provided to the guidance department, while two copies are provided to students to bring home. It is expected that one home copy is signed and returned to the school. Additionally, at any point in the school year, students and families can view academic performance by accessing the Student Access Center (SAC) or Home Access Center (HAC) for attendance, classroom performance, and schedule information. Login information is received by the home when the student is in the third grade. Student login information was reissued to students this year. The new administrators encourage students to access the SAC to self-monitor their academic progress. The release of an HAC application has allowed families and students to access this information through smart phones and tablets. Administrators can see the last login data for home and student, but not the frequency of HAC use. Administration and the information technology (IT) department know parents are utilizing the information HAC displays as phone calls are received to reset passwords or question low grades. Parents are invited to attend meetings such as general parent meetings, 504 meetings, and pupil placement team (PPT) meetings so that student classroom performance can be shared. These meetings can be requested by the parent, teacher, guidance counselors, special education teachers, or administrators. At some of these meetings, performance on assessments including teacher generated classroom assessments, curriculum assessments, and standardized testing is shared. Families are also invited to attend parent-teacher conferences, which occur in November after the first quarter report cards have been distributed. Students who receive math intervention, which is provided during the school day, have testing information mailed home. This includes performance on Aimsweb, MCAP, and/or MCOMP testing. Because the assessment of student learning is communicated

regularly to parents through a variety of procedures, parents are aware of student academic performance. (team meeting, school leadership, staff meetings, fall 2015 Patriot Herald, parents, teachers, students)

Rarely there are identified learning standards for each subject area, which are the basis for grading and reporting. The assessment system is in flux due to newly adopted standards, evolving curriculum, and suggested assessment practices in all academic areas. For example, the district is currently waiting for Connecticut to formally adopt the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) so that the science curriculum can be updated and revised to include these newer standards. However, inquiry-based assessments have been created and are currently being implemented. The math department is currently creating common, content-based assessments to identify students' mastery with skills and concepts. However, standards directly connected to these assessments were not clear. Although the curriculum for world languages is based on the American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages, assessments were connected to task performance rather than to standards. Some teachers identify learning standards by including them in a lesson plan or posting on the board. However, student performance on these standards was rarely the basis for grading and reporting. A large variety of assessment evidence demonstrated teacher-generated rubrics assessing students on completion of the task by means of a checklist rather than criteria for proficiency levels of standard performance. Currently there is no consistency across the grade levels or subjects on assessing the standards. Without assessment tools directly connected to learning standards, this data is not present and cannot be reported and analyzed. Therefore, students are unaware of their performance and proficiency level of identified learning standards. When learning standards for each subject area are both identified and criteria is established for proficiency levels, then student performance can be assessed with fidelity. (teachers, classroom observations, curriculum coordinators, teacher-generated assessments, rubrics)

By design, the school provides sufficient time, professional development, fiscal resources, materials, and supplies to support effective assessment procedures. However, there is limited staffing and technology to support effective assessment procedures. At team and department meetings grading practices are discussed. One team meetings is dedicated to review assessment data. Norming meetings occur so English and social studies teachers are able to discuss how to score writing pieces using the rubrics encouraging consistency when scoring. However, the implementation of this writing curriculum has greatly increased the amount of time needed to assess individual writing pieces given the rigor of the rubric and the number of students being assessed. Staffing to support effective assessment procedures is limited in some areas. Currently a team of nine reading specialists provide small group instruction and the corresponding assessments through assisted and strategic reading classes. Their focus is on reading strategy instruction during class time. However, there is a list of students waiting to receive math intervention due to limited staffing. Numerous in-service days provide opportunities for professional development (PD) at the department and school level for assessment procedures. Curricular areas have brought in guest speakers, completed book studies, participated in norming meetings, and discussed assessments at department meetings. Learning locks, made up of teachers in different teams, were recently instituted and will provide opportunities at the school level to

collaborate and discuss best practices. In science, a recent focus has been inquiry-based learning, which has supported the development of inquiry assessments. A representative from the Teacher's College came to visit a group of English and social studies staff and was able to share how to utilize the writing unit rubrics. The reading coordinator is currently completing a book study with the book *Common Core CPR: What about the Adolescents Who Struggle…or Just Don't Care* to support the rewriting of lessons and curriculum including assessment. Materials for content area assessments are available on a website for school staff. The amount of technology is not sufficient to support effective assessment procedures in all areas of the academic curriculum. Students use iPads to complete the Gates-MacGinitie Reading test, and when used for this testing, they are not able to be used by other classrooms. The long term use of computers to complete the SBAC testing limits the use of this technology for other assessments and classroom use. When revising and publishing writing, students often complete multiple handwritten drafts instead of using word processing applications as technology is not available. Supplies in general seem to be sufficient. Although the school provides sufficient time, professional development, fiscal resources, materials, and supplies, when adequate staffing and technology is provided, then effective assessment procedures will be more fully supported. (district administrators, staff, curriculum coordinators, teachers)

The school systematically interprets and occasionally reports assessment results to the community. The Academic Achievement Team meets three times a year to review student performance on a variety of assessments. These meetings, attended by the principal and curriculum coordinators, are designed to review assessment scores including benchmarks and baselines by looking at data collected. Scores can be reported on Performance Plus. Discussion at these meetings can identify instructional strategies to be altered as well as suggest interventions.   Some teachers report assessment data into the Performance Plus data system. When this is done, teachers are able to utilize this historical assessment data, if they choose. Teachers and administrators can view data entered into Performance Plus. Students are aware of benchmark scores if teachers input these grades into the HAC system. Currently SBAC scores are being compiled by administrators. At this time, a system to share information with the community regarding student proficiency in meeting the standards has not yet been developed. Communication of assessments to the community begins at the school level with the dissemination of interim progress reports and report cards to families and providing access to similar information on HAC and SAC. At the district level, assessment results are reported a few times throughout the academic year to the board of education during public meetings. Because the school systematically interprets and reports all significant assessment results to the greater community, the community is aware of what students know and are able to do. (school leadership, board of education, teachers)

Commendations

1. The beginning stages of creating standards-based assessments
2. The use of benchmark assessments to measure student growth

3. The initial stages of implementing best practices in assessments including student self- reflection
4. The newly established professional development time for curriculum areas to meet and discuss assessment procedures
5. The implementation of the Home Access Center and Student Access Center, which provide parents and students access to performance information
6. The systematic interpretation of some assessment results by the Academic Achievement Team

Recommendations

1. Create and implement a system to assess the proficiency of all students on curriculum learning standards that embodies the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement
2. Design and implement a plan to integrate research-based best practices in assessment into instructional practices
3. Create and implement a system in which data from common district assessment performances is reviewed, reported, and informs instruction and curriculum revision
4. Design and implement a plan to ensure that identified learning standards for all curricula are the basis for grading
5. Provide sufficient staffing and technology to support effective assessment procedures

<u>Middle School Support Standards</u>

Leadership and Organization
School Resources for Learning
Community Resources for Learning

5 Leadership and Organization

Leadership is the collaborative responsibility of administration, faculty, and support staff to achieve the mission and expectations of the school. The manner in which a school organizes itself, makes decisions, and treats its members affects the atmosphere in which teaching and learning take place. The school climate fosters mutual respect, as

well as opportunities for reflection and growth among students and staff and welcomes the meaningful involvement of parents and community members.

1. The principal, in conjunction with the educational community, provides leadership by developing and maintaining a vision which ensures a focus on the academic and social growth of the middle level child.

2. Professional and support staff shares the responsibility for implementing the school's mission and to maintain the academic and social expectations for students.

3. The principal provides meaningful opportunities for the staff to assume leadership roles.

4. Student grouping practices reflect an understanding of the unique learning and social needs of the middle level child and demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of the student body.

5. The school implements a process of clear, consistent, and meaningful communication within the building, within the district, and throughout the community.

6. The school establishes developmentally appropriate rules and consequences for student behavior that ensure the well-being and safety of students, which are understood and supported by the educational community.

7. The school has a climate that is positive, respectful, structured and safe. It is highly energized and encourages growth, change, renewal and constructive risk-taking among students and staff.

8. There is evidence of mutual respect, common purpose, and support among all members of the school community.

9. The work, contributions, and achievements of all students and school personnel are regularly acknowledged and celebrated and appropriately displayed throughout the school.

10. The school has a clearly defined process for the evaluation and supervision of faculty, staff, and administration which is used to improve student learning.

11. The school has a planned orientation and program for administrators, faculty, and support staff.

12. The school has clearly defined crisis/emergency response plans and all occupants are familiar with these procedures.

13. Parents, teachers and community members feel welcome at the school. They are encouraged and provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the school's decision-making process.

14. There is a planned program of professional development, collaboratively structured by administration, faculty, and staff which supports the school's mission and expectations for academic achievement and social behavior.

Conclusions

The principal, in conjunction with the educational community, provides leadership through beginning to develop and maintain a vision, which intends to ensure a focus on the academic and social growth of the middle level child. The current principal began his tenure at the John F. Kennedy (JFK) Middle School for the 2015-2016 school year. Previously, he was one of the assistant principals at Enfield High School. Currently,

the principal's vision is being defined with all constituents. He is choosing topics for professional development being focused on improving the school culture and developing a peer model for collaboration and formative evaluation. At the school level, his vision is focused on the "Four Rs" of respect, responsibility, relationships, and readiness, with a particular focus on respect and responsibility as being developmentally appropriate for middle school students.   He is visible to the staff and students, leads the implementation process for the "Four Rs", and has developed an increase in communication throughout the school. When the principal, in conjunction with the educational community, can embed his leadership by developing and maintaining a vision which ensures a focus on the academic and social growth of the middle level child, than there is a cohesion and focus among all the staff that leads to a consistent level of education for every child. (facility tour, school leadership, central office personnel, curriculum coordinators, teachers)

The majority of professional and support staff share the responsibility for implementing the school's mission and maintaining the academic and social expectations for students. Throughout the school, adherence to the school's mission and vision is verbally acknowledged. Support staff work with case managers and general education staff to provide appropriate supports. However, the mission has yet to be fully integrated into the daily life of the classroom. Some classrooms demonstrate learning for the 21st century with a focus on rigor and achievement. In a science classroom, the students were given basic parameters and asked to create and execute an experiment. These results were presented in a public forum and open to peer and self-reflection. However, this type of practice, aligned with the school mission does not occur consistently throughout the building. In many classrooms, there is a teacher-centered approach with some student participation. The use of technology is varied depending upon the subject area and availability of resources. The majority of the school is involved in implementing the social elements of the mission. The creation of the 4Rs by the administration has resulted in greater 'buy in' for improving the school culture by the staff as a whole and has fostered a heightened focus on the social and behavioral components of the mission. When professional and support staff are able to share the responsibility for fully implementing the school's mission and consistently maintain the academic and social expectations for students, an atmosphere where rigor is expected and achievable with a positive school culture that is centered on student learning will be supported. (school leadership, student shadowing, facility tour, students, Standard committee)

At this time, the principal provides limited meaningful opportunities for the staff to assume leadership roles as he begins his new role. Staff are routinely asked to sit on hiring committees, and are contractually required to be part of a committee or after school club, which provides limited opportunities for teacher leadership. The recent restructuring of the department chair system to multi-building grades 6-12 district coordinators with teaching responsibilities and district curriculum coordinators placed only one departmental leadership position within the school building. When the principal provides meaningful opportunities for the staff to assume leadership roles, greater ownership and responsibility will be promoted and fostered. (Standard committee, district administrators, teachers)

Student grouping practices infrequently reflect an understanding of the unique earning and social needs of the middle level child and do not demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of the student body. There are eleven teams within three houses. The students' elective choices play a large role in the distribution of students within the different teams. There are special education resources available on all teams and in all houses. Although there are heterogeneous groupings in the sixth grade in all content areas classes with the exception of math, the seventh and eighth grades have honors and average designated groups for math, English language arts, science, and social studies. This leveling does not support the school's mission of "meeting the individual needs of students" nor does it support rigor for all students. This leveling of classes into honors and average also affects the makeup of the teams as well as the distribution of students in non-leveled classes. There is not a cap to the number of students allowed into the honors level classes so the number of honors section for each team can fluctuate.   As a result, the leveling of students does not support the mission statement's focus on meeting the individualized needs of the diverse community of students. In addition students who are part of a sub-separate special education program are not aligned with any team or house with the exception of reading services. When student grouping practices reflect current research and an understanding of the unique learning and social needs of the middle level child and demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of the student body, than student's academic, social, and emotional needs are better able to be met. (Standard committee, teachers, classroom observations, school leadership)

The school, both formally and informally, implements a process of relatively clear, consistent, and meaningful communication within the building, within the district, and throughout the community. There are both formal and informal methods of communication within the building. The principal and assistant principals meet one time per week to discuss various issues. The principals also attend monthly secondary principals' meetings. They augment this with informal conversations in the cafeteria during lunch duty, as needed meetings with guidance counselors. Walkie-talkies are available for instant communication between administrators and custodians.   The team staff members have found ways to improve communication with off-team members through the use of shared documents, as they are not able to attend team meetings. Additionally, paraprofessionals receive limited direct communication within the building. They do not have a district email and often miss out on whole staff messages and opportunities. District level communication has several formal processes and forums. The superintendent holds community forums that are open to the community to discuss a variety of school initiatives and issues. The community has the opportunity to ask questions of central office staff, including the superintendent. The central office staff also meets with the faculty several times a year to review district initiatives as well as the budget. They provide the staff with the same budget presentation as the board of education. The superintendent holds principal meetings once per month, and district-wide administrative team meetings once a month. The chief academic officer meets with the curriculum coordinators weekly. However, communication between curriculum coordinators and building level staff members has been negatively impacted by the change from building level department chairs to central office curriculum coordinators and multi-building district coordinators. Tis change has

resulted in an increased global focus on departmental issues improving connection in grades 6-12 but reducing the focus on building based concerns. The district-level student achievement team meets three times year. The central office administrators perform formal team learning walks two times a year per school. The superintendent, principals, and informational technology (IT) director use Twitter and Facebook applications to share up-to-date and emergency information, including school cancellations due to snow. Information is posted on the website includes events and scheduling. Announcements occur at the beginning and the end of the day. Often this information is not easy for parents to find unless a student relays the information at home. Parents have access to the Home Access Center (HAC) to learn about their child's academic progress. Communication between home and school occurs monthly through the principal's newsletter. When the school implements a process of clear, consistent, and meaningful communication within the building, within the district, and throughout the community, all constituents will be aware of the various aspects of school growth and development. (central office personnel, parents, paraprofessionals, teachers, Standard committee)

To some extent the school has informally established developmentally appropriate rules and consequences for student behavior that ensure the well-being and safety of students, which are understood and supported by the educational community. Under the new administration, the school developed an appropriate system for behavior management focused on the four Rs of ready, responsible, relationships, and respect. Students use these concepts in every area of the school. During the summer, in conjunction with the 4Rs development, the administrative team revised the disciplinary referral forms to incorporate the mission statement, include teacher interventions, and final outcomes on an online form. The assistant principals collaborate and share information about disciplinary incidents in order to create consistency in disciplinary practices. There has been a decrease in suspensions since the implementation of the 4Rs expectations. The school has a designated an in-school suspension (ISS) room that can be used by the assistant principals for all-day or schedule specific ISS. The ISS teacher indicated that there is at least one student in ISS per day. There is also detention and a demerit system. Behavior and routines in the hallways are issues. Although there is supervision, the morning entry, transitions between classes, and end-of-day routines are inconsistency enforced. At times, students have trouble navigating the halls and people are easily jostled or shoved in the process, although there was no deliberate harm. During morning entry and dismissal there were multiple staff members visible in the hallway. When the school establishes developmentally appropriate rules and consequences for student behavior that ensure the well-being and safety of students then the climate of the school is positive, supported by the educational community, and allows for greater focus on academic achievement. (students, student shadowing, bus duty observations, hallway observations)

To some extent, the school has a school climate that is positive, respectful, structured, and safe. It is highly energized and at times encourages growth, change, renewal, and constructive risk-taking among students and staff. The staff, students, and support personnel routinely refer to the school as a family and as a community. All staff share in the congenial and friendly atmosphere. The principal fosters this feeling through a vision focused on building strong, supportive relationships with students. The

administrative team has a visible presence in the school, in the halls, the lunch room, and the stairwells which helps to promote expected behaviors and fosters respect among staff and students. There is a high level of positive energy in the building and frequently in the classroom. The structure and routines within the classrooms differ widely throughout the school. Many classes are organized and focused while in others there is overlapping communication and frequent off-task behavior. Some students remained quiet during these periods and were relatively uninvolved and disengaged in the lesson.   JFK Middle School attempts to meet the needs of students who are above and beyond that of an average middle level child through the Talented and Gifted program. While this program is intended to meet the needs of gifted and talented students within the school day, students miss academic class time and are required to make up missing work, which creates a time conflict. Staff risk-taking is inconsistent across the school. Individual teachers take risks by trying new strategies such as student-centered and project-based learning; and developing new lessons.   When the school has a climate that is positive, respectful, structured and safe, then it encourages growth, change, renewal and constructive risk-taking among students and staff. (teachers, classroom observations, hallway observations, stairwell observations)

There is mutual respect and support among all members of the school community. However, sense of a common purpose among all members of the school community is limited. Staff members get along well across disciplines and school roles. The student population is friendly and respectful to staff and visitors and the overall feeling of the school is positive and supportive. There are many classrooms with multiple staff members working in co-teaching or support models. Students are supported through an advisory meeting monthly where they are given guidance and participate in team building activities in a safe and respectful environment. All constituents of the school are heard from and listened to by their peers and superiors. For example, when the special areas teachers indicated a lack of communication from core subject team members, those teams found a way to improve communication about student needs and concerns. Custodians are friends with teachers; there is connection and communication with cafeteria staff workers; and in almost every conversation the word "family" is used to describe the connections between the staff members as well as the connections with students. A common purpose focused on student achievement is limited. There is little sharing of best practices, looking at student work, and the examination of data was routine or systemic. There are pockets of teachers who routinely reflect on their work and incorporate new research into their pedagogy. The 11 interdisciplinary teams meet daily for common planning time; but the time is not always focused on student learning. The new administration is implementing peer walk-throughs and reflections with colleagues that focuses on a common purpose. There is professional development currently scheduled around this focus. When there is evidence of mutual respect, common purpose, and support among all members of the school community, then a school becomes a positive place to work that is focused on student achievement and greater academic success for all students. (school leadership, classroom observations, team meeting, teachers)

Across the school, the work, contributions, and achievements of all students and school personnel are regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and appropriately displayed throughout the school. Many classrooms had student work posted on bulletin boards.

Murals created by students through the mural club are a permanent part of the school environment. There is a system for student behavioral praise called the Patriot Pride tickets. Any staff member may give a ticket to a student who is demonstrating the appropriate behaviors. The student turns the ticket in his/her assistant principal who draws raffle tickets for school "swag." When the student receives his or her swag, the assistant principal discusses with the student the rationale for the praise as the reason is not written on the ticket. The administrative team has talked about creating a way to announce all of the Patriot Pride tickets each week to recognize students engaging in appropriate behavior. Student success is posted frequently and obviously throughout the building. In one hallway there is a bulletin board noting the teams that won a fiction versus non-fiction skill competition. Various other achievements are posted in a variety of locations throughout the school. There are perfect attendance certificates for staff recognition. At faculty meetings, staff are recognized through Patriot Pride awards. In addition, the principal sends out weekly emails on Fridays to recognize achievements by staff. As a result, there is a positive climate because students and staff fell valued and connected. Because the work, contributions, and achievements of all students and school personnel are regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and appropriately displayed throughout the school than students gain an understanding of the importance of their work and their education and staff can take pride in their accomplishments. (school leadership, facility tour, Patriot Pride raffle observations)

The school has a formally adopted clearly defined process for the evaluation and supervision of faculty, staff, and administration, which is used to improve student learning.   JFK follows the Enfield Public Schools Professional Growth and Evaluation Standards in alignment with the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching. Teachers are placed in one of four categories for evaluation and observation as determined by the primary evaluator. Teacher performance is evaluated each year through a combination of factors: 5 percent student feedback, 10 percent parent feedback, 40 percent teacher performance and practice, and 45 percent student learning measures as determined from the teacher's Student Learning Objective (SLO). There is a clearly delineated process for the teacher evaluation system that includes: self-evaluation, goal-setting, development of student learning objectives, gathering evidence, mid-year conference, self-reflection, and end-of-year conference. Teachers receive formal and unannounced observations from administrators, curriculum coordinators, and curriculum directors depending upon each teacher's plan. The school is in the second year of implementation and there is an increase in time spent in classrooms, a reduction in the number of people assigned to each evaluator, and student achievement is more measurable through the use of student learning objectives. Secretaries are evaluated at the end of each year by the principal and assistant principals. Paraprofessionals are evaluated at the end of the year by the special education director. Administrators are evaluated under the *Enfield Administrator Effectiveness and Performance Evaluation Handbook.* The school has a clearly defined process for the evaluation and supervision of faculty, staff, and administration, which is used to improve student learning. (evaluation handbook, teachers, school leadership)

The school has an informal orientation program for administrators, a consistent and planned orientation program for new faculty, and minimal orientation program for support staff. The Enfield Public Schools has an informal process for orientation and

support for new administrators. The current principal, in his first year at JFK and in his first year in a middle school, has received informal support in his new role. New administrators are paired with veteran administrators for technology information and familiarity with the teacher evaluation tools. The high school administrators have taken the new secondary principal "under their wing" as he begins his tenure at JFK as he was an assistant principal at the high school. All district administrators attended a two-day retreat at the beginning of the school year to review district initiatives. Although the state attempted to create a new administrators program statewide, it was not fully developed. For new teachers, in their first two years of teaching, the district participates in the state-mandated, two-year Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program. All new teachers, both novice and veteran, take part in orientation training before school starts where the organization and rules specific to the district are reviewed. New teachers also participate in the district-wide convocation and professional development prior to the beginning of the school year. The Enfield Public Schools uses Enfield Self-Services, part of the Munis system, as a tool for teachers to manage human resource information including: professional development hours, sick time, and demographics. However, teachers do not receive training on how to use the system to manage their information. Paraprofessionals start on the first day of school for students and receive a packet of information about their duties and responsibilities from the secretary. This year, paraprofessionals will participate in three half-days of professional development for the first time. Because the school has a planned orientation program for administrators, faculty and support staff, there is a shared vision for the school community that is enacted through daily routines and procedures. (self-study, teachers, paraprofessionals, central office personnel, school leadership)

  Across the school there are clearly defined crisis/emergency response plans and all occupants are familiar with these procedures. Each staff member is given a binder that outlines the procedures for a large variety of potentially dangerous events including: tornadoes, lock-downs, and intruders. These procedures are also posted throughout the school in all rooms and classrooms. All staff and students are familiar with the procedures and are able to define what needs to be done in the various situations. There are drills run each year. This year, the school hosted a state-coordinated drill for tornadoes. The school is also the primary shelter for the town with a full-size generator that can maintain all building functions in an emergency. There is also a back-up emergency generator that covers essentials. The clearly defined crisis/emergency response plans and procedure, with which all occupants are familiar, ensure all emergencies can be handled with the appropriate response and level of care. (self-study, emergency protocols, facility tour, custodians, school leadership, teachers)

  Parents, teachers, and community members often feel welcome at the school. However, they are infrequently encouraged and provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the school's decision-making process. The school welcomes parents and community members into the building in a variety of ways. The pool is open to public use during the summer; many functions are held after school and on the weekends. The school board recently lifted restrictions on the inclusion of volunteers throughout the district in order to promote a greater number of people, including participation on field trips. The most prominent way for a parent to be involved in the school is through the parent-teacher organization (PTO), which has a definite presence

within the school community and provides significant funding opportunities for teachers and staff. At this time parents, teachers, and community members have limited opportunities for decision making within the school. One such opportunity is the teacher choice for professional development.   While parents, teachers, and community members are welcome at the school, when they are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the school's decision-making process, all benefit from an expansion of resources and a more global approach to education. (parents, teachers, Standard committee, school leadership)

There is a collectively planned program of professional development, collaboratively structured by administration, faculty, and staff which intends to support the school's mission and expectations for academic achievement and social behavior. Professional development is planned by the chief academic officer (CAO) in collaboration with the building principal and the curriculum coordinators. Via the online program *Enfield Self-Service*, all teachers and administrators have access to a master calendar of professional development for the school year. Currently, these dates are loaded online until April of 2016. Teachers are informed of professional development topics prior to the session by their department coordinators and/or building administrators, when they are required to sign in. However, the lack of training in the technology system associated with professional development impedes the staff's ability to access the master calendar. During the summer, the CAO meets with the building principal to determine the focus for each professional development session. There are monthly half-day professional development meetings from 1:00 p.m. to 2:51p.m., five full days of professional development, and after-school professional development/faculty meeting time 3 out of 4 Tuesdays a month for 45 minutes to an hour. For the current year, the district held one full day before school began, three days during November, and one is planned for the spring. In the past, there were three days in the summer, one in November, and one in the spring. The district intends to return to this model next year. Some of the professional development time is used for district-level initiatives. For example, there will be training in Lucy Calkins writing units of study through the writers' workshop model that was initiated last year. Additionally, there will be continued professional development on shared inquiry.   At the building level, the principal has focused professional development on school-specific issues. For example, some topics are focused on improving the school culture through the use of the 4Rs system of behavioral modification, while other days the focus will be on peer walkthroughs. Some of the district and school initiatives that are the focus of professional development are used by teachers. Since the reflection of the findings in the self-study, the district has attempted to improve teacher input into professional development by creating a full-day teacher choice professional development. Teachers were given the opportunity to present a workshop for a full day and then the faculty was able to sign up for the workshop of their choice. However, the teachers' choices were limited by the influence of their department coordinators, who made strong suggestions for their workshop. At the end of each professional development day, teachers are asks to complete a survey on the effectiveness of the offering. Curriculum coordinators and department coordinators meet with their faculties at the beginning of the year to collect ideas for professional development needs. Additionally, the district funds individualized professional development opportunities, though the funding is limited. Teachers can

make a request, which may be approved by the building principal and the chief academic officer based upon alignment with school and district initiatives and availability of teacher coverage. Because there is a planned program of professional development, structured by administration, faculty, and staff the school's mission and expectations for academic achievement and social behavior are supported. (central office personnel, teachers, classroom observations)

Commendations

1. The initial stages of the development of a vision by the new principal
2. The clear sense of family and community that is pervasive among the staff, students, administration, and parents
3. The improvement of school culture and climate through the creation of the school-wide behavioral expectations and through the visibility of the new principal
4. The recognition of students' academic and behavioral achievements
5. The multiple opportunities and ample time provided for professional development
6. The communication from central office administrators that is routine and student focused
7. The established process for evaluation and supervision designed to improve student learning
8. The emergency crisis plans designed and practiced to ensure student and staff safety

Recommendations

1. Ensure the development and communication of the principal's vision that focuses on the students' academic achievement and social growth
2. Create and implement systems of communication that occur regularly and frequently within the school, within the educational community, and with the community-at-large
3. Establish student grouping practices that reflect an understanding of the unique learning and social needs of middle level students, demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of the student body, and foster heterogeneity

6 School Resources for Learning

Student support services and programs are designed to enable each student to participate in and benefit from each of the educational programs within the school and to meet the expectations for academic achievement and social development. The school provides a range of service which include guidance, library and media services, special education services, and health services.

All Student Support Services:
1. The school provides student support services, programs, and resources to ensure that each student has an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for academic achievement and social development.

2. The school's student support services are designed to support the learning and emotional needs of the middle level child and are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for academic achievement and social development.

3. Student support services personnel interact and work cooperatively with other school personnel and community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of the middle level child and to enhance student learning opportunities.

4. The school's student support services programs are housed in areas which are appropriate to the support provided and ensure privacy and confidentiality.

5. There is an effective and ongoing system of communication with students and parents which keeps them informed and knowledgeable about available student support services.

6. All school support services for learning are regularly evaluated, reviewed, and revised to support improved learning.

7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, and special education services.

Guidance Services:
8. The school shall provide a full range of guidance services, including: individual and group meetings with guidance personnel; student course selection assistance; collaborative outreach with community mental health agencies and social service providers; and appropriate support for the delivery of special education services for students

9. There are opportunities for advisories, teams, and students to receive peer and adult support through small communities (i.e. teams, group counseling) and through various programs that instruct and/or counsel students in effective decision making.

Library Media Services:
10. The library media services program is housed in an area with adequate physical space and is staffed by professionally trained and qualified personnel and supervised by a certified library media specialist.

11. The library media services program is readily accessible to students as an integral part of their educational experience, fostering independent and collaborative learning, and supporting the research needs of the students.

12. Library and media services personnel are knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation and integration.

13. A wide range of materials and information resources is available to students and faculty in a variety of formats, to meet the learning needs of the middle level child, and to improve teaching and learning.

14. Policies are in place for the selection and removal of resources and materials and the use of technologies and the Internet.

Health Services:

15. The school's health services include:
   - preventive health services and direct intervention services
   - emergency response
   - ongoing student health assessments
   - appropriate referrals.

Special Education Services:
16. The school provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws.

Conclusions

To some extent, the school provides student support services, programs, and resources to ensure that each student has an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for academic achievement and social development. There is a significant amount of service options available for students. Within the guidance department students have access to their counselor for a variety of reasons which include, but are not limited to: academic discussions regarding their grades and class schedules; challenges they may have with peers, family members, and others; managing their anxiety and stress levels; and support for those in crisis. The guidance department offers social skill programming to address various developmental issues along with providing direct counseling for those who may need additional counseling. They also can access outside agencies, such as the Community Health Center (CHC), Enfield Police Department, and faith-based ministers within the Enfield/Hartford area to support children and their families. There are full- and part-time social workers, who work primarily with special education students and those on Section 504 plans. The services include: counseling, check-ins on a weekly basis, social skills groups, and frequent communication from school to home. The social workers are also the liaisons for contacting outside agencies to best address the needs of the children on their caseloads and their families. There are part-time English *Language* Learner (ELL) tutors working with specific students in the school. The tutors implement an ELL curriculum and provide annual testing to assess English language competencies. The

special education department is comprised of certified special education case managers, paraprofessionals, a speech pathologist, one part-time and one full-time school psychologist, an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist. They provide a plethora of services to the students in grades 6, 7, and 8. The planning and placement teams (PPT) determine what services, programs, and resources are needed for special education students. The district accesses outside personnel, such as a board certified behavior analyst (BCBA) to develop programming to address the individual needs. Augmentative communication devices, iPads, and other technology have been purchased to address individual needs as deemed appropriate from the student's Individual Educational Program (IEP). However, due to the loss of the guidance department head, the school counselors are now required to perform administrative and clerical jobs, which negatively impacts their time to work with students' families. The student population has stayed constant; however, the needs of the children and their families have become greater with the loss of major employers in the community, which has resulted in job loss. There is no special education department head due to restructuring. The case managers and related services no longer have daily contact with the department head to problem solve, evaluate programs, and share best practices. For the 2015-2016 school year, resource reading was eliminated from the schedule due to budget cuts. Students were placed in co-taught regular education assisted reading classes. When there are support services, programming, and resources to meet all needs, each student will have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for academic achievement and social development. (central office personnel, guidance counselors, student observations)

The vast majority of the school's student support services are designed to support the learning and emotional needs of the middle level child and are consistent with the school's mission; however, there are no expectations for academic achievement and social development at this time. Even though the expectations have not been developed, a variety of services are available between the guidance and special education departments based on student needs. Collaboration between and among these two departments, along with the core teachers, allows the team to work together to address the needs of the children. If outside agencies are needed, counselors contact the appropriate parties; social workers contact agencies for students on their caseload. Both the guidance department and special education department focus on the social, emotional, and academic needs of the students. Communication between the department coordinators both in special education and the guidance departments is limited, which impacts the direct supervision and collaboration that the professionals require to provide programming or services to the children within grades 6, 7, and 8. The communication is challenged due to the coordinators having to be in other buildings within the school district. The common goal, within the guidance and special education departments is to have the children continue to make progress in academic, social, and emotional areas while they master skills to be lifelong productive citizens. Although there are student services that support student learning and emotional needs, it is only when these services are aligned with formally developed expectations for academic achievement and social development, that the school's mission will be fully integrated into the support services. (guidance counselors, special education teachers, parents)

In most cases the student support services personnel interact and work cooperatively with other school personnel and community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of the middle level child and to enhance student learning opportunities. The special education department meets together as a team twice a month to address global issues within the building, related to special education. In addition there are numerous meetings, each week during planning time and team time in additional to PPT meetings to address academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. Although most special education teachers are partnered with regular education teachers with the expectation of co-teaching, how this occurs varies from partnership to partnership. Professional development around co-teaching including how to collaborate and differentiate assessments has not occurred. In addition, in some cases content areas assessments are not made available to the special educator for modifications. The guidance department also meets twice a month as a department. In addition they meet with individual teams and special education personnel as needed. The social worker also meets with the individual teams and attend PPT meetings as needed. Depending on the team, the special education child or at-risk child's needs are addressed either by individual members or as a whole team approach. The school nurses attend PPT meetings and 504 meetings.   In addition, student support service personnel work cooperatively with community resources to address student need. This includes the school resource officer, a community health resources clinician and a behavioral consultant. The community also provides educational resources to assist students, which include the Joshua Center, the Institute of Living and Kids Matter. A mentoring program pairs community members with students struggling socially or emotionally in order to forma long term personal connection. As a result of support service personnel interacting and working with school personnel and community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs, student learning opportunities are enhanced. (parents, special education teachers, team meeting)

In some areas, the school's student support services programs are housed in areas, which are appropriate to the support provided and ensure privacy and confidentiality. Services are delivered in various classrooms throughout the building. Some services are delivered in the regular education classrooms while others are delivered in small rooms. There is adequate space in the nurse's office to address the health issues, however there is not a place to speak to a student privately to address the problems at hand. The nurse's office does not have any dividers in the patient care areas, which creates a lack of privacy. The guidance department has offices to work with individual students or small groups. When students arrive at the office to meet with their counselor, they stand in a small entryway, which has a large glass door out to a main hallway. Community agencies are an integral part of the social wellbeing of the students. Outside agencies do not generally share space in the guidance office. At times a 211 crisis counselor may meet with a student in a counselor's office. However, when space is shared with other faculty within the guidance offices, it can be challenging when meeting with students or addressing confidential matters. A Community Health Center therapist has an office across the hall from guidance. Dental services are provided on a monthly basis through the Community Health Center and this takes place in the nurse's office. When the student support services are housed in

appropriate spaces, student confidentiality and privacy will be ensured. (special education teachers, classroom observations, guidance counselors, nurse, ELL tutor)

There is an extensive effective and ongoing system of communication with students and parents, which keeps them informed and knowledgeable about available student support services. The school uses various modes of communication via school website, newsletters, various paper packets sent home for major events, and email/cell phone blasts through School Messenger and Twitter. For those students who have specific services, phone calls, emails, and direct one-to-one connect with parents is used. In addition, community members outside of the school also have information shared through pamphlets from the CHC and police department and face-to-face meeting with families. The nurse communicates by calling parents directly. Because the communication is effective and on-going, students and parents are informed about support services. (parents, school website, special education teachers)

All school support services for learning are sporadically evaluated, reviewed, and revised to support improved learning. The district-wide grades 6-12 guidance department meets twice a month, but discussions on evaluating programs occur infrequently. In-house, the department has yet to have meetings to evaluate, review, and revise programs because the coordinator works in three buildings and is not available to meet with the department. The special education department uses a variety of programs dictated from the PPT meetings, IEPs, and best practices. The special education team meets twice a month for a department meeting. The special education coordinator attends one of the meetings and sets an agenda for the second meeting. The department meets informally with one another; however, they do not have time set aside to meet as a group on a weekly basis. Informal conversations occur with evaluating, reviewing, and revising programs however no concrete data or documentation is used in exploration of these programs. The ELL tutors do not have a set space to implement programs for students, so time is taken away from the students in order to find a quiet place to work. When all support services are regularly evaluated, reviewed, and revised, then the programs are better able to support student needs and learning. (special education teachers, guidance counselors)

In general, there is sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, and special education services. School support services staff have the proper licenses. However, the ratio of guidance counselors to students is below the state average. According to the State of Connecticut, it is best practice that for every 250 students, there should be one guidance counselor. Currently there are 320 students to one guidance counselor at the school. In addition, the current number of social workers cannot see the number of students that need counseling. Because professionals maintain the correct certifications and licenses and are adequate in number, effective school support services can be provided. (self-study, special education teachers, social worker)

Collectively, the school, provides a full range of guidance services, including: individual and group meetings with guidance personnel; student course selection assistance; collaborative outreach with community mental health agencies and social service providers; and appropriate support for the delivery of special education services for students. The guidance department has academic discussions with all students regarding grades and class schedules at least twice a year and more as needed. The

guidance department uses Naviance, which is a college and career readiness on-line program on a limited basis because of an inability to reserve computers. They use the program through the full three years in the middle school and then on to high school. The team has created and/or adopted various programs to address the multiple needs in the building. In addition, they work with individual students who have social, emotional, or physical challenges. Social skill groups and individual counseling occurs throughout the day. The coordinator for the guidance department and social workers are the liaisons for the community outreach programs such as CHC, Enfield Police Department, and faith-based ministers. Monthly meetings within the guidance department allows for positive collaboration with global issues. There is a school counselor who sits on every Student Assistance Team (SAT), PPT, and 504 meeting. Because the school provides a full range of guidance services, they are better able to meet the individual needs of students. (parents, central office personnel, team meetings)

In general, there are consistent opportunities for advisories, teams, and students to receive peer and adult support through small communities, such as teams and group counseling and through various programs that instruct and/or counsel students in effective decision making. Students have numerous opportunities to participate in small group activities that provide peer-to-peer and adult interactions. There are approximately 40 after-school clubs and a variety of sports programs. Sixty percent of the coaches in the district are currently employed at the middle school, which allows for a continuum of relationships with groups of students. The school resource officer (SRO) runs an after-school program called Peers are Wonderful Support (PAWS), which provides a monthly meeting for about 30 to 40 students. The club focuses on the school-wide 4 Rs of respect, responsibility, readiness, and positive relationships. Small groups of students meet with a staff member monthly through an advisory program. The faculty advisor stays with the same cohort of students for three years to allow relationships to develop. Each meeting is centered on themes such as team building, organization, self-esteem, or decision making. Teachers are encouraged to personalize the presentations. The Rachel's Challenge club meets bi-monthly to plan activities to benefit the school and community such as food and clothing drives. School counselors provide opportunities for small groups of students to meet and discuss issues such as substance abuse, grief counseling, anger management, and academic support. Mentors from the community are matched with students and meet regularly so students may develop relationships with a caring adult. Late busses are available to allow more students to participate in after-school activities. However, the guidance coordinator is unable to sponsor Project Wisdom, Career Day, and Junior Achievement for grades 6 and 8 for the current school year due to lack of time. The organization for these programs and communication with the Open Choice program and alternative technical high schools has been compromised with the organizational restructuring. Because there are multiple opportunities for advisories, teams, and students to receive peer and adult support through small communities, students can experience emotional growth and become effective decision makers. (Standard committee, students, guidance counselors, advisory observations)

By design, the library media services program is housed in an area with adequate physical space; however, it is not staffed by professionally trained and

qualified personnel nor is it supervised by a certified library media specialist. The library media center is a large, open space located at the front of the building with windows on all walls that bring in natural light. Renovations on the library media center were completed 12 years ago to add additional space. The circulation desk is located in the center of the library on either side are sufficient tables and chairs to accommodate two classes, one on each side. Library materials are artfully displayed on top of book cases to encourage book selection by the students. On one end of the library, there is a recently renovated spacious area, called the Innovation Lab, which provides teachers and students with technology resources to conduct research and prepare presentations. The lab is behind closed doors to ensure a dedicated space students in the library are not distracted. There is also an office and a workroom in the library. The library media office is currently being used by the reading department chairperson and the workroom currently houses the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program. The library personnel have desks in the front and rear of the library for their own use; however, workspace is limited. There is a full-time library assistant who is responsible for operating the library. She is assisted by a library aide and student volunteers. The library assistant works with classroom teachers to set up carts of library materials to be used by students in the library or classroom, purchases and processes library materials, and trains and supervises the library volunteers. Although the library facility is spacious, it is only when there is a library program staffed by a certified library media specialist then the library will become the hub of the school. (library media assistant, library media staff, Standard committee)

Although the library is accessible to students at most times, there is no program that is an integral part of their educational experience, fostering independent and collaborative learning, and supporting the research needs of the students. The library is open to all students during the school hours and is staffed with a library assistant. Individual students may go to the library during the day with the permission of their teacher. They may use the library during lunch provided there is supervision. Classroom teachers can schedule set times for book selection or teacher-led research projects as the library assistant works with the classroom teachers. Nevertheless, few students and classes access the resources available. There are times when the library space is unavailable due to meetings or special events, such as Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) testing, which takes place yearly from March to June. Students can use the facility after school if supervision is available. There is currently no formal program for library skills instruction. The library assistant presents a 30-minute orientation to the library media services to sixth grade students at the beginning of the school year. There is instruction on the use of the online card catalog system and assistance with book selection. Due to the lack of a certified library media specialist, there is limited opportunity for collaboratively planned units with classroom teachers or lessons on information literacy skills such as research strategies, plagiarism and academic integrity, copyright, media literacy, and use of digital resources and databases. As a result, students are not receiving the skills that are vital to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards through the current library media center services. Although the library media center is readily accessible to students, when it becomes an integral part of the educational experience to foster independent and collaborative learning, and support the research needs of students, students will be

better informed 21st century learners. (library media log, library media staff, teachers, State of Connecticut Information and Technology Literacy Frameworks)

Library and media services personnel have limited knowledge about the curriculum and are not able to support its implementation or integration. The library paraprofessionals maintain records for use of the library by classroom teachers and material circulation records. The library assistant attempts to purchase library materials which support curricular units. In past years, the library assistant met with subject area department heads to discuss curricular needs in order to plan library purchases. However, the library paraprofessionals must make decisions on purchases without input. A limited group of subject area teachers bring their classes to the library media center to conduct research. One grade six geography teacher brings classes to the library to research world countries. Students spend five days gathering information from books and Internet sources and then use the information to prepare a presentation for the class with minimal support from the library staff. Students demonstrate their proficiency in the utilization of library media services by being able to locate desired reading materials. When library and media services personnel are knowledgeable about the curriculum, they will be able to support the implementation and integration of the library media program into the curriculum. (Standard committee, library media staff, library media log, library observations)

A limited range of materials and information resources is available to students and faculty in a variety of formats, to meet the learning needs of the middle level child, and to improve teaching and learning. The library collection is somewhat designed around the curricular needs of the school, providing materials in a range of reading levels, genres, and of interest to middle school students. There is no formal procedure for acquiring appropriate middle level research materials. Based on a Destiny Titlewise Collection Analysis performed in October 27, 2015, the collection has 18,093 print items. However, there currently are approximately 600 items that require processing. The school subscribes to numerous periodical titles, which support both the curriculum and varied student interests including: Scholastic Magazine, Time, People, Time for Kids, and National Geographic for Kids, and J-14. The library provides a large collection of fiction materials in varied reading levels to accommodate all learners. Per the Destiny Titlewise report, the average age of the materials housed in the collection is 24 years. Over 3,000 items do not have a copyright date listed; therefore, the collection age may actually be older. Library materials in the time sensitive topics of reference, biography, technology, science, geography and history are, on average, over 30 years old. Current American Library Association recommendations for these areas advise the titles be no more than five years old. Currently, there is no weeding or appropriate collection development strategies to align the collection with the curriculum. With an enrollment of 1,052 students, there are 14.61 items per student, below the Connecticut Department of Education's recommendation of 25 items per student. The library has 24 three-year-old computers that provide Internet access for students. There are two additional computers for the library staff to utilize. There are no iPads, laptops, projectors, copy machines, or working TV/DVD players in the library media center. When there is a wide range of materials and information resources available to students and faculty in a variety of formats, the learning needs of students and improvement of

teaching and learning will be met. (library media staff, Destiny Titlewise Collection Analysis, library observations)

By design, policies are in place for the selection and removal of resources and materials and the use of technologies and the Internet. The Enfield Board of Education has a policy for the Selection of Education Resources as well as a policy for Challenges to the Use of Educational Resources. The library assistant has recently begun to weed the library collection using the continuous review, evaluation, and weeding (CREW) method manual guidelines. Students and parents must review and sign the student acceptable use agreement annually in order to use the school's computers. The form is issued to students on the first day of each new school year. There is a Computer Network and/or Internet Acceptable Use Policy for both certified and non-certified staff developed by the board of education, as well as policies for off-site computer use and social networking for certified staff members. However, these two policies are not currently being implemented. There is a process in place for dealing with infractions. The policies in place for the selection and removal of resources and materials and the use of technologies and the Internet provide guidance in managing the collection and computer use. Although policies are in place for the selection and removal of resources and materials and the use of technologies and the Internet, implementing the policies with fidelity will ensure maximum benefit to staff and students. (board of education policies, Selection of Educational Resources 6163.1, Challenges to the Use of Educational Resources 61631a, Disposal of Educational Materials, Computer Network and/or Internet Student Acceptable Use Agreement)

By design, the school's health services include: preventive health services and direct intervention services, emergency response, ongoing student health assessments, and appropriate referrals. There are two full-time state licensed registered nurses and one part-time licensed practical nurse, who provide comprehensive health care to the students and staff. There are currently six diabetic students using insulin pumps who are monitored for blood sugar levels. Nine students receive daily medications from the nursing staff. One student requires assistance with daily catheterization. The nursing staff monitors students, who are cancer survivors and have cardiac issues. A significant number of students also have medical issues with asthma, diagnosed concussions, severe allergic reactions, and diagnosed emotional/mental health issues. These students receive services in the clinic, which for the most part is a clean and safe place. However, within the clinic there are cots with large cracks in the upholstery that expose metal springs and foam padding, which compromises sanitary and safe conditions. The nursing staff complies with all of the State of Connecticut regulations and requirements, as well as the policies and procedures for health care outlined by the Enfield Board of Education. The nursing staff collects and records data into the eSchoolPlus program which can then be shared with staff and used to create care plans and track health data as mandated by the State of Connecticut. The data includes sixth grade physicals, seventh grade immunization records, and eligibility for sports programs. The nurses create a coordinated school health action plan that develops strategies and action plans for maintaining a safe school environment, including plans for students with physical limitations, including ambulatory issues along with school wide emergencies. In addition to caring for the student population's general needs, they also administer medications, provide crisis intervention, and conduct mandatory health screening for

students. Information is shared with appropriate staff to ensure optimal student health and learning environment. On the first in-service day, the nurses provide an overview of student medical needs to the staff. In addition, they provide training in blood borne pathogens and the Heimlich maneuver to all staff. The nurses also serve on safety committees, mental health planning committees, and attend team, PPT, and 504 meetings. Crisis intervention, in conjunction with guidance counselors, social worker and administrators, is an integral part of mental/emotional health evaluations. There is a collaborative outreach with community mental health and social services. Resources include but are not limited to: Enfield Youth Services for academic, social, and emotional concerns and crisis support; and the Enfield Crisis Response Team for those experiencing a tragic loss. The nurses attend professional development courses and obtain continuing education units (CEUs) to keep current with school nursing trends and changes. Because the school's health services include preventive health services, direct intervention services, emergency response, ongoing student health assessments, and appropriate referrals, the students' health and physical needs are met. (nursing staff, clinic observations, State of Connecticut Regulations)

In most cases, the school provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. A student Assistance Team (SAT) was established to monitor students who may have challenges within their educational experience. This includes, but is not limited to: attendance issues; concerns with anxiety and stress; challenges with academics; family changes; and behavior problems. The team, including the parents/legal guardians, discuss the roadblocks students are struggling with and determine the interventions that are needed to support the student. The team meets in a set period of time to determine if the interventions are working. Data collection is shared at this point. If the interventions are not working, the team brain storms additional interventions. This may result in changes with programming, services, and/or resources. The SAT may look into starting the process for a 504 plan due to medical issues; or the team may recommend that the special education department begin the referral process. However for the 2015-2016 school year, resource reading was eliminated from the schedule due to budget cuts. Students were placed in co-taught regular education assisted reading classes.   When the referral process has been established, the PPT will determine if the child is eligible for special education services. The special education department follows the proper procedure in accordance to local, state, and federal laws. Once an individual education program (IEP) is created, the student will be monitored as the goals and benchmark are graded quarterly. This information is shared with the parents/guardian. Annual review of progress is made along with the creation of a new IEP. In addition, every three years, the student will be re-evaluated to determine if special education services are to be continued. Most special education teachers are partnered with regular education teachers. Although the expectation of this instructional practice is to co-teach, how this occurs varies from partnership to partnership. Professional development around co-teaching including how to collaborate and differentiate assessments has not occurred. In addition, content areas assessments sometimes are made available to the special educator even though the students will be assessed just as the general education population is. When special education services are established and laws followed, students receive the

programming that meets their needs in the least restrictive environment. (PPT team, SAT data, special education staff)

Commendations

1. The variety of student services, programs, and resources available to meet student needs
2. The student support services and programs that support the mission
3. The effective and consistent communication between student support services and parents
4. The extensive opportunities for adult support within small communities available to students
5. The full range of guidance services designed to enhance the whole adolescent
6. The spacious library that is readily accessible to both students and staff
7. The wide range of health services offered that meet the needs of a diverse student body
8. The full range of special education services designed to support learning and meet the needs of students

Recommendations

1. Provide student support services, programs and resources that ensure equal opportunity for learning
2. Align the student support services with the school's expectations for academic achievement and social development
3. Provide adequate space for student support personnel to administer services in a private and confidential setting
4. Create and implement a process for evaluating, reviewing ,and revising all student support services
5. Ensure that a library media service program is established and supervised by a certified library media specialist
6. Ensure the range of library/media materials and resources is adequate, up-to-date and supports the curricular needs
7. Implement the policies for the selection and removal of resources and materials; along with the use of technology and the Internet with fidelity
8. Ensure furniture in the clinic is sanitary and safe

7 Community Resources for Learning

The community supports the school by providing consistent and sufficient funding for programs, services, personnel, and facilities. It sustains a learning environment that ensures the safety and well-being of all students. Active community and parent involvement is essential for the achievement of the school's mission and expectations.

1. The community, through the district's school committee, sets and implements district and school policy and ensures that an adequate and dependable source of revenue creates a framework for educational opportunity for all students.

2. The community, through the district school committee, provides and maintains appropriate middle level programs, personnel, professional development, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.

3. There is ongoing planning by the school and the school district to address future programs, staffing, facility, and technological needs as well as capital improvements.

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

5. There are meaningful opportunities for parental involvement in the student's academic achievement and social growth as well as decision-making at the school.

6. The school seeks strong community relationships through productive partnerships with businesses, higher education, and community groups and provides opportunities for mutual interaction between the students and the community.

7. The school site, plant, and equipment support and enhance all aspects of the middle level educational program and support services for student learning.

8. There is a planned and adequately funded program of building and site management that ensures the maintenance and cleanliness of facilities and equipment as well as the health and safety of all who use the facility.

9. The physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

10. If food services are provided, the area, menus, and equipment ensure that the well being of the students is a priority and is in compliance with state and federal regulations.

11. If transportation is provided appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the students.

Conclusions

To some extent, the community, through the district's school board, sets and implements district and school policy and ensures that an adequate and dependable source of revenue creates a framework for educational opportunity for all students. On January 28, 2014, the Enfield Board of Education (BOE) voted unanimously to approve the 2013-2015 BOE Priorities, which included: improving communication; implementing policies and practices with fidelity; championing educational issues; seeking budgetary efficiencies; and promoting a positive direction for the public schools. This was designed to ensure that the educational constituencies are "on the same page." The board has established educational student-centered goals including: developing a rigorous core curriculum; implementing research based instructional strategies; and analyzing student performance data to drive instruction. The board also created policies on: anti hazing; concussions and head injuries; accommodating students with special dietary needs; school security and safety; and nondiscrimination. Some policies have been recently revised in order to meet state mandates including: bullying, teen dating violence prevention and intervention; along with the district safe school climate plan. The community, through the board of education, supports a revenue source; and although it is consistent, it does not provide adequate revenue to keep up with 21st century educational needs. The superintendent presented the proposed 2015-2016 district-wide budget with a requested increase of 8.75 percent on January 13, 2015. The BOE approved a 6.99 percent increase on February 17, 2015. The town council voted an increase of 2.52 percent. For the 2013-2014 school year, salaries for 85 full-time employees was $6.1 million. In the 2014-2015 school year, the number of full-time employees dropped to 70, where it has remained static. Salaries decreased to $4.9 million. In the 2015-2016 school year, salaries rose to $5.1 million. Although the budget line for John F. Kennedy Middle School (JFK) supplies and materials increased from $51,128 to $66,772 during the last three fiscal years, the total building-based

budget for the school has decreased from $6.1 million to $5.1 million. Due to the restructuring of department heads to district-wide coordinators, there is a void left in the organizational structure, which negatively impacts programs, such as Project Wisdom, Career Day and Junior Achievement for both sixth and eighth grade. The reading coordinator is now in a K-12 role along with overseeing K-5 library services. In the past the reading department head modeled best instructional practices as teachers implemented the CCSS. Financial support for the Enfield Public Schools comes from the Town of Enfield, which is 51 percent of the town's budget, 43 percent comes from the state and 6 percent is from other grants. The Town of Enfield budgets for 100 percent of both the state and federal grants prior to receiving the grants. If there is a revenue shortfall, it is absorbed by the town, which ensures a dependable revenue stream. Due to a variety of factors, the town has experienced a budget shortfall. Recently Hallmark Cards, the largest employer within the community, closed its doors. Compounding the situation is the growth of the fixed-income residents, who are concerned about a property tax increase. To address this, the board is working to open lines of communication to educate citizens of the value added to property when there is an excellent school system. When the community sets and implements current policies and provides an adequate and dependable source of revenue to support the district and school policy, then the educational needs of the students will be better met. (budget, board of education, superintendent, board of education website)

In some areas, the community, through the board of education, provides and maintains appropriate middle level programs, personnel, professional development, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning. Budget decisions have impacted both programming and staffing. For the 2013-2014 school year, both math and reading intervention classes were eliminated. At the same time, there was a reduction in staffing, including: a seventh grade academic team; a special education position; and a technology support person. However, for the last three years, both programming and personnel have remained static. In order to achieve this, the positions of building-based department heads were eliminated at the school. The former department heads became district-wide curriculum coordinators. Although positions were not lost on paper, there was a resulting loss of oversight at the school. Typically, there are five full professional development days per year: three days in the summer, one in November and one in the spring. Although the town has been able to maintain most of its educational programs and staff, there has been a corresponding decrease in the distribution of materials and supplies available. The process for ordering materials is cumbersome and results in teachers personally purchasing materials for the classroom. Although there is a computer lab and an Innovation lab, the lack of additional computers restricts the use of technology throughout the building by students and teachers. Although the district board of education provides professional development, facilities, technological support, it is only when appropriate middle level programs, personnel, materials, and supplies along with equipment are provided then student learning will be better supported. (budget, superintendent, board of education, teachers, school facilities survey)

By design, there is ongoing planning by the school and the school district to address future programs, staffing, facility, and technological needs as well as capital improvements. In an effort not to reduce programs or staff, the board of education is

looking for budgetary efficiencies. This included the elimination of the building-based department heads and replacing them with system-wide K-12 coordinators to provide a global lens to view curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In the spring of 2014, the Town of Enfield initiated research regarding energy conservation and infrastructure improvements. As a result, Honeywell was selected as the town's energy partner. The program is self-sustaining which will reap a 47 percent savings for school buildings in both energy and operational savings. The project is scheduled to last from 15 to 18 months. In addition, Enfield conducted a town-wide facility condition assessment in order to prioritize projects, which will address the quality and safety of the schools and facilities. The preliminary findings include the need for: roof and window replacements; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and controls replacement; and deteriorating classroom casework. The priority needs at JFK are estimated to cost approximately $40.00 per square foot and are expected to be completed within three years. On November 5, 2015, the citizens of Enfield will vote on the referendum to addresses the prioritized projects. Because there is ongoing planning by the school and the school district to address future needs, there is a foundation to provide a learning environment that supports the mission. (budget, superintendent, board of education, board of education website)

Collectively, faculty and building administrators have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. Staff members submit budget requests to the department coordinators who meet with the principal and discuss the needs. Teachers without coordinators submit requests directly to the principal. Finally, the principal reviews the proposed budget with the superintendent and cabinet, which includes: the superintendent, assistant superintendent, chief academic officer, chief personnel officer, and chief educational technology officer. The superintendent brings the proposed budget to the board of education, which either accepts or rejects the budget. It then is sent to the city council for approval. Once the city council approves the budget, the superintendent provides the school with its set budget. Because faculty and administration follow a systematic budget process, they are active participants. (teachers, school leadership, Standard committee)

There are frequently meaningful opportunities for parental involvement in the student's academic achievement and social growth; however, there are limited opportunities for parents to participate in decision-making at the school. Open houses, newsletters, and parent/teacher conferences provide parents with academic information. Each student brings home an agenda book at the start of school year to discuss with parents. The agenda contains the student handbook which outlines the school expectations, procedures, and rules and policies. The agenda is also used for their homework, assignments, after school activities, another avenue for parents to become involved in their child's academic and social progress. Parents can contact staff individually or through the guidance counselor to meet with the student's grade level team to discuss academic or social concerns. Parents review their student's schedule for the following year and request changes in writing to the team. They may also contact the guidance office to request a meeting. Parents can track their child's progress through the Teacher Access Center (TAC) accounts. The parent-teacher organization (PTO) provides another avenue for parents to become involved by assisting with fundraising and attending programs with guest speakers. The PTO meets

monthly and provides opportunities to learn about school's academics. However, opportunities for parents to be active in decision-making at the school is limited. After the first report cared, there are two conference nights for parents to meet with teachers. At this time, parents discuss the student's academic progress and can share suggestions along with strategies to improve student learning. In addition, there is a Planning and Placement Team, where parents and teachers can collaborate on meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities. Although there are a variety of available avenues for parents to interact with staff on behalf of their children, when parents are actively involved in decision-making, then parent involvement will be optimized. (parents, teachers, guidance counselors)

By design, the school seeks strong community relationships through productive partnerships with businesses, higher education, and community groups and provides opportunities for mutual interaction between the students and the community. JFK and LEGO have forged a strong partnership. On September 20, 2015, the LEGO Community Fund U.S. hosted its seventh annual Family Day. Jane's Team, honoring a deceased teacher, received donations from local businesses including: Country Diner, Ann's Pizza, and Reveys. Jane's Team also is involved with cancer fundraisers in conjunction with Pampered Chef, Friendly's, and Simple. There is an ongoing partnership with Asnuntuck Community College designed to bring advanced manufacturing programs to the school. The college donated five three dimensional (3D) printers and software. A book club is offered by Barnes and Nobles as an after-school club. Rachel's Challenge is a school outreach program, focused on kindness. It hosts an annual town-wide pancake breakfast, along with a school-wide "Sneaker for Cancer" day. In November there is a school sponsored Turkey Trot, which is open to the community, to raise funds and food for a local food pantry. In addition, Asnuntuck college instructors co-teach at JFK two times per week in technology classes, where students also are able to learn about and utilize CAD software and 3D printers. On October 29, 2015 students had an opportunity to become informed voters as they had their questions answered by the candidates for the board of education and town council during Youth Candidates Night. Career Day is sponsored by Cosco and Shop Rite. Participants include: Phoenix Manufacturing, WRSB, Enfield Correctional Institution prison guards, local hair stylists, teachers, police, firefighters, Senator Kissel, and Mayor Kaupin. In addition, Shop Rite presents an Exceptional Acts of Kindness Award once a month to a student at JFK. A donation is made to the student's favorite charity. Mass Mutual Insurance Company presented each eighth grade team with a gift and provided four sessions of financial planning for students including saving for higher education, avoiding debt, and living within a budget. This culminated with an event for the area schools at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield. Because there is a strong bond between the school and the community through partnerships and opportunities for mutual interaction between students and the community, the educational experience for students is enhanced. (teachers, students, school website, district website)

In general, the school site, plant, and equipment support and enhance all aspects of the middle level educational program and support services for student learning. The middle school is situated on approximately 48 acres of land. The building has 48 permanent classrooms, 3 modular classrooms, along with dedicated areas for the arts, gym, technology, library media center, science labs, and pupil service areas. The

building is bright and clean but some of the building maintenance has been postponed, which has resulted in issues with the modular classrooms, windows, screens, painting, and lockers.   However many of these issues are scheduled to be addressed in long range planning. There are several parking lots, playing fields, and a paved loop for buses to drive around the building. The main plant houses 1,045 students and over 90 staff members. The building hub is surrounded by six wings that include many classrooms and some specialist offices. Larger areas include the auditorium and stage, gymnasium, swimming pool, cafeteria, and library. There are three technology labs and areas for special education, guidance, administration, and the school nurse. Although the custodial staff strives to keep the building evenly heated, there are certain rooms that remain quite cold or quite hot during winter months. Each wing has handicapped restrooms on the lower floor and there are elevators to the second floor. There are 22 computer stations in the library and many offices have at least one computer. The three portable computer carts and three iPad carts in the library can be signed out for classrooms or used in the tech lab known as the Innovation Room. Demand for this room is high and available sign up time is used quickly. Because the school's site, plant, and equipment support programming and services, student learning is supported. (custodians, maintenance supervisor, guidance counselors)

By design, there is a planned and adequately funded program of building and site management that ensures the maintenance and cleanliness of facilities and equipment as well as the health and safety of all who use the facility. The building is maintained by the town of Enfield with the custodians falling under the town management system. Communication between the building and the Department of Public Works was via request orders. There is no formal or routine communication between the school and the Department of Public Works. The school is maintained by the head custodian, one full-time day custodian, four full-time night custodians, and two part-time custodians. Custodians attend to the cleanliness of the building and also perform routine maintenance. In the event of a larger maintenance project, the custodians submit work orders to their supervisor, who then refer the job to the Town of Enfield maintenance employees. Elevators and fire suppression equipment are serviced by company personnel. The boilers, fire suppression equipment, and kitchen appliances are inspected and maintained as required by law. The building and site management program is funded by the Town of Enfield. For security purposes all of the outside doors of the facility remain locked during the school day. Staff members may enter by using a key card. There are mounted video cameras throughout the school building as well as several cameras outside. A fence surrounds the outside of the modular classrooms and the only entrance is through a door that goes directly into the school. Visitors are buzzed in by the school secretary at the main entrance. The front door requires visitors' access via a door bell and buzzer system. Once the visitor has entered the building, a valid picture identification is required, sign in, and receives a visitor's badge. There are barrier posts outside the front entrance to block the progress of vehicles. A school resource officer is housed at the school and available to assist with safety issues that occur during the school day along with maintaining a positive presence with the building. The resource officer has a monitor in her office to view cameras in and around the building. There are also staff members stationed by the spokes of the hub. Students who are in the halls during class time must present a pass

to the faculty member. Fire drills are held monthly and lockdown drills are held quarterly. The first drill in each category is announced, so that staff members can review procedures with students. The remainder of the drills are unannounced. Because of planning and funding for the management of the site and building, the school is kept clean, well maintained, and safe for students and staff. (Town of Enfield employees, facility tour, head custodian)

Across the school, the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. The facility is inspected by local and state officials before school opens in the fall and during the school year. Both the Public Works Department and the Enfield Department of Public Health inspect the school to ensure that it is in compliance with the Connecticut Health Code, Connecticut Regulation Fire Code and the Enfield Safety Police Commission. All doors are secured, labeled, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible. There are handicap access ramps original to the building. The facility has sprinklers. The three elevators are inspected annually. Because the physical plant meets all applicable federal and state laws along with adhering to all safety regulations for students and staff, the facility promotes teaching and learning in a safe environment. (head custodian, custodians, facility tour)

By design, the area, menus, and equipment for food services ensure that the well-being of the students is a priority and is in compliance with state and federal regulations. The food service at is operated by Enfield Nutritional Services, which is regulated by the board of education. The director of food service develops the menus based on the school requirements along with state and federal regulations. Once the menu is developed, the food manager orders the food for the menu. All food is cooked fresh on a daily basis and also for each wave of students. Food does not sit longer than 40 minutes. The staff consists of a full-time manager, eight full-time, and three part-time personnel. The staff has in-service training prior to the beginning of the school year. They also receive on-the-spot training. They are trained on the point-of-sale (POS) system which has been programmed with all student accounts and any student food allergies. There are four wave lunch times to feed students. The cafeteria has four sections for ease and flow: Hot Lunch, Deli Lunch, Express Lunch for hot dog and hamburgers, and Sweet Shoppe for desserts. An average of 250 hot lunches are served per day and an average of 650 students are served, not including a la carte items. Regular health and fire inspections take place during the year. If there are any issues with the inspection, the food manager reports the problem and how it was rectified to the food service director. All equipment is inspected and maintained by outside companies. Equipment is replaced as needed; this year a new freezer and refrigerator were received. For safety reasons, the kitchen no longer has a stove top and only boils or bakes food. Because the food service complies with state and federal regulations, cares for the equipment in the kitchen, and ensures that the food is fresh on a daily basis, the students are served well balanced and nutritious meals. (food service manager, kitchen observations, lunchroom observations)

In most cases, appropriate procedures for school transportation are in place to ensure the safety of the students. The school has published pick up/drop off procedures on its website. Children are dropped off near the parking lot by the white wing by their parents. This area is monitored by the school resource officer and other staff to ensure

a safe arrival. Walkers stand outside their designated wing entrance and enter when the entry bell rings. Each bus has a designated parking spot around the perimeter of the school. Students who ride the bus in the morning must stay on the bus until the entry bell, which can be for more than 10 minutes due to the bus schedule. Although this wait time is to ensure proper supervision of the students, when the temperature is above 20 degrees, students sit on an unheated bus until they are allowed to enter the building. Staff members are stationed at the doors to each wing as students exit the buses and enter the building after the entry bell. The above procedures are reversed at the end of the day. Students who are late go into the school through the main entrance. Bus drivers have a commercial driver's license, which is re-issued after a road test and written test every four years. When there are clear procedures and organized supervision, then students will be able to arrive and depart in a safe manner. (bus drop off/pick up observations, students, school website, school leadership)

Commendations

1. The educational, student-centered goals developed by the board of education
2. The board of education's commitment to educating the community regarding the value of an excellent school system
3. The ongoing planning by the school and the school district to address both operating expenses and capital improvements
4. The planning to address future needs
5. The strong bond between school and the external community to forge partnerships that enhance the educational experience for students
6. The safe, secure, and clean environment maintained for both students and staff

Recommendations

1. Implement board of education policies with fidelity
2. Provide an adequate and dependable source of revenue to address 21st century educational needs
3. Ensure that bus students exit the bus in a timely manner to ensure student well-being and safety

Follow-up Responsibilities

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

Because it is in the best interest of the students that the citizens of the district become aware of the strengths and limitations of the school and suggested recommendations for improvement, the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle

Schools requires that the evaluation report be made public in accordance with the Committee's Policy on Distribution, Use and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report.

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

The Committee urges school officials to establish a formal follow-up program at once to review and implement all findings of the self-study and valid recommendations identified in the evaluation report. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at follow-up seminars offered by Committee staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting committee wishes to commend all those that contributed time and energy toward the completion of the self-study, as well as toward the preparation and hosting of the visit. We enjoyed participating in this professional experience with you. We hope that this visiting team evaluation report, in conjunction with the strengths and needs determined during your self-study, will serve as rich resources for your short- and long-term planning and that they will assist you as you continue to strengthen education for your students.

Appendix

John F. Kennedy Middle School
NEASC Accreditation Visit
October 25-28, 2015

Visiting Team

Ann Galvani, Chair Natick Public Schools Natick, MA	Bailey Agakian Rochester Middle School Rochester, NH

Susan Schroeter Assistant Chair Unity Elementary School Newport, NH Sarah Chase Deerfield Community School Deerfield, NH Margo Fraczek Dedham Middle School Dedham, MA Betsy Murphy Timberlane Regional Middle School Plaistow, NH Tom Southworth Rye Junior High School Rye, NH Christine Schwartz North Haven Middle School North Haven, CT	Kim Royer Barrington Middle School Barrington, NH

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mission and Expectations

Commendations
1. The core values represented by the "4 Rs"
2. The safe and secure environment for both students and staff
3. The sense of family that is pervasive throughout the building

Recommendations
1. Create and implement high academic and social expectations, aligned to the mission statement, that are clearly stated and measurable
2. Develop and implement a description of the different levels of performance for academic and social expectations and the successful attainment of each
3. Ensure all stakeholders and actions taken support the mission and expectations
4. Create and implement a clearly defined cycle for the review and revision of the
   mission statement and expectations

Curriculum

Commendations
1. The consistent alignment of written curriculum to Common Core and state standards
2. The meaningful incorporation of student assessment data into the curriculum revision process
3. The abundant opportunities for authentic application of skills and knowledge embedded in the curriculum

Recommendations
1. Align all curricula with the expectations for academic achievement and social behavior
2. Ensure that each curriculum area has learning standards that are aligned with the academic expectations
3. Design and implement curriculum in all subject areas that is intellectually challenging for all students

Instruction

Commendations
1. The initial stages of employing instructional practices that are based on current research
2. The exploratory and authentically based learning employed by some professionals
3. The early stages of incorporating technology with instruction to improve student learning

Recommendations

1. Ensure all instruction is based on current research and supports the school's mission
2. Ensure classroom instruction is designed to enable all students to meet the school's expectations for academic achievement
3. Devise and implement a plan to ensure equity with the availability, training, and use of technology resources

Assessment of Learning

Commendations

1. The beginning stages of creating standards-based assessments
2. The use of benchmark assessments to measure student growth
3. The initial stages of implementing best practices in assessments including student self- reflection

Recommendations

1. Create and implement a system to assess the proficiency of all students on curriculum learning standards that embodies the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement
2. Design and implement a plan to integrate research-based best practices in assessment into instructional practices
3. Create and implement a system in which data from common district assessment performances is reviewed, reported, and informs instruction and curriculum revision

Leadership and Organization

Commendations

1. The initial stages of the development of a vision by the new principal
2. The clear sense of family and community that is pervasive among the staff, students, administration, and parents
3. The improvement of school culture and climate through the creation of the school-wide behavioral expectations and through the visibility of the new principal

Recommendations
1. Ensure the development and communication of the principal's vision that focuses on the students' academic achievement and social growth
2. Create and implement systems of communication that occur regularly and frequently within the school, within the educational community, and with the community-at-large
3. Establish student grouping practices that reflect an understanding of the unique learning and social needs of middle level students, demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of the student body, and foster heterogeneity

School Resources for Learning

Commendations
1. The variety of student services, programs, and resources available to meet student needs
2. The student support services and programs that support the mission
3. The effective and consistent communication between student support services and parents

Recommendations
1. Provide student support services, programs and resources that ensure equal opportunity for learning
2. Align the student support services with the school's expectations for academic achievement and social development
3. Provide adequate space for student support personnel to administer services in a private and confidential setting
4. Create and implement a process for evaluating, reviewing, and revising all student support services

Community Resources for Learning

Commendations
1. The educational, student-centered goals developed by the board of education
2. The board of education's commitment to educating the community regarding the value of an excellent school system
3. The ongoing planning by the school and the school district to address both operating expenses and capital improvements

Recommendations

1. Implement board of education policies with fidelity
2. Provide an adequate and dependable source of revenue to address 21st century educational needs
3. Ensure that bus students exit the bus in a timely manner to ensure student well-being and safety

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts and student activities

- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities

- significantly decreased funding

- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing

- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors

- grade level responsibilities of the principal

- cuts in the number of support staff

- decreases in student services

- cuts in the educational media staffing

- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated

- takeover by the state

- inordinate user fees

- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or students with limited English proficiency