Self-Study Report
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Prepared by

Brien McMahon High School
Norwalk, Connecticut

for

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

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Norwalk, Connecticut, is a twenty-three square mile coastal city located in Fairfield County in the Southwestern part of the state. When including Norwalk's islands, the city's area is 36.3 square miles. Settled by in 1651, Norwalk eventually became a city in 1913. It is surrounded by New Canaan and Darien to the west, Wilton to the north, Long Island Sound to the south, and Westport and Long Island Sound to the east. Based on the U.S. Census of 2010, the diverse community of Norwalk is comprised of 68.7% White, 14.2% African American, 0.4% American Indian and Alaska Native, 4.8% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 24.3% Hispanic or Latino, and 2.8% of two or more races. Its estimated total population for 2014 is 88,145 (U.S. Census, 2014 estimate). From 2000 to 2014, there was approximately a 6.2% increase in the city's population, from 82,951 to 88,145.

Norwalk is home to a number of varied businesses. Based on the generation of sales tax, Norwalk's retail sector is the fifth largest in Connecticut. The retail sector includes businesses such as Walmart, Costco, Home Depot, and Kohl’s. Rapidly growing technology companies like Priceline.com, WebMediaBrands, Adeptra, and Datto Inc. are also located in Norwalk. Major employers in the city include Norwalk Health Services and Norwalk Hospital, Stew Leonard's, MBI, Diageo North America, Bridgewater Associates, and Hewitt Associates. There are also a number of companies who maintain their headquarters in Norwalk such as Pepperidge Farm, XEROX Corporation, Knipschildt Chocolatier, and Graham Capital Management.
As of May 2015, the Norwalk unemployment rate was 4.70% in comparison to Fairfield County's 7.6% and the state's 5.6%. Norwalk reports a median family income of $76,384 with a poverty level of 8%. Between 2008 and 2012, 89.6% of adults 25 years or older earned a high school diploma or higher and 40% or more attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Between 2008 and 2012, the median home price in Norwalk was $440,700 compared to the state's $285,900.

The approved FY 2015-2016 budget for the City of Norwalk is $326,989,609 of which $170,987,857 was allocated for education, representing 52.3% of the total budget. Of the $170,987,857 allocated for education, $11,275,807 comes from the state Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula, and $159,712,050 comes from tax revenue.

The Norwalk Public School District includes twelve elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools and one alternative high school. Additionally, there are several private and parochial schools located in Norwalk. The estimated student enrollment in all schools is 12,136. Of those students enrolled in public and independent schools, 11,254 were enrolled in the Norwalk Public Schools in 2015-2016. It was not possible to determine how many Brien McMahon High School age students attended private or independent schools given the number of non-public schools present in Fairfield County. Norwalk Public Schools has experienced multiple changes in leadership over the last ten years, including seven superintendents. Faculty has expressed concern regarding issues concerning consistency.

Students from Rowayton, Fox Run, Brookside, Kendall, and Columbus Magnet Elementary Schools feed into Roton and Ponus Ridge Middle Schools. Students from these two middle schools make up the student body at
Brien McMahon High School. Brien McMahon High School's total student population as of October 1, 2015 was 1661. On October 1, 2015, there were 411 freshmen, 416 sophomore, 446 junior, and 388 senior students enrolled. The school's average per pupil expenditure has remained relatively stable as it was $15,639 in 2012-2013 and $15,509 in 2010-2011. The school's student population as of November 2, 2015 was 27.6% White, 43.7% Hispanic, 21.6% Black, 4.9% Asian American, <1% American Indian, and 1.7% multi-racial. Student enrollment at Brien McMahon High School was 1,626 in 2012-2013, 1,655 in 2013-2014, and 1,689 in 2014-2015. It is staffed by 105.4 full-time equivalent teachers, 6 full-time administrators, and 1 Library Media Specialist. Additionally, student support professionals include guidance counselors (8), a social worker (1.8), psychologist (1), speech therapist (1), and nurses (1.5). There are additional support personnel, which includes a library clerk (1), Special Education aides (9.8), secretaries (8), clerks (4.3), instructional aide (1.46), School-to-Career liaison (.5), and custodians (15).

Currently, Brien McMahon High School follows a four day rotation of an eight period schedule. Each period is forty-seven minutes long with four minutes passing time between classes. There are four separate lunch shifts each day aligning with periods 4, 5, 6 & 7. There is a 20 minute advisory period each week.

Brien McMahon High School offers advanced placement level work in Art History, Studio Art, Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, Macro-Economics, English Literature and Composition, English language and Composition, European History, American Government and Politics, Comparative Politics, French Language, Latin, Italian, Physics, Psychology, Spanish Language, Spanish Literature, Statistics, and United States History. Cumulative class rank is calculated using all subjects based on a 4-point scale. Honors courses are weighted with .50 additional quality points and Advanced Placement courses are weighted with 1.0 additional quality points.
Brien McMahon partners with the University of Connecticut (UCONN) to provide students with an early college experience, UCONN ECE program, which allows students to matriculate in a college level class while still in high school. Course materials are consistent with those used in the UCONN-based course, and students have full access to the UCONN library. Successful completion of the course provides students with a UCONN transcript and credits, which can be transferred to most higher education institutions towards a degree. There are seven UCONN ECE offerings available during the 2015-2016 school year.

Within Brien McMahon High School is The Center for Global Studies (CGS), an inter-district, international studies magnet school that focuses on Arabic, Chinese and Japanese language, history, and culture. The CGS is committed to preparing students to become citizens of a global society. The 280 students (about half from Norwalk and half from outside Norwalk) benefit from small classes that have fewer than 18 students each. Instruction is student-centered and active. Students study the history of the Middle East, China or Japan for one year to give more understanding of the culture, and they enroll in a World Literature class each year, reading stories, novels and poetry from around the world. Students take math, science, physical education, music and additional elective courses in Brien McMahon classes.

CGS has a highly diverse student body, coming from a wide spectrum of communities. Students live in the urban centers of Bridgeport, Stamford, and Norwalk, and in the affluent communities of Darien, Fairfield, and Weston. The students represent a range of geographic, economic, racial, and ethnic diversity. The CGS is funded through the Connecticut State Department of Education Bureau of Choice Programs, with support from Norwalk Public Schools.

The graduating class of 2015 totaled 427 students: 63.4% (271) of graduating seniors enrolled in 4 year
colleges; 26.2% (112) of graduating seniors enrolled in 2-year colleges; 1% (5) of graduating seniors enrolled in the military. Seventy-five percent of the graduating seniors took the SAT. The average SAT scores for students in the class of 2015 was 484 in Reading, 482 in Math, and 485 in Writing.

Brien McMahon High School offers a comprehensive Developmental Guidance Program in which all students are given access to the *Naviance*, career and college informational database which serves as a diagnostic tool for college and career planning. The Developmental Guidance Program of Brien McMahon High School is an individually designed program that provides guidance and counseling services responding to the developmental needs of all students: post-secondary planning; personal, social, and emotional development; as well as career and vocational planning. The program recognizes the unique qualities of each individual student and provides students with opportunities to acquire or improve competencies in the areas of school adjustment and achievement, career planning and exploration, decision making and knowledge of self and others. The Student Success Plans (SSP) are linked to *Naviance* as well. Additionally, Brien McMahon High School has one part-time School-to-Career Counselor which supports the school’s wide-ranging School-to-Career Program with annual events such as *The Career Expo, Job Shadow, and The Volunteer Expo*.

The Senior Internship program started in the spring of 2015. This program takes place during the last month of the student’s senior year. Students are able to experience life outside of school by participating in a range of business opportunities throughout the community to solidify their interest in a certain field and cultivate the possibilities of other careers.

The guidance and certified support staff have created or partnered with a variety of programs that support
at-risk students both academically and socially. *The Robert E. Applebee Health Center* provides on-site counseling services with a psychiatrist, social worker, and nurse practitioner available to students during school hours. Brien McMahon High School’s collaborative programs for at-risk youth also include the *Juvenile Review Board* (JRB) and a myriad of support groups such as *The Bereavement Group*, a partnership with the *DEN for Grieving Kids based in Darien, CT*. In the area of academic development and college planning, Brien McMahon High School offers SAT prep classes, regular college fair and visitation activities, Financial Aid Support and College Planning events open to all students and parents. Brien McMahon High School partners with *The Gaffney Foundation* to assist first-generation college bound students with additional academic support enabling students to thrive in a competitive college environment. The *College Representation Program* features 115 colleges with representatives who visit on-site and offer college application support and college recruitment opportunities.
**Core Values and Beliefs**

Brien McMahon High School engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process based on best practices, to identify, develop and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. The core values are periodically updated to reflect current needs/interests of the school community. The School Excellence Committee, consisting of four faculty members and the principal, oversees and adheres to NEASC standards and suggests improvement for BMHS. The committee leads this process using resources such as *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work* as well as suggestions from John Keogh, a consultant who has experience working on NEASC visiting committees. The steps used in the process were grounded in research. *21st Century Skills* by Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel was also utilized. The process is outlined in the Pre-Self Study Report and a timeline of the sequence of events.

The current core values were developed beginning in fall of 2011. The process involved stakeholders from every part of the Brien McMahon High School community including students, parents, faculty, school administrators, a local college president, and the School Excellence Committee. The School Governance Council facilitated discussion among students, faculty members, administrators, parents, and community members. In the summer of 2012, the School Excellence Committee completed the third and final draft of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations (CVBLE). In October of 2012, a vote took place for approval with the faculty on the core values and beliefs about learning. During the winter of 2012, the School Excellence Committee presented the CVBLE and the process to Board of Education.

To ensure CVBLE remain current and relevant, feedback is gathered from students and teachers on an annual basis. In May of 2014, after a survey was administered to students and faculty, an update was made to include the word *global* to emphasize that students are being prepared for life in a 21st century global environment. The faculty approved this revision of the core values statement in the fall of 2014.

To assess our core values and beliefs about learning, BMHS developed school-wide rubrics. To develop a common language around rubrics, the School Excellence Committee facilitated an activity for the faculty to create a rubric evaluating chocolate chip cookies. Teachers were then given a choice about what part of the
process (write, edit, or launch) they wanted to be a part of. In committees, teachers created communication, problem solving, personal responsibility, and civic responsibility rubrics.

BMHS currently has clearly defined measurable expectations for all students in the academic, social, and civic competencies and has school-wide rubrics to assess student performance in communication, personal development, problem solving and civic competencies. The rubrics were based on the core values developed from contributions from students, parents, faculty, and community members. The rubrics list the expected performances in ranges of basic, developed, goal and exemplary and are clearly divided to assess a range of different criteria to meet each of the 21st century learning expectations. All rubrics have space for student self-assessment as well as teacher feedback. In 2013-2014, teachers representing a cross section of the disciplines piloted rubrics in their classrooms. In 2014-2015, teachers tied one school-wide rubric to their student learning objectives (SLOs), as part of their teacher evaluation. In the last few years, the culture at McMahon has shifted to a greater emphasis on a student-centered learning approach, and the faculty sees the value of using these rubrics in assessing these learning experiences.

As the teachers and students use the rubrics, there is an identification of areas that need to be revised in order to better assess the learning expectations at BMHS. The administrative team is currently working on a process to implement rubrics, collect data, and use that data to improve teaching and learning. According to the Endicott Survey results, 77% of parents, 85% of staff, and 60% of students agree that the school's learning expectations (academics, social, and civic) are challenging. 75% of students and 90% of the staff say they are familiar with the school-wide rubrics. 85% of the parents understand the level of learning that their child must demonstrate in order to meet the school’s learning expectations. Identifying the extent to which the school's 21st century learning expectations are challenging is also being explored throughout the school; consequently, the rubrics will undergo revisions as necessary.

The school relaunched the use of rubrics in the classroom in the spring of 2015 to revise the process for making rubrics more meaningful for teaching and learning. Each department chose a specific rubric. All members of the department were required to complete the rubric in one of their classes and report the results back to
administration. Student focus groups were also held to get feedback on the rubrics. Feedback from department chairs and department members based on teacher input indicates: (1) Rubrics are better used holistically rather than on a specific assignment. (2) Connecting parts of each rubric works for some specific assignments. (3) Rubrics were too wordy, not student friendly, and/or not specific enough for an overall assessment tool. (4) The civic responsibility rubric does lend itself for evaluation and discussion in House.

Based on the analysis of teacher feedback on rubrics, there needs to be professional development and further discussion on how to report achievement levels on the rubrics to all stakeholders. A committee, made up of five teacher representatives and a principal, was put in place in the fall of 2015, made up of five teacher representatives and the principal. The committee is revising the rubrics to make them more user friendly for students and teachers and hopes to have the rubrics ready piloting using a select groups of students. Piloting groups are in the process of being selected and the committee plans to continue to meet to further the entire process.

The core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations of Brien McMahon High School are reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and help to guide the school’s policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. At Brien McMahon High School, a commitment to core values and beliefs are at the center of the formation, practice, and evolution of school-wide policies, practices and initiatives. Many of the existing organizations and committees throughout the school community are dedicated to widely promoting and implementing the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations both inside of the classroom and in the wider school community, shaping school culture and educational priorities. The foundations of the school culture rest upon these core values as expressed in the BMHS School Compact, a written commitment to common values shared among faculty, administration, parents, and students. Having directly tied it to learning expectations, the School Governance Council developed the School Compact. The values and beliefs cultivate an environment that exists within McMahon each day as demonstrated by many vital practices and organizations such as House Advisory Program, PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies), Peer Mediation, and the RANSACK (Relevant Academic Needed Support
Aimed at College-bound Kids) tutoring program.

House Advisory Program provides all students the opportunity to connect with a faculty member for 4 years, providing extended guidance and support as they navigate the unique challenges of high school. House Advisory activities are directly tied to the learning expectations. PBIS is committed to helping students invest in the BMHS school community through academic, civic, and social development. Peer Mediation, for example, works to provide students with conflict resolution skills to resolve problems among their classmates, as well as in their own lives, and thereby empowers students while instilling authentic life skills. In the RANSACK tutoring program, upperclassmen assist freshmen with their academics while promoting civic and personal responsibilities. Other initiatives and programs such as the Unified Sports Program, BMHS Literary Magazine, Lip Dub, Recycling Club, and Chemistry Week are just a few samples of the rich academic, civic, and social culture that is present in McMahon’s classrooms, halls, and community. These values are also evident in the numerous organizations designed to incorporate students, faculty, administration, and parents in our school community and weave a school culture that embodies our core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. With the enhancement and implementation of our core values, Brien McMahon is better meeting the needs of all learners.

With regards to curriculum, BMHS has committed to implementation of Common Core Standards, student centered learning, and the inclusion of English Language Learners in the general education classroom. These initiatives have involved an examination of curriculum across the subject areas in order to align materials, instruction, and assessments with our core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Faculty in every discipline has received professional development in areas dedicated to creating student-centered learning opportunities in every classroom. In order to facilitate this transition, BMHS has created a partnership with East Side Community High School in New York, allowing teachers to participate in student centered “roundtable assessments” and other 21st century summative assessments, in lieu of traditional assessments. In addition, over the past few years, 31 teachers from across departments have attended Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training to learn strategies that can be used in the classroom to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.
Moreover, in an effort to align educational, social, and civic goals for all students, BMHS has designed and has begun to implement school-wide rubrics which are being used to assess students as they develop personally and academically. The process of implementing these rubrics is in early stages; however, the practice of using teacher-created or department-wide rubrics to assess students with equity has been in place for years. In October 2015, the Freshman Seminar class was adopted by the district for the 2016-2017 school year. The Freshman Seminar course will be a heterogeneous, interdisciplinary course for all 9th graders. The class will focus on 21st century learning skills that all students need to be successful, not only at BMHS but in post-secondary institutions and in careers. The class curriculum will follow the four BMHS school-wide rubrics, focusing on communication skills, civic, personal development, problem solving, technology skills, and researching skills.

The future plan is that in 10th and 11th grades, students will continue to collect artifacts for the four school-wide rubrics through House and academic classes. Students will lead conferences with their parents about their progress. The culminating assessment of the rubrics will the Capstone Project in 12th grade where students will be required to demonstrate their ability to meet each of the rubrics’ criteria.

While the core values do not explicitly drive resource allocation, they have influence over school-wide policy decisions. One example is the move to block scheduling, which will be implemented in the fall of 2016, to allow for greater student-centered learning opportunities. The creation of the school Senate allows students to have an input into the formulation and administration of school-wide behavior policies, thereby creating responsible and ethical community members. Another opportunity for students to become engaged in the school community is evident in the addition of student representatives on the School Climate Committee. Additionally, the senior internship program prepares students for the challenges and needs of the 21st century by requiring students to utilize the skills acquired through their four years at McMahon in the greater Norwalk community.

The Brien McMahon High School Community formally reviews the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations every year. Revisions consistently include multiple data points, reflect the school and community priorities, and are based in current research. As was previously stated, the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations were developed from 2011-2012 with input from multiple stakeholders and in agreement with the
district mission and vision statements. In 2014, a review of the document was conducted. Students were asked if they believed the core values statement represented current ideology, and if they were supported by the beliefs about learning and learning expectations. The same questions were asked of the School Governance Council, which consists of faculty, student, community, and parent representatives. With an increased emphasis on preparing students for a 21st century world, the statement was amended to include and emphasize the word global. The CVBLE went through a grammatical change after a faculty discussion took place during the opening day faculty meeting for the 2015-2016 school year.

While the school community is in agreement with the learning expectations, revisions of the school-wide analytic rubrics are currently taking place as led by school administration. All students have been exposed to the use of each rubric in the classroom or through the House Advisory Program. The plan going forward is that rubrics will be used in Freshman Seminar class, in advisory at 10th/11th grade as part of student led conferences, and used for the 12th grade Capstone. The book, *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times* by Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel was referenced throughout the rubric revision process.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Brien McMahon High School engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process based on best practices, to identify, develop and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. On a regular basis the CVBLE are revisited, discussed, and communicated to all stakeholders and revised to meet the needs of all learners. Rubrics were created to assess our commitment to our CVBLE and to determine if we are meeting the needs of all students.

BMHS currently has clearly defined measurable expectations for all students in the academic, social, and civic competencies and has school-wide rubrics to assess the student performance in communication, personal development, problem solving and civic competencies. The four school-wide rubrics were piloted by teachers and based off of the initial outcomes, were revisited and are now in the process of being revised by a committee of assorted teachers and administrators. This thoughtful work will help the rubrics to become meaningful for students, teachers, and families and make rubrics part of BMHS culture.
The core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations of Brien McMahon High School are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and help to guide the school’s policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. A commitment to the CVBLE are reflected in our school’s community through numerous programs such as House, PBIS and Ransack Tutoring which helps to shape the culture of our school, thereby enhancing educational priorities. CVBLE are embedded in curriculum and instruction through ongoing and relevant professional development opportunities such as SIOP and student centered learning strategies, which have encouraged non-traditional assessments such as round tables to be implemented as a practice for accessing different 21st learning expectations. The CVBLE have guided and changed policies, procedures and decisions.

The Brien McMahon High School Community formally reviews the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations every few years. Revisions consistently include multiple data points, reflect the school and community priorities, and are based in current research. All stakeholders are consistently involved in the process of reviewing CVBLE and ensuring that it is aligned with the district's mission and vision. As a school, BMHS is in the process of determining the bests way to implement the use of school-wide rubrics to best assess 21st century learning expectations.

Based on the CPSS Rating Guide for the Standard on Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations, Brien McMahon High School judges its adherence to the Standard as ACCEPTABLE.

Summary of Strengths and Needs

Strengths:
- Dynamic and inclusive process in place for creating CVBLE
- Professional development to support 21st century learning expectations
- School-wide rubrics have been created and modified to fit 21st century learning skills and the needs of learners at BMHS
- Committees have been formed to determine the best way to implement rubrics
- Available data has been used to make informed decisions about changing scheduling policy and procedure in incorporating a student voice into decision making and implementing various school programs

Needs:
- Still in process of full implementation of school-wide rubrics
- Continue to develop formal procedure for collecting data on student growth on school-wide rubrics
- BMHS core values influence is limited to building level decisions
Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Standard

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelsey Murphy, Chair</td>
<td>Special Education Teacher</td>
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<td>Kristi Carriero, Co-Chair</td>
<td>Mathematics Teacher</td>
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<td>Jimmy Benincaso</td>
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<td>Thomas Fried</td>
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<td>Nicole Stockfisch</td>
<td>P.E./Health Teacher</td>
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<td>Sheila Wolfe</td>
<td>Art Department Chair</td>
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**Curriculum**

Brien McMahon High School has begun the curriculum revision process in order to explicitly identify which 21st century skills are addressed in the content areas. Curriculum revision is coordinated by central office with input from Norwalk’s three high schools. The Chief Academic Officer oversees the writing of curriculum. To support this work, there are full time math, science, and English curriculum/instructional specialists. Consultants are hired as needed to assist in the writing of curricula for academic areas without instructional specialists.

Curriculum revision in these subject areas is facilitated with consultants supported by grant monies. **Curricula, in some areas, explicitly state that students will practice or achieve 21st century learning expectations.**

The curriculum in world language, English, US history, civics, and world history courses are purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The math, science, arts, business and special education departments have not yet updated their curriculum or moved to the common template. These curricula frequently emphasize depth of understanding through inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills. The instructional strategies are appropriate for heterogeneous grouping and varied learning styles. Included in these strategies are methods such as hands-on learning activities, student-centered options, direct instruction, and both individual and cooperative learning opportunities. The vast majority of students attending BMHS have many opportunities to demonstrate learning through authentic learning opportunities. For example, in the civics curriculum, it states that students participate in Mock Congress practicing critical thinking and collaboration through a performance assessment that demonstrates 21st century learning expectations. The design of the BMHS curriculum ensures that each student has multiple learning experiences to achieve the learning expectations through pre-assessments, formative assessments, and post assessments with some staff members allowing retakes. In 2014-2015 school year, teachers were required to evaluate students using at least one school-wide rubric. In 2015-2016, as the school finalizes its plan for formal rubric implementation, teachers continue to use rubrics in their classrooms. The problem solving, communication, civic responsibility, and personal development rubrics connect to 21st century learning expectations.

Although not all curricula are in the new template, which explicitly lists 21st century learning
expectations, all teachers are consciously developing strategies for incorporating 21st century learning skills into all courses. This is done as applicable, providing opportunities for all students to practice and achieve learning expectations. Most teachers informally address these skills throughout their courses. For example, there are many circumstances in science courses in which students must communicate and collaborate during their lab work.

The curriculum, in some areas, is written in a common format. A new common template was adopted by central office on January 8, 2014. The common curriculum format includes the district’s 21st century learning expectations, units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. The curricula for all core English classes, social studies classes, and all first and second level world language classes use this common template. However, not all curriculum areas have utilized this template. Curricula from the departments that have not yet updated have some of these qualities, but do not always explicitly or consistently include this information.

BMHS’ 21st century learning expectations are articulated through the teacher-designed school-wide rubrics. Curriculum is written at central office, and curriculum does state to use school-wide rubrics as determined by schools. The Math department has adopted their curriculum from the State Department of Education and has not used the common curriculum template. As curricula is updated, BMHS encourages the district to align with the common template to reflect both the district’s and BMHS’ 21st century learning expectations.

School-wide rubrics and course-specific rubrics have been developed. World language has developed rubrics specific to their department. Additionally, social studies uses a course-specific rubric for assessing writing assignments. Currently, most curricula list instructional strategies. Future revisions of curricula will formally identify specific instructional strategies. According the Endicott Survey results, 63.1% of parents feel they are informed by the school-wide learning expectations in each of their child’s classes.

The evidence demonstrates that BMHS curriculum consistently emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills in the vast majority of courses, across various skill levels. The curriculum continues to include greater cross-disciplinary learning experiences for students. BMHS staff connects students with experiences and professionals both within and outside school to create authentic
learning opportunities. The informed and ethical use of technology is a pervasive effort that can be seen in all areas of study at BMHS. BMHS is a dynamic learning environment that challenges students. Many courses are offered at both the Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) level. A total of 20 AP courses are offered as of 2015-2016. Brien McMahon also offers college credit courses, including 7 Early College Experience (ECE) courses through the University of Connecticut courses for college credit and four Project Lead the Way courses through the University of New Haven. These courses explore content at a more sophisticated level while providing students opportunities to apply their knowledge to think critically, experiment, and problem solve. This academic standard is not exclusive to Honors and AP classes and can be readily seen in all classrooms throughout the school. Every student in US history, whether in general education level, Honors, or AP, must find historical documents and scholarly articles to support a historical interpretation to successfully complete the benchmark assessments. All students in English II classes, regardless of course level, read several fiction and nonfiction texts. These texts are utilized during student-led discussions requiring students to identify content to compare, contrast, and analyze literary devices, themes, and use of imagery from multiple sources.

A great deal of teacher driven collaboration at BMHS results in a wide array of cross-disciplinary learning opportunities for students. Chemistry instructors rely on a student’s competency with algebra topics like recursive and explicit rules of sequencing and conversions for dimensional analysis. Statistics and calculus knowledge also aids the top-tier students in challenging AP science courses which require careful interpretation and analysis of data. Additionally, the art department has recently developed an interdisciplinary project which requires student to design and present a multimedia project on an environmental pollutant. The final project is designed to be a digital artifact and requires computer application, instruction, and practice. English and the art departments have one co-curricula class to analyze and produce graphic novels. 63% of teachers agreed that there are crossdisciplinary learning experiences, according to the Endicott Survey. Due to the constraints of the current schedule, there is no formal mechanism for incorporating cross-disciplinary learning experiences for students. BMHS is hoping to address these needs with blocking scheduling in the 2016-2017 school year.
Authentic learning opportunities both in and out of the school are evident at BMHS. In the 2014-2015 school year, BMHS has designed and implemented a community senior internship program for professional work experiences outside the building during the school hours. Students enrolled in AP Language and Composition classes compete in a school improvement competition as a part of their final exam. The competition, which mimics the television show Shark Tank, requires groups of students to present an idea that would improve the school to a panel of judges consisting of PTO members, local business owners, a representative from the Mayor’s office, and the executive director of the Norwalk Education Fund (NEF), who provides a $500 grant to the winner to implement. Another example includes students enrolled in the Child Development classes, who create and implement lesson plans for preschool program at BMHS. In addition, Marine Biology students participate in field studies of local marine ecosystems with trips to Calf Pasture Beach. The TEMPEST Program at the Norwalk Maritime Center is an after school opportunity that promotes teen STEM literacy, prepares for college, and provides an awareness of career opportunities in this field. In the summertime, Greenlight Academy runs through a research station in Maine and is free for Norwalk students. It provides a hands-on experience for BMHS students to learn about sustainable energy.

There are many examples of authentic tasks at BMHS. The Functional Academics class has a weekly breakfast program where special education students learn to prepare basic food items, manage money, and work on social skills. Journalism students investigate and write articles for a school newspaper. Also, students in the yearbook class design and market the yearbook, including efforts to sell advertisements to local businesses. In addition, health classes run the MAGIC Garden, which has been used with the health curriculum to increase awareness of healthy eating habits. Moreover, entrepreneurship class allows students to develop their marketing and salesmanship skills by providing money for students to purchase items to later sell at the holiday fair for profit. Also, the music curriculum provides multiple opportunities for students to display their musical skills at performances throughout the year. Currently, 55% of students believe that BMHS provides them with authentic out of school experiences.

Informed and ethical use of technology is expected of all students at BMHS. Entering freshmen are
introduced to and sign a district-wide agreement noting their commitment to this standard. Computer Application classes remain a graduation requirement and teach students to command the entire Microsoft Office Suite of programs. The classes also cover issues such as respecting intellectual property and proper citation of sources through MLA. Databases are used in vast majority of classes and students are guided through the process of evaluating sources’ validity. All BMHS teachers are required to post grades using Pearson’s PowerSchool, a web-based student information system which allows students, teachers, and parents to access grades at their convenience. Recently, Google Chromebooks were purchased for students. Each of the core subjects has 2 carts of 26-28 Chromebooks to share for classroom use. Also, most classes incorporate an exchange of work and information between students and teacher via Google Drive and conversations occurring between student and teacher using Remind101. Graduating seniors fulfill their personal success plan, which is developed and tracked through Naviance. Naviance also helps students learn more about college and career opportunities. In House Advisory, there are activities about appropriate use of social media. The Endicott Survey revealed that 83% of students believe that they learn how to use technology ethically, and 73% of staff believe the curriculum emphasizes ethical use of technology.

The taught curriculum is, on the whole, aligned with the written curriculum. According to evidence provided by educators at Brien McMahon High School, curriculum is often deliberately followed by classroom teachers who provide weekly lesson plans to department chairs and housemasters. Lesson plans are reviewed to ensure the curriculum is being followed and feedback is given as necessary. Additionally, there are 23 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in which educators who teach the same class meet during the school week to discuss curriculum, lesson plans, common assessments, data and instructional strategies. Common objectives that align with curriculum are also developed and measured during PLC times to certify that there is consistency and commonality between classes. For example, the Civics PLC identified citizenship as a central concept in the curriculum. This PLC created a Document Based Question (DBQ) based on immigration and citizenship that requires students to write a persuasive response. The 9th grade Physical Science PLC identified the importance of polymers as a core concept and developed a lesson to ensure student competency before the CAPT science test. Due to scheduling difficulties business, art, and special education departments meet less often. Despite
this issue, most teachers use common assessments that are scored using either course-specific or schoolwide rubrics that align to core concepts in their class’ curriculum. Most content areas and classes have their own set of common assessments, which are embedded into the curriculum. According to the Endicott Survey results, 88% of staff are in agreement that the formal curriculum in their subject area emphasizes inquiry, problem-solving, and high order thinking. Also, 78.7% of staff is in agreement that the written and taught curriculum are aligned.

Effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among academic areas within the school exists to a limited extent. There is some curricular coordination and articulation with the sending schools in the district. Teacher PLCs encourage coordination within a single subject area. Unfortunately, there is very little formal time to ensure there is vertical coordination within content areas as in Algebra I to Geometry or English I to English II. The schedule does not allow for this during the school year. Efforts to coordinate the development of skills through multiple grades may be discussed as a department during monthly meetings and professional development days during the summer. For example, over the summer, social studies teachers mapped out how key skills would develop through grades 9, 10, and 11.

Likewise, it is difficult for teachers to coordinate across departments. For example, teachers who work with sophomores in the English and social studies departments do not have time to coordinate curriculum. While there was time for coordination within the core departments of English, social studies, and World Languages, these committees did not work together on an interdisciplinary basis.

Collaboration time for PLCs is provided to teachers in order to better align teaching practices and content within a single class. Core subject area teachers have been provided with a common planning time with other teachers of the same discipline once or twice every four-day cycle. Business and health/physical education teachers are not able to meet in PLCs. Since teachers are grouped by courses taught or grade level, this limits the amount of cross curricular discussions and planning for vertical alignment. Informal meetings to discuss how teachers may integrate other subjects or levels into their class are common practice among the staff, but they are not formally scheduled. In the 2016-2017 school year, the new block schedule may be able to address these limitations.
One model of good vertical and horizontal alignment at BMHS is the House Advisory Program, which has been implemented in our school for the past 5 years. It has been modified over time; presently, it is a very well thought out program that is vertically aligned in order to introduce and revisit topics in an appropriate way for each grade level. The School Climate Committee was called upon to design and update the curriculum. Each year, the staff as a whole, are included in any necessary revisions. While this model is an excellent way to align curriculum, it does require a significant time outside of the school day to complete thus making it hard to replicate with each subject without the commitment of significant resources.

There is some curricular coordination and articulation with the sending schools in the district. World language uses a placement test for some incoming students to determine placement. In math, there is coordination to ensure that middle school students taking Algebra 1 and Honors Geometry learn the same content and skills as their high school counterparts. In the curriculum writing process, the English, Social Studies, and World Language committees met with middle school teachers to discuss how to vertically align curricula to encourage a deeper mastery of content and development of relevant skills.

In some areas, staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. Staffing levels at Brien McMahon High School are for the most part satisfactory. However, specialized classes experience great difficulty in properly implementing the curriculum within the current budget. In the 2012-2013 school year, a 0.5 business teacher, a 0.5 PE/Health teacher, and one full-time school-to-career counselor were eliminated due to budget constraints. These positions have not been reinstated but have not had an impact on the educational program, except for the school-to-career counselor. As a result, students have reduced access to additional outside resources. Class sizes are determined by course enrollment as guided by the NFT contract, which establishes maximum class size at 28 and student load at 130. In science, technology, and computer courses, however, the contract stipulates that the number of students shall not exceed the number of student stations available. Currently, the teacher to student ratio is about 1:13. Endicott Survey results indicate 65.7% of the staff say there is sufficient professional staff.
Funds are allocated to the school based on pupil enrollment; from this pool, funds are distributed to the departments to purchase instructional materials based on determined needs. New course materials are supplied by Central Office. According to department chairs who have responsibility for the budget, supplies, equipment not including that supplied by the Central Office, instructional materials are provided at an adequate rate to implement the curriculum. In the Art department, students must pay a $25 fee for class materials for the photography and 3D media courses. The budget has been cut repeatedly over the past five years. Regarding school technology, only 55.2% of parents believe that it is adequate according to the Endicott Survey results. The technology available to teachers and students also makes it challenging to implement the curriculum. Almost every classroom has a Mobi or a Smartboard as well as one desktop computer. Updates to the Smartboard software is not supported by IT Department, making them inefficient as a teaching tool. Each teacher has received a laptop. Currently, the building has two carts of 26-28 Chromebooks for each academic department and another five carts distributed through the library. However, the Endicott Survey indicates that only 58.1% of students believe that there is a sufficient number of computers for student use. Regarding instructors, the Business Department has five labs for business classes plus one small (16 computers) as well as teacher iPads, all supplied by the Perkins Grant. Most teachers, except for those in the business department, believe technology is insufficient since it is sometimes a struggle to procure the technology needed for the lesson. Most academic subjects have their own lab of desktop computers. The English and social studies departments agreed to share one computer lab in exchange for additional Google chromebooks. The remaining computer labs are of limited usefulness. Every summer the goal is that computers are restored to working condition, but they are reported as being in poor, almost non-working condition by the end of each year as there is not enough technical support to keep them operational. The same is true for replacing Google chromebooks that are out of warranty. The benchmark assessments and surveys that need to be completed on computers, further tie up technology intended to improve instruction. Additionally, the network that provides internet access is unreliable; it often cannot handle large groups accessing the internet simultaneously, as is necessary for a benchmark assessment or for teachers to implement student-centered, inquiry-based lessons that require technology. Although a new network was created that would allow students to bring their own mobile devices to school, this network is also unreliable. It is very challenging for teachers to
implement the new curriculum with fidelity because students cannot reliably research online or access their Google accounts to use the word processing, presentation, spreadsheet, or storage functions. BMHS administrators have called on teachers to provide each other with technical support and training. Although teachers can usually implement the curriculum with the current technological resources, it can be challenging to coordinate access to these tools.

The resources of the library are inadequate and outdated, making them insufficient to implement the curriculum. Only 57.6% of parents believe the library/media center is adequate. The floor of the library has only 13 computers for student use; the library computer lab of 26 computers can be reserved by individual teachers for class use with teacher supervision. The library budget has been cut or eliminated at least twice during the past five years. Students’ ability to access library databases is threatened each year by budget cuts. For example, access to fundamental databases such as U.S. History in Context and World History in Context were eliminated and eventually restored in the last 4 years due to budgetary restraints. This creates inequity in the implementation of curriculum. Some years, students have consistent access to databases and resources that allow for student-centered and inquiry-based learning experiences. Other years, students are extremely limited and do not have access to scholarly resources that allow for thoughtful exploration and critical thinking.

To a large extent, the school facilities are adequate for implementing the curriculum. If teachers share classrooms, there is a concerted effort to make sure that teachers have adequate space to implement the curriculum. For example, science classes work within their schedule to ensure adequate lab experiences are available to students. While school facilities are sufficient, the resources of the library/media center are insufficient due to decreases in funding. Also, the equipment in the physical education weight room has not been updated since the room originally was opened in 2006, which is needed to implement the health curriculum.

In the past, there has been difficulty with funding programs. The physical education department relies on donations from other schools and local businesses to provide equipment for the PE program. The athletic budget has been reduced by 35% over the past ten years; however, this year the budget has been increased to keep pace with inflation. Moreover, the fundraising efforts of parents are key in sustaining the music and drama programs. According to the Endicott Survey results, only 40.7% of staff and 38.4% of parents believe co-curricular programs
are adequately funded. In 2011, BMHS was awarded a Nellie Mae grant that provided opportunities, professional
development, and materials for the implementation of student-centered learning.

In summation, the staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment and supplies are
sufficient. According to the Endicott Survey results, 55.2% of parents agree that the school’s technology is
adequate. Efforts have been made to communicate with the district about technology professional development and
technology issues and to supply what is needed at the building level, but opportunity for improvement at the
district level is vast.

The school curriculum review schedule is ongoing and collaborative to a limited extent. The curriculum
revision is on an ongoing 10-year collaborative cycle. The curriculum revision schedule was developed by central
office. Most subject areas are not on schedule with the appointed time line, with efforts being hampered by
inconsistent district leadership. At this time, art, physical education/health, and mathematics should have started
the developmental stage in 2012-13. Out of those three departments, mathematics is the only one that has begun
working on their revisions during the 2014-2015 school year. During the 2013-2014 school year, science, music,
and technology should have started development but have not. The business and health curriculum revisions are off
by 4 years. The only departments that are close to meeting their revision dates are English and world language.
In addition, according to the curriculum schedule, the dates of development for social studies are off by one year.

The World Language and Social Studies Committees from both schools met once a month with a
curriculum consultant during the 2014-2015 school year. The English and Math Committees from both schools
were led by district-employed curriculum leaders. Up to this point, curriculum revision focus is on core subjects,
not elective subject areas. Science is not on schedule with revisions, but that was done in order to accommodate any
changes in state standards resulting from the Next Generation Science Standards.

In 2014-2015 school year, the social studies department met once a month to develop their curriculum at
Central Office. Time scheduled for teachers working on the curriculum utilizes school business hours, but BMHS has
not found any concrete evidence that shows where or how much money there is in the account for ongoing
collaborative development. According to most departments, there is limited formal time scheduled for teachers to
meet and review the success of their curriculum and instructional practices, evaluation, or to discuss 21st century learning expectations and implementation. This is reflected in the Endicott Survey results in which only 48% of staff agreed that there is sufficient time given to curriculum writing and revision while 61% of staff feels that they are directly involved in this work.

The business, art, and science departments do not rely on any research or current texts to revise curriculum or guide its evaluation for its most recent curriculum; this curriculum has not been updated since 2003, 2003, and 2006 respectively. The new math curriculum was designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. This Steering Committee was not instructed to use any research or text to guide the curriculum development aside from the adoption of the State Department of Education’s interpretation of the Common Core standards. Therefore, current research did not guided the development, evaluation, review and revision of curriculum in those departments.

In world language, Understanding by Design by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe was used to guide the curriculum design process. In social studies and English, Larry Ainsworth’s Rigorous Curriculum Design presents a process for unwrapping and prioritizing standards, as well as identifying essential questions and enduring understandings. The arts, business, and science curricula have not been updated in the past decade. Consequently, they have not been shaped in any way by recent student performance data. Neither the English nor math departments were given the opportunity to use student performance data in their revision efforts. In world language, student performance data was used to revise common assessments. In social studies, student performance data was very influential on the curriculum development, evaluation, and revision process. Teachers in all three social studies content areas piloted the new curriculum units and provided feedback on this process to the Curriculum Committee members. This feedback led to several performance assessments and the required content for several units being altered to better suit the needs of these classes. Although teachers use data to analyze instruction, social studies and world language are the only courses where student performance data was used in the development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum.

English, world language, math, and social studies are the only departments in which the staff has played
an active role in the curriculum development process; however, as more departments begin the curriculum process, teachers will be involved. In the English area, representatives from the middle schools and high schools were brought together to revise the curriculum. The math curriculum was developed at the state level, leaving limited room for personalization at the school or district level. There was no piloting process for the curriculum that allowed other teachers to give feedback. Representatives from Social studies and world language were on the curriculum revision committee for their content area. Teachers wrote curriculum, piloted curriculum, provided feedback, and made changes. The PLCs allowed these teachers to have the time to discuss how the piloting process was going and to discuss any revisions that may be determined as necessary. While the professional staff has been an active part of the curriculum development and revision process, their influence over the outcome has been limited in some areas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The curriculum, in part, is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve 21st century learning expectations. A common, district-wide template for curriculum exists which includes each unit of study with essential questions, concepts, content, skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. Subjects whose curricula have been updated to the common template, explicitly state the 21st century learning expectations specific to them. Although not all curricula are in the new common template, all teachers are consciously developing strategies for incorporating 21st century learning expectations into all courses.

The curriculum at BMHS emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills in the vast majority of courses, across various skill levels. Cross-disciplinary learning experiences are often incorporated into existing curriculum; however, there is no mechanism for creating formal cross-disciplinary learning units. BMHS staff consistently connects students with experiences and professionals both within and outside school to create authentic learning opportunities. The informed and ethical use of technology is a pervasive effort that can be seen in all areas of study at BMHS.

The taught curriculum is, on the whole, aligned with the written curriculum. Effective curricular
coordination and articulation between and among academic areas within the school exists to a limited extent. PLCs facilitate coordination within a single class subject, but they do not explicitly promote coordination between departments or with sending schools. There are some explicit efforts towards coordination and articulation between sending schools and BMHS by department chairs.

In most areas, staffing levels, instructional materials, equipment supplies, and facilities are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. Supplies, equipment (except that supplied by the Central Office), and instructional materials are provided at an adequate rate to implement the curriculum. However, the resources of the library are inadequate and outdated, making them insufficient to implement the curriculum. In addition, there are difficulties with implementation due to reliability and maintenance issues regarding current school technology.

The district provides the school’s professional staff with sufficient personnel and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. However, the majority of the resources are funded by grants and allocation of time is limited. Nearly all curriculum revisions are off by two to three years according to the curriculum revision schedule. There is limited formal time scheduled for teachers to meet and review the success of their curriculum and instructional practices, evaluation, or to discuss 21st century learning expectations and implementation. Current research has often guided the development, evaluation, review, and revision of curriculum. Brien McMahon High School occasionally uses student performance data in the development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum.

Based on the CPSS Rating Guide for the Standard on Curriculum, Brien McMahon High School judges its adherence to the Standard as LIMITED.

Summary of Strengths and Needs

Strengths:

- There is a common, district-wide curriculum template. This template includes 21st century learning expectations; units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics
- The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, and authentic learning opportunities in and out of school
- The curriculum emphasizes an informed and ethical use of technology
The written curriculum and taught curriculum is aligned

- Effective curricular coordination exists within single subject areas
- Sufficient staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies exist, enabling the implementation of the curriculum, co-curricular programs, and other learning experiences
- Of the updated curriculum, it was an inclusive process with sufficient personnel for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum.
- Current research is often used in the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum

Needs

- Not all course curricula are currently written in the common template; those in the old template may be lacking 21st century learning expectations and may not be anchored to school-wide or course-specific rubrics
- Lack of adherence to the Revision Curriculum Schedule
- Greater opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning experiences would improve student outcomes
- Curricular coordination and articulation between departments and with sending schools could be improved
- Technology and school facilities present challenges to implementing the curriculum, co-curricular programs, and other learning experiences
- The library/media center is not sufficient for implementing the curriculum
- The district does not provide the school’s professional staff with sufficient time for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum
- Sustainable district funds are not dedicated to curriculum revision
- Data from assessments could be used more frequently in the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum
Curriculum
Standard

Adrienne Harris, Chair
Social Studies Teacher

Sean Phillips, Co-Chair
Mathematics Teacher

Yanetsy Diaz
World Languages Teacher

Grace D’Onofrio
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Kenneth Dustin
P.E./Health Teacher

Ellen Gaber
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Michael Horvath
Special Education Teacher

William Pierce
Art Teacher

Kaitlyn Prescott
English Teacher

Jeffrey Queiroga
Science Teacher

Laura Quagliata
Mathematics Teacher

David Rich
Science Teacher

Christopher Scalise
Business Teacher

Barbara Wood
Housemaster
Instruction

Based on the analysis of information, teachers across the board at Brien McMahon High School use instructional practices which are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school’s core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. According to the Endicott Survey results, 76.9% of teachers in Brien McMahon feel that they continually examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning. The survey also shows that 53.6% of students’ parents feel their child’s teachers personalize instruction to support achievement of the school’s learning expectations. During professional development and within departments, teachers read educational books and articles, such as *On Common Ground* and *Teach Like a Champion* to keep them up to date on 21st century learning expectations.

Books and articles are discussed during department meetings and professional development. Examples of learning expectations in instruction can been seen throughout the building. Many departments use a roundtable strategy where students practice collaboration and communication skills. This strategy requires students to take ownership of their learning, communication skills, and problem solving skills. Several departments utilize computer programs to enhance instruction. An example is in algebra classes where instructors implement an interactive, student-centered program geared towards those who are struggling. The program, Agile Minds, is instructional practice that ensures consistency with the school’s belief that all students can be lifelong learners and 21st century problem solvers. In addition, throughout World History and US History classes, all students are required to research a historical topic and produce a research paper. This assessment requires students to practice problem solving skills and communication skills. Students practice the civic responsibility learning expectation primarily in the House Advisory Program. Teachers implement School Climate Committee developed activities to promote active community engagement. Students participate in a canned food drive, write letters to troops, and engage in activities created to promote diversity awareness. Additionally, teachers at BMHS implement four school-wide rubrics that mirror our core values with instructional practices. These rubrics include problem solving, civic responsibility, personal responsibility, and communication. Use of the rubrics can be seen throughout different types of instruction and are continuously reviewed by teachers. Teacher feedback is reviewed for future
modifications to improve the use of the rubrics in academic classes. During PLC allotted time, teachers collaborate to develop and implement instructional activities that give students opportunities to meet the learning expectations.

Extensively, teachers’ instructional practices support the achievement of the school’s 21st century learning expectations through personalizing instruction, engaging students, emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving and higher-order thinking, providing authentic tasks, and integrating technology in the classroom. Most teachers personalize instruction. Examples can be seen in lessons and assessments. Teachers often allow students a choice in activities and assessments. This approach is highly personalized to the strengths and interests of individual students. An example would be in the health classes where students choose their assessment project from: making a movie, constructing an art project, caring for an egg for a week in a childcare simulation, or writing a report on how much it costs to provide for an infant. Students in Spanish classes choose a topic, based on their future occupational aspirations, and give an oral presentation and act out the occupation in the target language. In science, the Chemistry-Element Project is personalized for each student. Students choose an element, develop an argument supporting the chosen element, and choose a method of presentation for the class. One statistic from the Endicott Survey states that although 89.8% of teachers say they personalize lessons, only 37.5% of students report that their teachers do. It is difficult to say whether this is due to a lack of student understanding about the nature of personalization or an actual lack of personalized instruction.

Interdisciplinary learning occurs sporadically throughout BMHS. There is one formal cross-curricular course offered at BMHS new to 2015-2016 school year. The Graphic Novel: Analysis and Creation class is taught by both an English and art teacher. BMHS schedule limits opportunities for interdisciplinary activities; however, there are examples of informal collaboration initiated by individual teachers. A Functional Academics class and a health class work together four to five times throughout the school year, and the two teachers purposefully collaborate and plan lessons together. The special education teacher and the health teacher work together to incorporate lessons around the garden at BMHS. These lessons include the life cycle of plants, planting seeds
with peers, an Earth Day celebration, making globes, and discussing how a person could individually make the world a greener place. In addition, an ELL class and a science course work together on a DNA unit where both teachers provide content knowledge and assistance for English Language Learners.

Informally, an attempt to teach students that content can be incorporated as cross-curricular does occur in a variety of classrooms. For example, chemistry students study the historical impacts chemicals had on societal, cultural and political transformations during the Molecules that Changed History project. In English, during *The Importance of Being Earnest* lesson, students utilize technology in order to research historical data about the play’s author as well as the Victorian era. Although this is not a demonstration of formal cross-collaboration, these are a few examples from individual teachers who attempt to informally establish the connection of courses, similar skills, and incorporation of content knowledge from other subjects where appropriate.

Teachers across the school support the achievement of the school’s 21st century learning by engaging students as active and self-directed learners. Students peer edit papers in social studies, World Languages, and English classes. In addition, these classes also emphasize discussion and debate. Students in Functional Academics courses run a coffee shop on Friday mornings. During coffee shop, students use a working cash register, take and prepare orders for coffee and baked goods, and work on their interpersonal communication skills. Additionally, students in Functional Academic transition courses participate in a work site program. They are given employment opportunities during the school day at local businesses in order to learn how to become self-directed, active employees. In Geometry A, while learning about transformations, students employ manipulatives in order to calculate the line of reflection, rotation, and translations. Students are self-directed learners in Honors Pre-Calculus classes as they frequently present homework, class activities, and on-demand problems in class. In chemistry, students are required to be self-directed as they make predictions, combine chemicals, and record resulting reactions. In physical education, students record and analyze their physical activity and then write about their personal growth as they strive to their physical fitness.

According to the Endicott Survey, 92.6% of BMHS teachers agree that they consistently engage students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking while 71.9% of parents agree. In Astronomy, students use technology to research the Apollo Space mission through problem-solving and inquiry-based learning. In the
Functional Academics class, focused on daily living skills, students must problem-solve solutions to authentic budgeting quandaries such as determining how much food to buy and how using coupons impacts budgeting. All U.S. and World History students engage in the research paper process, which includes analyzing primary sources, evaluating their usefulness, and defending a thesis. In Biology classes, students completed a project called the Galapagos Island Crisis to emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order thinking. Students had to research the viewpoints of different relevant stakeholders and determine if the Galapagos Islands should be opened for tourism and fishing or kept as a preserved national park. This assignment requires higher-order thinking through, analysis and synthesis, and self evaluation using rubrics.

Brien McMahon High School educators ask students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks at least once a year in all learning areas. Music classes perform a yearly winter concert for the school and neighborhood community. Art students create works for the annual district-wide art show for the City of Norwalk. Students of anatomy and physiology create a fully functioning circulatory system applying the concepts learned in class. Geometry (using trigonometry) determines the height of the Center for Global Studies wing of the building using a clinometer that they created. Health students create a personalized eating plan based on “My Plate,” a nutritional plan by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Child development students design and implement developmentally appropriate lesson plans for the preschoolers who populate the BMHS Pre-School. The culinary arts students serve themed luncheons to students in the World Language, CGS, and various other departments. Students in English classes create original speeches inspired by memorable historical speeches. NJROTC students assist with the American Legion Flag ceremony applying concepts learned in class to prepare presentations around Memorial Day. Business students create mock PowerPoint presentations to be used by a hypothetical college recruiter at a college fair. Finally, civics students create mock presidential election campaigns including a political party platform, campaign speech, voting session, and a newly elected president.

There is strong evidence that teachers at BMHS often ask students to self-assess and reflect on their learning. 64.3% of students agree that teachers provide them with opportunities to assess their own work. In ESL, the Spanish teacher, assisted by the biology teacher, used a KWL to have students self-assess what they knew at
the beginning, middle, and end of the unit on DNA and genetics. During student-centered learning activities in biology, English, and world language classes, students are given a rubric to assess their learning prior to turning in their final work and/or the teacher’s assessment.

Teachers at BMHS regularly integrate technology into teaching and learning. Examples were found across disciplines. According to the Endicott Survey results, 72.9% of BMHS students determined that teachers require the use of technology for completing assignments. ESL uses the internet to help explain concepts of genetics. In world language, students debate in the target language, Spanish, about the uses of functional Magnetic Resonance Imagery and studies of the limbic system. Art classes use technology to display art, research works of symbolism, and create using programs such as Photoshop. Health students produce a DVD or CD as part of their health final project. Another use of technology that can be seen across disciplines is through the APEX tutorials. APEX was initially utilized as credit recovery for students at BMHS, and also available as a digital curriculum used as enrichment material. All students and teachers have access to APEX to enrich student knowledge if they are struggling and would benefit from a tutorial; all teachers have been offered the opportunity to be trained. Additionally, teachers regularly use web platforms such as Google Drive and Google Classroom to communicate electronically and share assignments. Some teachers use Remind app to send students reminders about upcoming due dates. A variety of teachers encourage student use of Quizlet.com and Study Stack to review for assessments. Vernier Probeware is used in science classes to gather and analyze data while conducting experiments. Additionally, teachers utilize online textbooks as part of the curriculum. Students in French, Italian, and Spanish in levels I and II have access to an online textbook. Students taking the Child Development course have a new textbook with digital texts and features. Across the math and social studies curricula, teachers use web-based textbooks. A computer applications class also uses an interactive online program from Cengage Publishing that helps students master Microsoft Office and other needed computer concepts.

There is extensive evidence that Brien McMahon High School teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments, strategic differentiation, organization of group learning activities, and implementing alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
Across learning areas, BMHS teachers routinely adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student based on assessment results. In PLCs, teachers use common formative assessment, CFA, results. Teachers compare these results and share successful instructional strategies. In the past, teachers used Link It, a computer program that tracked student data; unfortunately, the funding for that program was grant money that ran out. In math and science classes, teachers assess student knowledge by the use of clickers, an electronic, student response system that provides immediate feedback and allows the teacher to adjust and modify instructional practices. In the Social Studies department, some teachers utilize google drive and check individual progress of students, modifying and adjusting instruction based on their daily work.

According to Endicott survey results, 90.7% of the teachers at Brien McMahon High School adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student through strategic differentiation. The Intensified Algebra classes use a program called Agile Minds. This program offers various strategies to promote learning such as visuals, videos, and slides. In Geometry A, there are unit plans that show the instructional practices that utilize different learning strategies. Through the use of visuals and real-world examples, students in Geometry A are able to learn through various modes. Throughout the school, instruction and assessments are differentiated to meet student needs. Strategic differentiation can also be seen in the Functional Daily Living Skills class. For example, during one lesson, each student is able to create his or her own grocery list and use different modes of calculation to determine the total cost. In this class, all materials are modified to meet the individual needs of the different abilities and learning styles. Co-taught courses often implement multiple forms of assessments to meet each student’s needs. According to the Endicott Survey, 65% of students agree that teachers are using a variety of teaching strategies in their courses.

Teachers at Brien McMahon High school purposefully organize student learning activities and groups to meet the needs of students and adjust instructional strategies. During a poetry unit, an English teacher assigns groups based on interpersonal proficiency and academic ability level. In another English class, strategically assigned groups peer edit and review classmates’ papers. The Functional Academics program consists of small
group inclusion classes. Groupings are based on ability level and IEP goals and objectives. According to the Endicott Survey, 90.7% of teachers adjust their instructional practices by organizing group learning activities, and 83.8% of students agree that this practice occurs.

Teachers at BMHS provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. The Endicott Survey shows that 74.9% of parents agree that teachers provide additional support to their son/daughter when needed. This is demonstrated in math where, students in Intensified Math receive an Agile Minds workbook that focuses on collaboration, equity, engagement, and personalization. This packet allows students to work at their own pace and allows the teacher to provide additional support to students as needed while others can work independently or in groups. This combination of methods allows teachers to measure the progress of the students and adjust instruction based on feedback. Additionally, from the Geometry A class, teachers provide both transformation lessons and bisector lessons, which include multiple strategies that are used within the regular classroom. Since 2009, some math teachers have volunteered to provide free tutoring in the summer. Co-taught teachers can frequently be seen during a class period meeting with their students in small groups to clarify student misconceptions, bridge learning gaps, and provide additional support. The health and PE departments administer a final project that gives the students choices to work in groups or independently as well as a choice on the type of project. Students can choose to make a movie, design an art project, or a write a research paper on the cost of supporting an infant over the span of a year.

Frequently, BMHS teachers individually and collaboratively improve their instructional practices by using student’s achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, examining student work, using current research, engaging in professional discourse, and utilizing feedback from a variety of sources including student, parents, other teachers, and occasionally supervisors. According to the Endicott Survey, 88.9% of teachers at BMHS improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. There is strong evidence showing teachers individually and collaboratively work to improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. In math, teachers collect CFA data and compare and contrast the data during PLC time.
They also discuss best practices that will improve instruction. The physical education department football unit uses formative and summative assessments that provide positive and corrective feedback to the student’s regarding their ability to throw and catch a football. This unit also uses a peer checklist as a form of assessment to provide immediate feedback on the skill cues involved in throwing and catching. Based on the checklist results, students will continue to work to improve their throwing and catching and work towards an entire game or have modified lessons to work on skills. The English department uses both formative and summative assessments as well. For example, in English, an important assessment occurs among peers during a short story unit. This unit allows the students to write their own short story and then edit three different students’ stories. This process allows all student’s work to be edited so improvements can be made. Moreover, the process allows the teacher to monitor and provide feedback if necessary. The Biology PLC plans a common midterm and final exam. After question analysis and a comparison of data, these teachers share the effective strategy that had resulted in better student understanding. Other examples of formative assessment that occur at BMHS are exit slips, whiteboard responses, index card questions (ICQs), and concept maps or graphic organizers. Each of these assessment tools assists teachers in improving their instructional practices for student success.

According to the Endicott Survey, 73.1% of teachers have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practices. There are 23 PLC’s that meet in their subject areas twice during a four day cycle during designated class periods to review curriculum, create common assessments, discuss and analyze student performance, and share best practices. Although time is scheduled after school for teachers who do not meet during the day due to scheduling conflicts, this is often allotted to other purposes that arise throughout the year. To provide teachers’ choice in using their PLC time, there is not a formal process that is utilized by the PLCs to examine student work or to maintain records; however, evidence suggests that some subject specific groups are making strides to improve their instructional practices. For example, over the past four years, the chemistry PLC has given a quarterly common assessment and the data from these assessments is used to compare student achievement from year to year. Biology, Algebra 1, and Physical Science teachers administer formative assessments that are focused on the essential questions of the key units. The data from these assessments is used...
to help the teachers make informed decisions about their instruction, student achievement, and best practices. Also, physical education teachers measure their students’ muscular strength at the beginning and end of the quarter to measure growth and drive further instruction. In addition, English teachers conduct writing conferences, meeting with students individually to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of essays and to offer constructive feedback. This allows the teachers to determine if areas require further instruction. BMHS teachers actively assess students’ work throughout their classes on a daily basis. They do this by examining students’ homework responses, quizzes, tests, and project. Questioning directed towards the class, small groups, or individual students is utilized. Furthermore, many BMHS teachers start their classes with a “Do Now” or an opening activity to drive their instruction for the day’s lesson and clarify misconceptions. Other teachers utilize exit slips to determine if their instruction was understood by the students. Data from these assessment instruments helps the teacher make informed decisions about whether they should reteach, move on, or switch directions. Throughout the school, academic teachers and students utilize school-wide rubrics to assess communication, personal development, and problem solving skills in academic settings while examining student work. In House, school-wide rubrics are utilized to assess student personal development and/or civic contributions. These rubrics allow teachers to alter or modify instruction if necessary to improve student success.

BMHS teachers improve their instructional practices in many ways. In the building communication, among individuals drives instructional practices. PLCs are the place in which lengthy discussions about instructional practices occur between subject specific teachers. Discussions are based on data and drive instruction in the classroom. Core subject PLCs report to the Building Data Team (BDT) the results of their data collection and how they are using the results to drive instruction. Teachers also regularly take advantage of informal meetings, such as cafeteria duty, to discuss instructional practices. Some teachers use surveys to gauge their students’ opinions on various aspects of a unit of study. Endicott Survey results show 43.5% of students believe that their teachers ask for their ideas/opinions to improve how they teach. During the 2014-2015 school year, a number of teachers, school and district administrators, guidance counselors, and Board of Education members visited teacher classrooms during roundtables as assessors/facilitators. The implementation of roundtables in the
The classroom has created a setting for discourse between teachers. The general success of this strategy has prompted a number of teachers to implement roundtables in their classroom, thus demonstrating that the practice has impacted their instructional practices. In addition, through the state program, TEAM, those teachers new to the profession routinely meet with their mentor to discuss best practices for the first two years of their careers. Observations offer the mentor the opportunity to reflect upon not only their mentee’s work but their work as well. These discussions drive the instructional practices of both mentors and mentees. In addition, the use of My Learning Plan and the evaluation process, which includes the creation of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), provides an opportunity for communication between administrators and teachers to impact instructional practices. Discussions occur throughout the year based on observations, the evaluation process, and feedback provided from the administrator. Moreover, Brien McMahon teachers across the school use current research to improve instructional strategies. One example of current research among professional staff is a series of texts available to staff to incorporate and improve instructional practices. Every new teacher to the school receives a copy of *Teach Like a Champion*, which discusses current and improved teaching strategies for the 21st century. Other books available to staff are *How We Learn*, *Teacher to Teacher*, *Get Personal*, and *Improving Adolescent Literacy*. Opportunities to receive these books have been provided to some subject specific teachers by their supervising housemaster at different times throughout the year. Current content specific research is utilized to improve instruction.

There is an acceptable amount of evidence showing teachers at Brien McMahon High School engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practices in a variety of ways. Common planning time, PLCs, are scheduled during specific periods by department. Evidence of professional discourse focused on instructional strategies is also present in professional development planned for teachers throughout the school year. The main focus of professional development over the past three school years have been based on student-centered learning. These workshops have colleagues comparing and contrasting different instructional strategies to improve the overall efficiency within the classroom. An example is having representatives from East Side Community High School in New York visit and demonstrate roundtable discussions used as final exams and then having teachers
go out and visit the school directly to report back to school staff and faculty. Expert teachers in student-centered learning have visited BMHS teachers to provide onsite support in implementation. The use of roundtables has been adopted by many teachers and can be seen in English, math, and science classes. Also, various teachers in the Social Studies and the English department have utilized a fishbowl discussion strategy where a group presents while others monitor the discussion. According to Endicott survey results, 77.8% of the staff at BMHS believe they improve their instructional practices by engaging in formal opportunities for professional discourse.

At Brien McMahon High School, teachers frequently reflect upon their instructional practices and maintain expertise in their content areas by attending courses and conferences, professional development, site visits, meetings, and through collaboration and evaluation. According to the data published in the Endicott Survey, 87% of teachers have a master’s degree. Nearly 65% of teachers attend graduate level courses beyond their required master’s degree to stay up-to-date in their content area. 5.6% of teachers have a doctorate/doctoral degree. According to the Endicott Survey, 63.8% of parents believed that teachers maintained expertise in their subject area while 79.6% of the students believed their teachers were knowledgeable about subjects they teach. 90.7% of teachers maintain expertise in their content area and content-specific instructional practices according to Endicott Survey results. In addition, twenty-three core class PLC meeting times have been incorporated into the master school schedule whenever possible. This allows teachers to have an opportunity to meet with their discipline specific groups to collaborate, design lessons and assessments, reflect on the data driven results, and analyze and modify work when necessary. Professional development has been provided to all teachers on 21st century learning practices, such as focusing on literacy in content areas with Jean Evans Davila and student-centered learning workshops by staff from The Center for Secondary School Redesign. Teachers from all departments including Mathematics, Science, English, Social Studies, and Special Education attended onsite visits to Eastside Community School in New York City. These visits have allowed teachers to actively engage in roundtable discussions as evaluators, providing more expertise in their content area while observing 21st century learning practices. Summer work has been offered to teachers who strive to further their knowledge of student-centered learning strategies and
lesson development. BMHS has also continued the enrichment and development of student centered learning throughout the 2014-2015 school year and during the summer of 2015. Over the past two years, the Social Studies department had worked with an expert, Chris Geraghty from Kearsarge High School in New Hampshire. The English department worked with Joanna Dolgin over the summer of 2014 and have continued their work throughout the school year. Math teachers worked with Diane Kruse from Francis W. Parker Charter School during the summer of 2014 and throughout the 2015 year to discuss and create student-centered learning lessons and strategies for success. Math and world language teachers and an administrator visited Parker Charter School to observe student-centered learning in action. The science teachers worked in their professional learning communities to develop lessons to reflect 21st century learning practices during the summers of 2014 and 2015. This work is ongoing and is expected to continue. The Special Education Department meets about one time every other month at the Central Office to keep up-to-date on laws and Individual Education Plan (IEP) policies, procedures, and instructional practices. In addition, Advanced Placement and early college experience (ECE) teachers have attended conferences and courses to qualify to teach their respective courses and to learn about changes in the curricula and assessments as they evolve. The principal holds monthly department chair meetings. Department chairs also meet monthly with their content specific colleagues. At some department meetings, new learning strategies and opportunities to maintain expertise are discussed. For example, teachers interested in furthering their science content area have had the opportunity to be trained in Project Lead the Way (PLTW) certification courses. Frequently, the Math department has read current event articles before department meetings and has been provided books to review for application and discussion such as *Styles and Strategies for Teaching High School Mathematics*. In addition, many teachers have attended national conferences as well as have taken supplementary courses to maintain expertise in their content area. For example, representatives from the Social Studies department attended the National Council of Social Studies and a member of the Science department attended the National Science Teacher Association. Also, a consumer and family science teacher attended a national conference to incorporate technology into the culinary classroom as well as utilize student-based instruction. Representatives from the World Language Department attended workshops at Central
Connecticut State University in March of 2014. Teachers from the School Climate Committee attended a 2-day school climate workshop led by Joanne Freiberg, Education Consultant for the state of Connecticut on School Climate, Bullying and Character Education. School representatives have also attended NEASC conferences and a Nellie Mae conference allowing the attendees to provide feedback to other teachers regarding instructional practices. Two teachers and the principal attended the 2015 NASSP National Conference not only to present our House Advisory Program, but also to learn about 21st century learning techniques.

In some areas, teachers at Brien McMahon High School demonstrate instructional practices that adhere to 21st century learning strategies and expectations by developing content specific lesson plans which incorporate inquiry, problem-solving, engagement, student-centered activities, technology, self and peer assessments using rubrics, and higher-order thinking opportunities. Teachers submit lesson plans to their subject administrator/evaluator. Dependent on the evaluator, comments are sent back to the teacher as they pertain to the lesson plans. By design, the Science department frequently lends itself to student engagement. The double lab period is more conducive for teachers to develop lessons that may be inquiry driven or student-centered requiring task completion. The Biology PLC completes at least one common student centered learning assignment per quarter. Examples include having students construct and present a restaurant menu while identifying the organic compounds, or researching and presenting on a specific type of cancer, and demonstrating the evolution of a Norway Rat in a given habitat. Roundtables and fishbowl presentations occur in the English and social studies classes. These type of assessments require students to use problem solving and critical thinking skills to successfully argue a topic. In some areas throughout the building, teachers assign a do-now activity to engage students the moment class begins to review content from the previous day or intrigue interest in the day’s lesson. During group projects and writing assignments, students in English classes utilize peer editing. Across all grades, students are usually provided the opportunity to assess themselves on a rubric. An example of this can be seen in world history classes when students assessed their writing on a research paper. This practice is common in English in fish bowl discussions. In math, teachers provide students the opportunity to teach each other concepts. All of these examples require students to use higher-order thinking skills.
The convenience and access to chrome book carts has allowed technology to be utilized in class in some areas, while computer labs may be used in other areas. The submission of assignments via Google Drive or Google Classroom is increasing around the building. Some teachers provide feedback to assignments electronically. The use of clickers as assessment tools, both formally and informally, is utilized. Students and teachers utilize many technology platforms to provide feedback, resources, reminders, and communicate with classmates. Some examples of these are TurnItIn.com, Remind, and Google Classroom.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Instructional practices across the board at Brien McMahon High School (BMHS) are continuously examined to guarantee consistency with the core values and 21st century learning expectations. Teachers are also committed to maintaining expertise in their content areas, while reflecting on instructional practices. Many of the core values and 21st century learning expectations are being met at BMHS and teachers continually employ instructional strategies that help students meet these standards. These practices include personalizing instruction, engaging students, emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking. For instance, roundtables are used in a variety of content areas to engage students, implement student centered instruction, and encourage self-assessment and reflection. In addition, teachers provide authentic tasks and integrate technology in the classroom. In many areas, computers and technology are utilized during learning. One specific example is the Agile Mind program used by Intensified Algebra teachers as an interactive, instructional practice.

Ample evidence suggests that BMHS teachers meet the needs of each student using a variety of instructional practices. Formative assessment, strategic differentiation, organized grouping, and alternative strategies are implemented to reach all learners. In Social Studies, some teachers use google drive to monitor student progress, while some teachers in math and science use clickers as a quick assessment to drive instruction. Many instructional practices are necessary in co-taught classes, especially organized grouping. Modified assignments meet the needs of all students. In the past, teachers were able to make adjustments to their instruction based off of the database LinkIt. Since the loss of this database, there is no formal mechanism for tracking student data.
At BMHS, limited cross-disciplinary collaboration takes place due to scheduling. However, throughout BMHS, PLC time has been scheduled into the school day for many content teachers to work on common formative assessments and to improve instruction by allowing discourse among colleagues. PLC collaboration time takes precedence over common planning time for co-teachers. Efforts are made to schedule co-teachers with common lunch or prep periods, allowing time for collaboration during the school day. While this is an improvement from years past when teachers had no common scheduled time during the school day, teachers feel a formal planning period would be beneficial.

Strong evidence shows teachers work individually and collaboratively to improve instructional practices by analyzing student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments include; exit slips, whiteboard responses, clickers, index card quizzes, and concept maps or graphic organizers. Throughout BMHS, PLC time has been scheduled into the school day for many content teachers to work on common formative assessments and to improve instruction by allowing discourse among colleagues; in most cases this is a duty period and in others this is a lunch period. There are 23 PLC groups within BMHS, and instructional practices are improved throughout the time within these groups. Scheduling all PLC groups common time during the school day would improve instructional strategies among their content area.

Teachers at BMHS maintain expertise in their content areas by attending courses, conferences, professional development, site visits, and meetings. Teachers demonstrate instructional practices that adhere to the 21st century learning strategies and expectations. Content specific lesson plans are checked by some administrators. No uniform lesson plan is required in the building. Across the school, teachers are increasing implementing student-centered learning instructional strategies. These types of lessons incorporate inquiry, problem-solving, and technology. The use of these assignments has increased student engagement. Technology is utilized in a variety of content areas.

Based on the CPSS Rating Guide for the Standard on Instruction, Brien McMahon High School judges its adherence to the Standard as ACCEPTABLE.

**Strengths and Needs**

**Strengths:**
Teachers continually examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning. Technology is utilized to enhance instruction. The House Advisory Program provides instruction on the learning expectations of the civic responsibility rubric and asks students to rate their progress. Students are encouraged to maintain active community involvement and participate in community service. The communication, personal responsibility and problem solving school-wide rubrics are used throughout all disciplines. PLC time allows teachers to collaborate to develop and improve instructional activities that give students opportunities to meet the learning expectations. Strategic differentiation of assessment and instruction maximizes student learning. Teachers assign instructional groups purposefully to promote effective collaboration and student learning.

Needs:
- Insufficient common planning time for all teachers in PLCs and co-teacher pairs
- Increase interdisciplinary experiences for all students
- Increase support and alternative teaching strategies for personalized learning within the classroom
- Maintain a consistent database for student academic progress
Instruction
Standard

A.J. Albano, Chair  P.E./Health Teacher  
Erin Angelucci, Co-Chair  Science Teacher  
Steven Annunziato  Social Studies Teacher  
Chela Belcher  World Lang. Dept. Chair  
Amanda Bolz  Special Education Teacher  
John Cross  Science Teacher  
Rosemarie Hamilton  World Language Teacher  
Rachel Josovitz  Social Worker  
Valerie McNamara  English Teacher  
Hector Mirabal  World Languages Teacher  
Derek Oliver  Special Education Teacher  
Janet Sell  Child Development Teacher  
Bobby Wasil  Social Studies Teacher  

[Signatures]
Assessment of and for Learning

In August of 2015, Brien McMahon High School created a Rubric Committee that is formalizing the rubric progress. The school began to formalize a process for assessing whole-school and individual rubrics in achieving the 21st century learning expectations. Students have been contributing, over the past two years, to the writing of school-wide rubrics. The teachers have written four school-wide rubrics that have been used by every teacher and every house. The frequency of usage of the rubrics varies by teacher and by department. These four rubrics include the following areas: communication, problem solving/critical thinking/innovation, personal development, and civic responsibility. All four of these rubrics have been posted on the school website and have been sent to teachers to use as needed. BMHS is continuing the process in identifying which rubrics lend themselves best to certain disciplines. The findings, thus far, are that some of the rubrics lend themselves better to certain classrooms, such as the problem solving rubric being used routinely in math and science classes. In addition, most teachers have incorporated the school-wide rubrics in their Student Learning Objectives or SLOs. The increasing use of the rubrics has continually become more prevalent at Brien McMahon.

BMHS is also in the process of actively revising and using school-wide rubrics with the intention of improving communication of whole-school and individual student progress to students, their families, and the community. The school has been working on making the rubrics more user-friendly for students and teachers alike. The challenges that exist are ensuring that all students are not only exposed to the rubrics but to use them as a means of accessing the BMHS core values. Another area of concern in the utilization of rubrics would be reporting the information in a valuable and timely manner to all stakeholders of students, teachers, and community. Some obstacles to this process may include getting all teachers to evaluate uniformly, thereby ensuring that there is continuity of rubric usage.

As the evaluation and revision of the school-wide rubrics is an ongoing process, BMHS continues striving to improve the usage of school-wide rubrics. BMHS teachers are currently using the rubrics. Teachers are working to make them more user-friendly for all stakeholders and expect them to be used more extensively as a result. Each teacher will continue with the goal of implementing school-wide rubrics into every class. In the
2016-2017 school year, freshmen will be exposed and evaluated on the four school-wide rubrics in Freshman Seminar class. Students will then continue to assess progress on rubrics in House Advisory by collecting work from their 10th and 11th grade academic classes, culminating in their 12th grade Capstone project.

The school’s professional staff rarely communicates individual student progress to students and families, and the professional staff does not communicate the school’s progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations to the school community. At this time, BMHS has implemented four school-wide rubrics which teachers across all curricula are implementing into their classrooms. These rubrics are used when teachers find their guidelines to be appropriate to the specific assignment. Teachers can decide either individually or as a department which rubric to use and which assignments to score given the standards of that specific rubric. Data has been collected and is used by many to measure teacher success in achieving their individual SLO's portion of the teacher evaluation plan. However, the data is not yet being communicated with students and parents.

The staff at Brien McMahon High School frequently collects, disaggregates and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Responses to inequities vary widely and are tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers utilize Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and planning time to determine which skills need to be assessed at the particular grade level. For example, the 10th grade English department PLC meets to create a variety of assessments, both formative and summative, to be administered at specific times of the year. Typically, these assessments consist of an initial benchmark and a final summative assessment. Based on the results of formative assessments, teachers analyze the data to determine if students have met the required goal(s). Instruction is adjusted accordingly by grade level and by student results. This is a pervasive process throughout all departments in the school.

All teachers use common planning time to develop instructional strategies based upon common assessment results. For example, some courses in math and science evaluate student progress based on the results of common unit and quarterly exams. Teachers also utilize common PLC planning time to collaborate in order to ensure that students are meeting the required goals established by grade level, as determined by district and state standards. Based on the analysis of evidence collected, the staff utilizes the data to determine inequities in student
achievement. The vast majority of disciplines meet in PLCs to identify individual academic needs of students at all levels. PLCs are assigned by subject area and grade level. In addition, the principal provides whole-school data comparing AP scores, CAPT science scores, and SAT scores at the beginning of the school year. The PLCs present data to the Building Data Team, which works to identify trends and shares best practices for addressing inequities.

Prior to each unit of study, teachers and house advisors frequently communicate to students the applicable 21st century learning expectations and the related unit specific learning goals to be assessed. At the beginning of the school year, all students are apprised of the 21st century learning expectations in place for all students through the school compact and school-wide rubrics during the initial meeting of the weekly House Advisory program. Sometimes, teachers model the use of 21st century skills through teacher websites and social media such as Twitter, Remind, and email communication. Students are frequently informed of both the 21st century learning expectations and content-specific goals at the start of each new unit across academic departments.

It is a common school-wide practice for students to be assessed with subject-specific rubrics during a unit. Two examples of this are the Social Studies department’s research paper rubric and the AP Statistics project rubric. Prior to units of study, students are sometimes provided the unit specific rubrics that will be used for summative and/or formative assessments such as the laboratory report rubric used in Biology classes. It is a school-wide practice at BMHS for teachers to use formative assessments and other assessments to provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure that students revise and improve their work. In 2014-2015, teachers began to use school-wide rubrics more frequently to assess individual student progress in civic responsibility, personal development, problem solving/critical thinking, and communication skills. While there is no formal process for using the school-wide rubrics at this time, the rubric committee is working with faculty input to develop and consistently implement a process to measure and encourage student progress towards the attainment of BMHS core values as well as provide students with applicable rubrics or content expectations prior to beginning a unit.

Prior to summative assessments, some teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics. BMHS
is in the process of having teachers provide a rubric to students prior to the student taking summative assessments. Each department utilizes summative assessments, and the teachers use them frequently so that they can assess student achievement and make adjustments in planning and instruction. Departments are working on making it common practice to present and review a rubric that is designed to go along with the assessment. However, the practice is not consistent across all disciplines. School-wide rubrics are also being implemented at BMHS. For example, students in U.S. history and world history are assigned a research project which is graded in part by the school-wide problem solving and a department specific rubric.

According to the Endicott Survey results, 75% of students stated, “I understand in advance what work I have to accomplish to meet my teachers’ expectations.” 69% also said, “I understand the rubrics my teachers use.” Moreover, 75% of the students said, “My teachers use rubrics to assess my work.”

Most departments use rubrics to assess learning. For example, the English department uses a rubric for their midterm exam, final essay, and Honors English final exam. The Mathematics department uses a rubric in AP statistics. The Music department uses a rubric with their final exam. The Science department uses a rubric in their physical science lab report.

At Brien McMahon High School, each department extensively employs a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. The type of assessments given are diverse. Assessments include but are not limited to warm-up questions, projects, portfolios, quizzes, tests, lab reports, common formative assessments (CFAs), rubrics which include student self-assessment rubrics, midterms, final exams, exit slips and roundtable discussions.

Examples of a variety of assessments exist throughout the school. The Social Studies department uses the Revolt Project as a formative assessment allowing students to apply what they learned at the beginning of the unit and create a project where they compare and contrast historical revolutions. In addition, the Art department uses self-assessment sheets based on the projects they complete. Teachers assess students using rubrics for time management, vocabulary, and artistic techniques. Students assess themselves and their peers. Moreover, the teacher communicates to each student and/or group how they performed on a piece of artwork. Also, the English
department utilizes study guides, projects, and exams based upon a novel. In one classroom studying the play *Fences*, students will anticipate what will come next with guided questions. For the same novel, they will also be assessed through quizzes and tests. Students also complete the Eulogy Assignment for the novel, demonstrating understanding of the character and the events occurring within the plot. The Family and Consumer Science department also assesses student learning using lab activities through an on-site student evaluation rubric, quizzes based on a film, and an authentic assessment such as following a recipe. The Music department assesses students through practice, performances, portfolios, and essays while the business department assesses students by having them create a website for which a rubric is given. Students are also given an end of the year assessment in which they demonstrate what they have learned about entrepreneurship by investigating a business idea. The Mathematics department assesses students using summative assessments, CFA’s, performance tasks, projects, and roundtable discussions. In addition, the Science department assesses students through projects, lab reports, CFAs and roundtable discussions. The Special Education department uses tests, quizzes and authentic tasks. The World Language department uses projects, midterms, final exams, tests, quizzes, and oral exams to assess student proficiency in the target language.

The vast majority of Brien McMahon High School faculty members collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Regularly scheduled meetings of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), departments, and common planning time among co-taught teachers provide most faculty with many opportunities to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments. PLCs meet formally, at least once a week for forty-five minutes. Each department meets monthly for forty-five minutes. In addition, co-taught teachers, on their own time or during prep or lunch, meet at least once a week for 45 minutes. During these meetings, teachers typically utilize time to discuss and plan future assessments, consider improving existing assessments, and make revisions as necessary based on past student performance or current curricular needs. There are formative and summative assessments collected from each department that were created and revised collaboratively during PLC meetings. For example, the Biology Department has met to revise labs and fine-tune student-centered learning activities. Based on student
performance and teacher feedback, the English department revisited its benchmark assessments at the end of the 2014-2015 school year. Brien McMahon’s English department designed a benchmark to measure student growth more accurately. As a result, the district has adopted our current grade level assessments.

The faculty collaborates frequently, both formally and informally, to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments. These assessments are created in grade specific PLCs. For example, for the PLC of English 10th grade, the formative assessments test ten different skills. Each question identifies the skill being tested. The results indicate what skills each individual student is proficient in or still developing. These results allow the 10th grade teachers to target which skills need more instructional time within the classroom. These results are also part of the 10th grade student learning goals for the year. Teachers report results three times a year to administrators. The English 10th grade formative assessments have been so successful that other grade levels will be using a similar format. While teachers use results to inform instruction, curricular changes are made at the district level. According to the Endicott Survey results, 85.2% of BMHS staff agreed that they formally meet to discuss and improve both formative and summative assessment strategies.

Teachers in most learning areas at BMHS frequently and regularly provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students have the opportunity to revise and improve their work. Many teachers at BMHS provide students with the opportunity to revise assignments prior to being submitted and graded. Teachers provide both written and verbal feedback to students on assignments to encourage students to revise and improve their work before turning in for a final grade. Feedback is provided on written assignments or digitally, using Google Drive. Many teachers use rubrics to grade final assignments and/or projects. Students are encouraged to revise and edit their responses to show improvements and understanding, which model appropriate grade-level expectations. Typically, teachers at BMHS provide regular feedback to students to improve their work. Teachers input grades into PowerSchool in a timely manner which provides students and parents with on-going, up-to-date access to grades.

Teachers at Brien McMahon High School regularly use formative assessments, including school-wide rubrics for the purpose of revising and improving instructional practices and student learning. Teachers use a range of
strategies and techniques on a daily basis to check for student understanding. These assessments include feedback from classroom discussions, daily quizzes, written questions, short writing assignments, lab reports, and simulation labs. Teachers frequently use do-now assignments, exit slips, feedback from technology such as clickers and Mobis. Web-based assessment sites such as Digital Dialects, Edmodo, Quizlet, Aplia, Apex, SAM and No Red Ink are used by teachers to provide students with data for self-assessment. Teachers utilize rubrics to evaluate long-term assignments. They collaborate regularly in formal ways through PLCs to create, analyze, and revise formative assessments and instruction, however curriculum revision is coordinated at the district level.

Brien McMahon teachers and administrators frequently, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purposes of improving instructional practices including student work, common course and grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations, and standardized assessments. Typically at BMHS, teachers individually and/or collaboratively examine student work with the intent of improving curriculum and classroom instruction. All departments develop and implement common assessments and common course work. BMHS faculty diligently works to improve instruction and assessment to meet and achieve the school’s 21st century learning expectations. This work is often done through collaboration time as a department and/or cohort PLCs in core subjects. During this PLC time, teachers analyze results from common assessments. Furthermore, they spend allotted time on assessment construction in order to be consistent in obtaining the objectives of the curriculum. There is also a school data team which is made up of department leaders and administrators that tend to look at key standardized test measures such as CAPT, AP, PSAT/SAT, ECE PLTW, and common core state exams at BMHS with the intent of improving student outcomes. Teachers also examine the results of these standardized assessments with the intent to improve instructional practice. Currently, the CAPT is only administered to 10th grade students in science. In past years, students were also tested in reading, writing, and math, and the data was collected and reviewed with the intent of revising curriculum and instruction. For the first time in October 2015, BMHS was made an SAT School Day District. The 9th graders took the PSAT 8/9. The PSAT was administered to 10th and 11th graders and the SAT was given to all 12th graders. Science teachers at BMHS typically revise instruction
based on the student performance on science CAPT. As PSAT/SAT scores become available, they will be used to guide instruction across the disciplines. The process of curriculum revision is coordinated through central office. Teachers and administrators typically do not have access to data from sending schools, receiving schools, and postsecondary institutions, or survey data from current students and alumni.

Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning. All teachers at BMHS are required to use the PowerSchool grading and attendance system. This allows students, parents, administrators, and counselors to access current information on student progress. This allows all stakeholders to be responsible for student performance by providing students with the opportunity to be more responsible in seeking out missing work and being an active part of their progress in the class. PowerSchool also provides parents with the opportunity to be more engaged in their children’s education through the constant updating of their child’s progress. These are crucial elements in helping students become self-motivated, life-long learners, which is one aspect of our school Core Value statements.

All teachers in all courses are required to follow the same grade calculation of the student’s final grade in the course. There are many variations of quarter grades in terms of the weight of tests, quizzes, homework, classwork, projects, and presentations based on the course, subject and tracking level of the course. Common formative and summative assessments, and common grading procedures are used within departments and subject areas, but grading may vary between teachers. In a new initiative, all teachers are required to use 1 of 4 schoolwide rubrics in their classroom to assess BMHS core values.

BMHS is in the process of working towards a system of reporting the results of student progress on school-wide rubrics. During the 2014-15 school year, all teachers were required to use one of the school-wide rubrics and submit the results to their department chair. After reviewing the results, the decision was made to form a committee in September 2015 for the purpose of editing the existing rubrics to better align with the school core values. During the 2015-16 school year, a select group of teachers will pilot the updated rubrics. According to the Endicott Survey results, 73.2% of parents are in agreement that grading practices are regularly reviewed and revised while 56.5% of the staff are in agreement as well.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brien McMahon High School has developed a formal process to assess student progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations for all students through four school-wide rubrics that address communication, problem solving, personal development, and civic responsibility. The school’s professional staff is in the process of developing ways to communicate student progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations to students and their families. The professional staff at BMHS generally collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Few teachers at BMHS communicate to students the school’s applicable 21st century learning expectations; however, teachers do generally communicate unit-specific learning goals to be assessed, including corresponding rubrics. Teachers extensively employ a range of assessment strategies including traditional test and quizzes, authentic projects and tasks, portfolios, and roundtables. Teachers collaborate regularly to create assessments both formative and summative. Teachers collaborate to disaggregate assessment results, modify instruction with the intent of improving student learning, and change unit plans to improve pedagogy. Administrators are not typically involved in these meetings and since curriculum is coordinated at the district level, these meetings generally do not result in a timely change in curriculum. Historically, department leaders and administrators have disaggregated standardized test results such as the CAPT, SAT, PSAT, ECE, and AP results either individually or in the school data team to compare student performance at BMHS with DERG, state, and national averages. In many departments, teachers are then given their student results and meet in their Professional Learning Communities to examine the data and make appropriate changes in instruction, pedagogy, and unit plans to better prepare students in the future. For most teachers at BMHS, it is common practice to provide appropriate feedback in a timely manner so that students can learn from their mistakes and, in many cases, can correct and re-submit assignments. Grading and reporting practices at BMHS are reviewed regularly by the administration and appropriate committees to align with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning.

Based on the CPSS Rating Guide for the Standard on Assessment of and for Learning, Brien McMahon High School judges its adherence to the Standard as LIMITED.
Summary of Strengths and Needs

Strengths:
- Rubrics developed to assess 21st Century Learning Expectations
- PLC using data to assess student learning/achievement and to address inequities in student performance
- In HOUSE and some classes, students are exposed to the four rubrics
- Communication of rubrics/expectations for summative assessments
- Differentiated assessments
- PLCs to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments
- Teachers use feedback on assessments to allow students to edit/revise prior to submitting final assignments
- Use of technology to provide personalized corrective feedback to students
- Teachers regularly use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning
- Teachers regularly use a range of evidence of student work with the intent of revising curriculum and improving classroom instruction
- School data team looks at relevant metrics to determine school progress

Needs:
- Lack of a unified system for analyzing and reporting progress on school-wide rubrics
- Communication and knowledge of 21st CLEs by all stakeholders
- No student data available from sending/post-secondary schools
- Central Office and Building Level Administrator involvement in looking at student work to revise curriculum and instruction
# Assessment of and for Learning

## Standard

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Assessment for and of Learning
School Culture & Leadership

The Brien McMahon High School community has consciously and continuously built a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all students. The BMHS community encourages all members to work responsibly and safely in the building at all times and creates an atmosphere where learning is the priority. BMHS has many active programs in place that serve to improve the school climate. Athletic, artistic, academic, and service-oriented extracurricular programs are available. Evidence can be found in the BMHS Sport and Club Program Spreadsheet which provides faculty, students, and parents contact information for club advisors as well as a number of students currently involved in these activities. School Climate Day, led by the School Climate Committee, is a school-wide event that provides students with activities that move toward building a positive school culture. Students participate in group activities that fall under the categories of Sports, the Arts, Games, Relaxation, or Curiosity. The expectation is that as the positive relationships continue to grow between students/students and staff/students, there will be open and responsible communication between all people in the building. The Peer Mediation group has similar objectives in mind and is used to resolve conflicts between students. Individuals involved in Peer Mediation have been trained in communication and conflict resolution skills. These mediators are used as a resource for settling disputes before a conflict escalates to a disciplinary referral. Students are encouraged to complete the Peer Mediation Request Form if this resource is needed.

BMHS fosters student responsibility for learning in a variety of ways. Teachers actively encourage students to contact them when class time is missed and are routinely available before school, during prep periods, and after school. All grading and attendance is managed through PowerSchool, and login information is provided for students and parents to track progress and attendance. Report Cards are reviewed during House activities which allow students to create plans for success. The School Climate Survey, administered through House during the 2014-2015 school year, indicates that 91% of students reviewed their goals and report cards during House Advisory Program. This provided students another opportunity to take ownership of their learning. The survey
results also demonstrate that 95% of the students participating in House activities have a better understanding of graduation requirements, especially after completing the Transcript Review Activity with their House Advisor.

BMHS prepares and distributes faculty and student handbooks. The High School Student and Family Handbook is printed and is also available online through the Brien McMahon High School website in both English and Spanish. Discipline and attendance policies are thoroughly outlined in these documents. Students are required to sign and return the Code of Conduct Contract stating that they have received and reviewed the handbook policies with an adult. Computer Lab Procedures and Behavioral Expectations are also distributed to students. Students are informed of the consequences for offenses in the computer lab and are encouraged to adhere to the district Technology Use Plan. BMHS expectations are clearly defined and this allows for the school community to improve student engagement in learning.

_Brien McMahon High School does, to some extent, foster heterogeneity in elective courses and is moving toward non-levelled required courses, such as Freshman Seminar class in 2016-2017._ There is an option for nonleveled classes in civics, world history, and physical science classes and most elective classes. Brien McMahon High School currently requires a minimum of twenty credits to graduate. The Brien McMahon Program of Studies breaks down the credit amounts students need to accumulate. All students are required to earn credits as follows: English (4 credits), Social Studies (3 credits), Mathematics (3 credits), Science (3 credits), Arts (1 credit), Physical Education (1 credit), Health Education (0.5 credit), Computer Literacy (0.5 credits), and Electives (4 credits).

_Brien McMahon High School has a variety of opportunities and levels for students who achieve at differing rates._ The school offers special education, co-taught, grade-level, Honors, Early College Experience (ECE) and Advanced Placement courses that are open to the students with minimal prerequisites of enrollment. Health and physical education, chorus, band, and all electives in areas such as logic, computer science, psychology, forensics, drama and creative writing are heterogeneous courses since they do not require a perquisite and are non-leveled. At the 9th grade level, physical science and world history are offered as a nonleveled course. Special education and co-taught courses are available and are designed for students with IEPs.
to receive content in an inclusive environment. Students interested in more comprehensive or extensive courses can matriculate into Honors and Advanced Placement classes. These classes are open to students who have completed the previous course, but there are no grade requirements. As an example, students are obligated to complete Biology I before entering AP Biology. The vast majority of students at Brien McMahon are able to enroll in numerous and comprehensive courses designed to incorporate the needs of all students.

Brien McMahon High School has a formal ongoing program through which students have an adult in the building who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations. The House Advisory Program is an ongoing initiative that was developed to foster healthy and supportive relationships between all students and adults in the building. The goal of the House Advisory Program is to prepare students for life’s transitions including career development and post-secondary opportunities through meaningful connections. Students are assigned to a House advisor during their 9th grade year. Each House consists of approximately 10-15 students. Students remain in the same House Advisory with the same advisor until the end of their 12th grade year. House meets once a week at a set time for 20 minutes. Each grade follows detailed lesson plans developed by the School Climate Committee to reflect the school’s 21st century learning expectations. An example of this is the 9th grade “Goal Worksheet” lesson. This lesson was completed by all students at the start of the first quarter. Students wrote goals relating to school and continuously reflected on them throughout the year. In addition to focusing on academics, the House Advisory curriculum also includes lessons that focus on improving peer relationships and partnerships with the community. Examples of these include a lesson on building positive relationships on School Climate Day and a lesson that focuses on collecting canned goods for the food drive. At the end of every school year, a School Climate Survey is administered, which includes questions about House Advisory. In the survey, students and teachers provide feedback about the purpose of House, the lessons provided, and their relationships with their House peers and advisor.

In addition to House Advisory, BMHS provides students with opportunities to join sporting teams and
clubs in which the majority is facilitated by a faculty member. There is a House activity dedicated to distributing the information about these clubs and teams. On that day, a list of sports and clubs is provided to all students and the House advisor explains the list, as well as who to contact if interested in joining those organizations. Through joining these clubs and sports, students are exposed and practice communication skills, civic responsibility, and personal development skills, thereby meeting our learning expectations.

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff of Brien McMahon High School often engage in professional discourse for reflection. In addition, there is inquiry and analysis of teaching and learning. The professional staff frequently uses resources outside of the school to maintain current with best practices. The principal and professional staff dedicate formal time to implement professional development. The principal and professional staff consciously applies skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessments.

Through professional development, the principal and professional staff often engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning. In school-wide meetings and department meetings, teachers and administration have read and discussed published articles. The faculty read and discussed excerpts from “Engaging all Students for College, Career, and Civic success” as well as “Roles and Responsibilities for All levels of Student-Centered Education Ecosystem.” During these discussions, teachers and administrators provided insight as to how the information can be applied in BMHS and in individual classrooms. The BMHS professional staff also uses formal time in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to discuss student performance data as well as teaching strategies and practices. Articles read by PLCs include “Student-Owned Homework” and “The Bridge Between Today’s Lesson and Tomorrow’s.” Books read by PLCs and new teachers include Teach like a Champion and On Common Ground. In the BMHS book club, they have recently read and discussed How We Learn.

The professional staff frequently uses resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best
practices. All teachers had the opportunity to attend Round Table discussions at Eastside Community School in New York City. Teachers who observed these alternate forms of assessment have returned to BMHS to share their experiences and implement such practices in their own classrooms.

The principal and professional staff extensively dedicates formal time to implement professional development. In addition to having dedicated professional development days built into the school calendar, the district has invested in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training. Forty teachers from across the district and in various subject areas attend these training sessions to discuss and design lessons and instructional strategies to help all learners.

The principal and professional staff apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained to improve instruction and assessments. In addition to observing and interacting with professionals from other school and districts, the BMHS professional staff has opportunities to observe teaching in the building. Teachers observed colleagues in their departments and discussed content strategies. Teachers also observed colleagues in other content areas and discussed instructional strategies.

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes focused on improved student learning. Brien McMahon High School is led by administrators who support their teachers through offering reflective and constructive feedback after formal and informal observations. Teachers are made aware of expectations through the My Learning Plan Evaluation Rubric. Consequently, they can plan lessons that meet these standards and help students to achieve 21st century learning goals. School leaders encourage teachers to improve their practices by offering professional development opportunities.

As part of teachers’ evaluation process, teachers are mandated to complete writing that shows reflection on their teaching. Administrators use the Danielson Model when evaluating teachers. Administrators serve as the supervisors to multiple departments and meet with these teachers during a beginning-of-the-year, mid-year, and end-of-the-year conference. The evaluation rubric addresses the important domains for effective approaches for improving teacher practice. School leaders have been trained in using this rubric and program. BMHS administrators participated in online training and were expected to pass an exam. Retraining was mandatory for
returning administrators and all new administrators are required to complete the training process. The administrator uses the Student Learning Objective (SLO) goals during mid-year and end-year meetings to track teacher progress. It is also used to allow administrators to focus on established goals during class observations. School leaders use the data collected during the PLC meetings and individual teacher meetings to hold teachers accountable for student performance.

The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration, among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. The design of both teacher and student schedules, as well as afterschool and summer programs, formally and deliberately demonstrate that Brien McMahon’s organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration and addresses the learning needs of all students across the school. The master schedule is reviewed by a committee made up of ten department chairs, the guidance department chair, the principal, and housemasters. It is revised every fall to be in alignment with state and district graduation requirements. As per BMHS values in which all faculty strive to challenge students to become more knowledgeable, the school is now offering more honors (45 courses consisting of 104 class sections) and more AP courses (a total of 23 courses consisting of 42 class sections) than ever before. In the 2016-17 school year, the school will switch to block scheduling which will allow for increased collaboration and offer more classes. By design, the flexibility in the master schedule allows all students to get the extra time needed through the House Advisory Program, and special events such as Anti-Bullying Day (now known as School Climate Day) as well as the first and second day of school orientation activities. Furthermore, most students identified with learning disabilities have been scheduled for double or extra periods, math and English enhancement classes, Academic Assistance, and/or ESL classes. All teachers are required to be available for fifteen minutes of extrahelp both before and after school, however most teachers make themselves available more than the required time.

Seventy-four academic teachers are scheduled for PLC meeting periods to assure regular ongoing support to differentiate instruction for individual students. PLCs are comprised of professionals teaching the same gradelevel content. The PLCs meet once or twice during the four-day cycle. PLC meeting times are utilized by teachers to collaborate on instructional practices, review data on formative and summative assessments, and
review progress towards SLO goals in order to improve student learning and address the needs of all students. Weekly House Advisory meetings enhance student personalization by breaking the larger school into personalized units where students can rely on a trusted staff member for guidance and support.

Beyond the school day and school year, programs such as APEX Learning (credit recovery and enhancement program), RANSACK (Relevant Academic Needed Support Aimed at College-Bound Kids), and the community-partnership YDP (Youth Development Program) are offered after school. Summer school is available for credit recovery. In addition, the Freshman Success Summer Academy, a community-based partnership, supports incoming freshmen making transition from middle school to high school.

Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of the vast majority of individual students. As defined by the NPS Contract, class sizes are capped at twenty-eight, however, there may be fewer students per class. For instance, in the Special Education department, functional classes have an average range between 7-10 students per class to meet the needs of the students. Another exception to this case is when a larger class size is necessary to maintain the integrity of the academic experience, for example in music classes where a large ensemble is desired. Deliberately, some classes are capped at lower numbers; this is geared to specialty subject areas where a smaller class is necessary for safety such as in Fine Arts and Culinary Arts which are currently capped at 24. This is due to an emphasis on safety when working with tools such as chef’s knives, Xacto blades, and lino cutting tools. This is also done for practicality when there are space limitations within a classroom. Commitment to meeting the learning needs of students is demonstrated in all classes. Co-taught classes are capped at twenty-eight students and are taught by a pair of certified special and regular education teachers, resulting in a 1:14 teacher-student ratio, again, lower than the contract-mandated twenty-eight.

By contract, full-time teachers teach a maximum of five classes per school day and have a maximum student load of 130 students. Physical Education and Health teachers are one of the exceptions to the rule with 10 classes per semester and a maximum of 280 students. These classes do not meet every day, which makes it possible to have a larger number of students. An examination of class sizes from the 2013-2014 school year shows the school’s commitment to maintaining the desired class sizes set forth in the contract.
The principal, Suzanne Brown Koroshetz, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. A continuous and conscious effort is made by the principal through various ways to successfully lead and instruct the Brien McMahon. Through a myriad of methods, the principal actively engages and instructs faculty, staff, and community. Brien McMahon High School’s Core Values and Beliefs clearly guide instructional goals. The principal takes advantage of school-wide faculty meetings to provide instructional leadership. Instructional meetings also allow the principal to share and dispense pertinent information to the staff as the leader via a specifically designed agenda. For example, the November professional development day is focused on developing authentic assessments geared toward student-centered strategies. As a component of the core values, Housemasters look for student-driven activities in the weekly lesson plans. In addition, school-wide rubrics have been implemented to align student learning with the core values of BMHS. Attendance at PLC meetings, provides time for the principal to instruct on a subject grade level. In addition, there are weekly Housemaster meetings to allow for an additional occasion for the principal to provide instructional leadership to other building leaders. Her attendance at School Excellence Committee meetings also provides time for instructional leadership. Through the use of the BMHS Home Web Page, the principal instructs and informs the school community. The principal utilizes bilingual teachers, counselors, and support staff to communicate with all families. The principal, along with housemasters, provides an extensive amount of leadership that is rooted in BMHS’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Availing herself of numerous alternatives: faculty and instructional meetings, PLC (Professional Learning Community), NEASC, housemaster and parent meetings, the principal provides an extensive amount of instructional leadership.

As a core value, BMHS shows exemplary practice in the concept of parents as partners in the education of the children along with the concept of students as active participants in their education. These concepts require that teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Parents, students, and educators interact and collaborate in exemplary ways, as partners in the education of students at Brien McMahon High School. On a macro level, the school’s teachers and
administrators are extensively involved in the decision making process. The leadership structure is composed of four housemasters and the school principal. There are several committees that teachers and administrators participate in to make decisions such as the Building Data Team, the Safety Committee, School Governance Council, The Senate, Positive Behavioral Support Team, School Climate Committee, School Excellence Committee, and Rubric Committee. In these committees, teachers and administrators plan and implement school programs and monitor the overall success of the school. Through planning and placement team meetings, House Advisory Program, course selection, and collaborative efforts to guide students through high school and formulate a plan for postsecondary success, teachers and administrators are included as integral point-people on a parent, student, and educator team.

Students at Brien McMahon High School are involved in the decision making process at the school. The Senate is a student group which has been formed over the past year in order to give students a voice in the day-to-day happenings at the school. School Climate surveys are distributed to all students through the House Advisory Program to acquire specific input on advisory activities and school climate. Questions on the climate survey ask for input on parent, student, teacher, and administrative involvement to inform the principal of areas that should be addressed in the school. Students were added to School Climate Committee during the 2014-2015 school year to plan and implement school-wide events and create House activities. Students annually vote for class officers for the Student Advisory Council (SAC) to represent the student voice in extracurricular activities.

Parents are active members of the decision making process at BMHS. The School Governance Council requires a minimum of seven parent members who meet with the principal, five teachers, two students, and two community members to follow-through on initiatives and tasks that are identified as priorities to the student success. An example would be the development of the senior internship program. In addition, this group was instrumental in developing the school compact, which defines roles of each each stake holder of each student’s success. Annually, the School Governance Council identifies and selects a school improvement project. Parents’ input is a crucial part of the decision making process at Brien McMahon High School.

On an individual level, parents are also involved in decision making through the course selection process,
where they approve student course selection. Parents of 11th and 12th grade students are invited to guidance counselor meetings to prepare for post-secondary life. Through phone calls, emails, meetings, and required signatures, parents are also involved in student decisions: schedule changes, IEP recommendations, 504 plans, and every other aspect relating to decision-making for a student.

Aside from the channels of phone and email contact with all staff members which are made public through the BMHS website and the PowerSchool data program, there are other avenues through which parent contact is encouraged and welcomed by the principal. McMahon also has parent groups. The Parents Club is for the general population. Parents whose first language is Spanish may choose to participate in the Hispanic Parents group. Both of these forums provide ample opportunity for parents to submit their input and thoughts about the day-to-day operations at Brien McMahon High School. In addition, on an annual basis, parents are asked to complete an electronic district wide survey, through the Panorama website, in order to provide a gauge on their experiences. However, the questions in the survey were not specific to high schools, making the results ineffective.

The Senators Success Fund is a group of parents and community members whose primary focus is to raise money to fund projects at Brien McMahon High School that will enhance and support the mission of the administration and faculty in providing the highest level of learning experience for all students. This allows for strengthening the school's tie to the community.

There is a multitude of channels for teachers, students, and parents to collaborate continuously and deliberately on decision making to promote responsibility and ownership. Across the school, from meetings, to documentation, to protocol and procedures, all parties are incorporated in order to include a variety of perspectives so that initiatives and 21st century learning expectations can be addressed.

Teachers at Brien McMahon High School often initiate leadership that improves the school and increases student engagement. Many programs in the building give teachers the opportunity to exercise and initiate leadership. Teachers work with their co-workers in PLCs to improve the school and help increase student learning. In some of these groups, teachers create common formative assessments and common rubrics in order
to increase students’ engagement in the classroom. Forty teachers at BMHS also attend professional development workshops such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training. SIOP training exposes educators to a program that makes curriculum more accessible for English Language Learners. This allows teachers to create lessons that engage students of all backgrounds. Some teachers are also members of the School Climate Committee, which is responsible for coordinating, developing, creating, and implementing the House Advisory Program and the Summer Academy. Additionally, teachers have created some new positive initiatives such as Colleague Kudos and Peer Mediation. Other measures that allow teachers the opportunity to take on roles of leadership include the science department’s Medical Academy and Project Lead the Way. These programs are designated to provide students with early hands-on experience to prepare for potential careers in the health sciences and engineering fields. Many teachers in the building have worked on Curriculum Committees for their departments, the implementation of an International Baccalaureate Program, as well as a Special Olympics Unified Sports team. Administrators create these groups, and develop teacher leaders by guiding teachers to implement these programs. By taking initiative and leadership roles, teachers help to improve the school and ultimately enhance student engagement.

The school board, superintendent, and principal are somewhat collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations because of the transition of multiple superintendents and central office administrators. The previous superintendent, when this report was mostly written, involved both the board and the administration in the discussions that were reflective and constructive. Board meetings have shown all stakeholder employees constructively and collaboratively discussed school budget, CAPT Test high achievers, progress in the schools, and present levels of performance throughout the district. There has been a lot of changes with the district’s administrative team. The superintendent of the Norwalk Public Schools resigned on January 31, 2015 for personal reasons. Interim superintendent James Connelly began his term on February 2, 2015 and was replaced by the current superintendent, Dr. Steven Adamowski on July 15, 2015. The assistant superintendent, Anthony Dadonna, also retired in the summer of 2015.
The current superintendent has communicated with BMHS during superintendent’s annual convocation. Prior to the start of the school year, the superintendent addressed the entire Norwalk Public Schools staff in an assembly to share his initiatives for the school year. The superintendent also meets with the principals in district principal meetings. Some of his assistant superintendents, called chiefs, have visited the BMHS in the 2015-2016 school year and are representatives on district committees including but not limited to, scheduling, course selection, and graduation requirements. Board of Education meetings are recorded and placed on YouTube account. The minutes and agendas from the meetings are also posted on the Norwalk Public Schools website. In addition, school administrators shared their involvement in collaborative committees. These committees were set up in the district under the direction of the superintendent to work with one another on finding creative and innovative solutions to improve student performance and school culture. They dealt with changing and challenging expectations regarding instruction, schedules, attendance, and graduation requirements. Due to Brien McMahon participation in committees whose members span the district in collaboration with the superintendent and board members, the school is continuously adapting to fit the needs of the 21st century student population. It is the hope that the new superintendent will be able to work collaboratively with the board and principals of the schools to ensure that our students and faculty continue to be afforded the opportunity to reach maximum potential.

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making opportunities to lead the school. The principal, Suzanne Brown Koroshetz, has demonstrated that she and the BMHS community have a great deal of autonomy in leading the school forward. For example, she implemented PLC teams a year before the request came from Central Office.

Her vision for the school has been “raise the bar, close the gap.” The school has developed a series of initiatives that have worked to address these two goals. In speaking with Koroshetz, she made it clear that she is able to start and implement a number of initiatives without asking for permission from the Superintendent or the Board. She, in turn, empowers the faculty and administration in many ways where, as she says, “The teachers do the work.” Examples of this include the creation of the House Advisory program and the Summer Academy by a
group of 10-12 teachers and counselors, the implementation of the Hispanic Parents’ Group to support the needs of our Hispanic community.

Other new programs are done under the initiative of Central Office which is then passed on to the principal. For example, BMHS created a Building Data team that meets with PLC teams to discuss their evidence of student success. Moreover, the School Governance Council brings together faculty, administration, the principal, students, and parents.

Various programs have been initiated at BMHS under the direction of Koroshetz and school committees. It is apparent that Koroshetz and BMHS were given significant freedom to foster these programs to meet the unique needs of the students and community, with the hopes that this practice continues with the new district leadership.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BMHS community has consciously and continuously demonstrated its dedication to our core value beliefs and 21st century learning expectations for all students in many aspects of our school culture. The design of most school initiatives provides opportunities for collaborative, reflective, and constructive practices that are accessible to the administration, teachers, counseling services, and school community including students and parents. There is a shared leadership at BMHS amongst all stakeholders involved. The school initiatives provide opportunity and promote a culture that fosters shared leadership in efforts to improve the teaching and learning in a positive, safe and supportive community. A large percentage of students are enrolled in heterogeneously structured core classes of either Physical Science or Civics. Maximum class size guidelines are dictated by the Board of Education and is strictly adhered to in order to allow for enough time for rigorous direct instruction as well as differentiation when needed. Most Department chairpersons, administrative staff, teachers and pupil support services participate in Professional Learning Communities that meet at minimum once a week to review lessons, evaluate data, and make appropriate modifications to curriculum that will meet the needs of our students. Once a year all content specific PLCs present to all the department chairpersons and administrative staff assigned
to individual departments. PLCs present the meeting agendas, data, standards being taught, and adjustments made to their teaching strategies as a PLC.

Based on the CPSS Rating Guide for the Standard on School Culture & Leadership, Brien McMahon High School judges its adherence to the Standard as ACCEPTABLE.

Summary of Strengths and Needs

Strengths

- BMHS has created and revised an advisory program that has four years of specific grade level lessons. “House” students create and review their SMART Goals, interim reports, transcripts, and report cards with their House advisor to help build a strong student-adult connection and smooth plan for assimilation into the BMHS community.
- There is a strong collegial atmosphere in PLC’s that allows for weekly discourse on content, analysis of data collection, student learning, progress towards SLO goals and reflection on curriculum by seventy-four academic teachers.
- Provide a large selection of AP, Early College Experience, PLTW (Engineering courses) and honor level classes in almost every content area with growing enrollment.
- Teachers are actively involved in the leadership of the school. Teachers create a host of new programs and implement core programs like Advisory, YDP, and the Summer Academy.
- The design of both teacher and students schedules, after-school and summer programs, formally and deliberately demonstrate that the BMHS organization of time supports professional collaboration and addresses the learning needs of all students across the school.
- BMHS has a strong working partnership with our Spanish speaking community focusing on the needs of our ESL students. This includes a large number of teachers being SIOP trained and an active Hispanic Parents group, and monthly Hispanic parent workshops.
- The School and the principal have had autonomy in creating and implementing initiatives and committees that have improved student learning at BMHS.
- There are several diverse groups of clubs, sports and service oriented programs that provide ample opportunities for all students and staff to become involved.
- “School Climate Day” brings staff and students together to build moral and closer connections between different staff and students.
- Student responsibility is reinforced with the offering of PowerSchool that provides real time access to grades and attendance.
- School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes focusing on improved student learning, through the My Learning Plan database for teacher evaluation. (The Danielson Model)
- A limit to class caps and composition of class ratios within special education, regular education classes, core classes and electives, allows teachers to meet the learning needs of all students by teacher contract.
- Through faculty professional development, professional learning communities, housemaster and parent meetings, the principal provides an extensive amount of instructional leadership that is rooted in the school’s core values beliefs and learning expectations.
- School-wide rubrics based on the core values of BMHS have been implemented to strengthen student learning.

Needs

- Collaborative time between departments to plan and implement interdisciplinary opportunities.
- Frequent changes in the superintendent of Norwalk Public School have resulted in district wide direction and coordination being interrupted.
An updated student/parent Spanish manual should be offered electronically and hardcopy.
## School Culture and Leadership

### Standard

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<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Sue Quatrelle</td>
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<td>Co-Chair Mathematics Teacher</td>
<td>Marshal Root</td>
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<td>Melissa Bruen</td>
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<td>Joseph Corcoran</td>
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<td>Michel Emmanuel</td>
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<td>Daniela Kimmich</td>
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<td>Megan Queiroga</td>
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<td>Kali Stamnos</td>
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<td>P.E./Health Teacher</td>
<td>Tory Sullivan</td>
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<td>English Teacher</td>
<td>Christine Vanderwerff</td>
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School Resources for Learning

Brien McMahon High School has multiple timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk, that support each student’s achievement of the school’s 21st Century Learning Expectations. Universal Instruction is active in the classroom for all students. Teachers provide tier one interventions within the classroom setting. These interventions include, but are not limited to, differentiated instruction and assignments, use of data collected from learning styles inventories, student-centered learning, effective teaching strategies (ETS), progress monitoring via formative assessments, and formative instruction using technology. In addition, school-wide academic supports include the RANSACK (Relevant Academic Needed Support Aimed at College-bound Kids) after-school program in our Guidance Career Center which provides peer-tutoring from National Honor Society members three days a week for students of all grades and abilities. Furthermore, teachers often make themselves available before and after school, during free periods, and during the first 15-minutes of every lunch wave for students Monday through Friday to provide corrective instruction, quiz/test review, and reinforcement of study skills. The identified and at-risk learners are also eligible to receive 504 and Special Education services based on Accommodation Plans and Individualized Educational Plans (IEP). These legal documents are designed by the 504 team and a PPT (Planning and Placement Team) that consists of a housemaster, classroom teacher, social worker, school psychologist, nurse, student, and parent. These teams work collaboratively to ensure that our identified students receive the support they need to reach our 21st century learning expectations. 100% of our student population spends some portion of the school day in mainstream classes with non-disabled peers. Moreover, the majority of SPED students spend the entire day in mainstream classes. BMHS ensures that all of students have the opportunity, when appropriate, to access the Common Core curriculum. The interventions and supports in place for our at-risk learners are facilitated by all school personnel at Brien McMahon. These students are recommended for more intensive levels of interventions and instruction if they are not meeting the BMHS learning expectations. In January 2016, BMHS created a reading course focusing on providing tier two interventions to students who scored below proficiency on a
universal reading test administered to 9th grade students. Other possibilities for intervention will hopefully arise in the new block schedule in the 2016-2017 school year.

In order to help ensure students are successful at Brien McMahon HS, Progress Monitoring has been implemented to identify students who are not making adequate progress towards grade level promotion/graduation. An intense effort has also been made to develop more effective programming for these students who are not benefitting from core classroom instruction. BMHS’ goal is to establish proactive, individualized interventions early on to assist in making all students successful. Throughout the quarter, housemasters and counselors review reports of students with Ds or Fs in any of the four core subject areas of English, math, science, and history. In addition, teachers may refer students to their school counselor or housemaster when a student is failing, in danger of failing, or has accumulated absences that have negatively impacted achievement. When students are considered “at-risk” of promotion because of failing grades, counselors confer with the student regarding academics or behaviors that lead to failing, or in danger of failing grades in a course. If a student has two or more Ds and Fs, a counselor will schedule a meeting with parents, teachers, support staff, and housemaster. Counselors support students by devising a plan to improve performance in class. The plan includes coordinating after-school help with teachers or school-based tutorial services and utilizing Power School to track progress. Parents/guardians may also be contacted regarding attendance at after school activities. Social workers and school psychologists may do additional progress monitoring, utilizing the same criteria and intervention strategies as housemasters and school counselors. Furthermore, students receive social and emotional support, including but not limited to, crisis intervention and conflict resolution skills in regularly scheduled social work meetings. Additional support is available to students to develop time management and organizational skills. Students also received support for speech/language sessions to help improve achievement. The School Based Health Center and nurse offer medical support for students. For behavior support and intervention, Brien McMahon HS utilizes the PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) model to decrease negative behaviors, promote positive behaviors, and improve school culture. The school-wide behavioral expectations for all students are to Be respectful Make good decisions Help others and Strive for success, or
BMHS. PBIS provides an organizational approach for improving the social-behavioral climate of our school by supporting or enhancing the impact of academic instruction by increasing proactive management. These timely coordinated directive intervention strategies prepare all of our students for the challenges of the 21st Century by inspiring intellectual curiosity and foster our students to become responsible, ethical, and innovative members of society.

The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, regarding available student support services. Students are given important information directly, such as the Guide for Students and Families and the NPS Handbook. Emerging technology has brought broad and varied access to information relative to school and student information. Both the district and school website allow parents, guardians, and students of Brien McMahon to access information related to academic subject areas, student support services personnel, transportation, registration, parent organizations, alumni activities, and senior internships. The School Counseling department site provides course descriptions, academic requirements, access to information on college planning through Naviance, which includes scholarship, college testing and financial aid forms, as well as career planning through School to Career information. The same information is also provided during regularly scheduled parent and student meetings. Naviance also connects parents and students to local and regional programs and support services. In addition, Brien McMahon has created Facebook and Twitter pages where McMahon community members can be made aware of news and current and upcoming events. The Hour and Citizen News, Norwalk’s newspapers, television station NEWS 12, and various radio stations also keep the community informed of news and events emanating from the school. The library and media services site provides access to its collection and catalog of texts, documents, periodicals and reference materials.

Brien McMahon offers numerous opportunities throughout the year to interact personally with faculty, staff, and administration. There are events such as Back-to-School Night and Academic Fair where incoming 9th graders and current students can meet teachers and learn about future courses, transitioning to high school, and special programs available at BMHS. All information is distributed in Spanish and translators are available. McMahon’s Hispanic Parent’s Group allows parents and guardians the ability to become familiar with the
policies, requirements, personnel, and facilities provided by the school. The McMahon Parent’s Club regularly sends e-mail blasts about upcoming events and deadlines. Students who qualify are encouraged to apply for Norwalk’s free or reduced lunch program via handouts given to students during the House Advisory Program, through the back to school letter mailed home, and on the School Counseling site. School counselors and department representatives provide information during the Academic Fair for 8th graders entering McMahon in the fall and their parents/guardians. The presentation is both in English and Spanish. For graduation and assemblies, an interpreter is available for American sign language when needed. Also, the School Based Health Center provides seasonal information and updates pertinent to maintaining a healthy and active body. Additionally, the Athletic Department holds seasonal Coaches’ Nights where eligibility, participation requirements, and policies are explained and discussed with coaches. The athletic school conference (FCIAC) and state association (CIAC) sites provide updated standings and news related to interscholastic athletic competition.

Brien McMahon High School support services use a variety of technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. Norwalk has made a district-wide change from Genesis to Power School for the 2014-2015 school year. The web based data management system has allowed teachers to increase both feedback and transparency of student progress via the parent portal. Counselors and administrators alike have utilized their access to Gradebook within Power School to monitor student achievement and proactively intervene when the need arises. Additionally, Power School has streamlined the special education piece by linking access to IEP Direct. This allows teachers to implement modifications and accommodations quickly. Student IEP’s are continuously accessed and updated by Special Education teachers, guidance counselors, and school psychologists based on quarterly/semi-annual/annual PPT meetings. Teachers then have access to the most recent changes in accommodations and or modifications. Power School also has the potential to track student progress towards graduation.

Teachers continue to receive either electronic or hard copies of 504 plans for students receiving such accommodations. Services for students who require significant visual, audio, and or physical accommodations are coordinated through the Special Education Department and the district’s assistive technology consultant. Such
services include, but are not limited to, laptops with visual enhancement applications, classroom speaker systems, and physical therapy.

Brien McMahon has made many hardware upgrades. The district has made efforts to bolster its wireless network, but the network’s effectiveness is still limited. McMahon currently has 354 Chromebooks that have been assigned to many of the departments and are being implemented as mobile computer labs. The science department computer lab has been fully upgraded with 27 new computers. Moreover, there are Smart-Boards or projectors in 87 classrooms. The school library has a computer lab. In addition, a number of McMahon faculty continue to use clickers to enhance formative assessment.

Brien McMahon has also implemented a number of major software upgrades. Naviance, has allowed guidance counselors to aide students in their backwards planning and has streamlined the college application process for all parties involved. Naviance edocs has made transcript, common app, and teacher letters of recommendation submittal more efficient. In addition, McMahon also continues to use multiple software programs in an attempt to both access and enhance student-centered learning curricula. Specifically, the addition of Project Lead The Way (Certified Pre-Engineering Program) implements a number of professional grade technical software programs. Also, the school’s medical staff utilizes a software called SNAP to input and track student medical records.

There are other non-district initiated technologies being implemented at Brien McMahon that is certainly worthy of mention. One of these being the use of Remind. Remind is a third party text message service that allows teachers to instantly communicate with students and parents as well. While not every teacher is implementing Remind, there is a growing number of teachers who are making use of this impactful application.

While technology is present throughout the building, teachers feel that support is often lacking. Of the 10 computers in the main library, 3 do not allow access to Google Drive, an application teachers often utilize with their students. Also, three are not capable of printing. IT support is one area in need of improvement. Connectivity and internet speed issues at times are problematic however, there are plans to further upgrade both
bandwidth and speed of the building wi-fi. The lack of support has definitely contributed to the ineffectiveness of the utilization of technology that is available.

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written developmental program: meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career and college counseling, sporadically engage in individual and group meetings with all students, frequently deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers, and occasionally use ongoing relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

There are eight school counselors in the department who serve roughly 1,700 students at Brien McMahon High School. Each counselor is responsible for over 220 students per year and provides developmental guidance-related services in the domains of academic, personal/social, and career/college development, primarily on an individual basis. Much of the small-group developmental guidance lessons have been absorbed into our weekly advisory sessions. There are two designated 9th grade counselors who work almost exclusively with the freshman class. The other six counselors are responsible for students in grades 10-12 within a specified alphabetical split. The only exception to this alphabetical breakdown are the two counselors who work with the students in the Center for Global Studies (CGS) interdistrict magnet program; one counselor works with students who reside in Norwalk and the other counselor serves students who are part of the program but reside outside of Norwalk. One ten month bilingual receptionist provides clerical support for the counselors, three social workers and the school psychologist. As a department, counselors also work collaboratively with support staff within the school, such as special education case workers, social workers, the school psychologist, and the school nurse. One designated full time social worker, as well as a designated part time school social worker, meets with special education students who require social work services as part of their individualized education plans (IEP’s). BMHS has an in-house Kids in Crisis (KIC) TeenTalk social worker, who meets with regular education students who are experiencing a heightened level of anxiety, stress, and crisis. This social worker is not an NPS employee and is funded by KIC.
Counselors consistently utilize technology to meet the needs of families and students. The Brien McMahon High School website is frequently updated by a counselor to inform students and parents about relevant events that the School Counseling Department organizes and oversees. In addition, mailings are sent home regarding upcoming informational sessions held in the evenings. Students and parents are able to access their Naviance/Family Connection accounts through the BMHS website as well. Naviance/Family Connection is an online tool that counselors use with all of their students to assist in the career exploration and college planning process. Information about postsecondary student outcomes in regards to colleges that Brien McMahon graduates attend also is stored through Naviance. The data can be accessed by students and families. Counselors spend the majority of their time in individual counseling sessions with students to address both academic and personal/social issues and to address career and college readiness. In addition, the BMHS School Counseling department oversees a number of programs and events for students during the school day such as Peer Mediation meetings, the College Life Program, and the Junior/Senior College Panel. Additionally there are after school events for both students and parents such as the Academic Fair and Financial Aid Night. These events are purposely done to meet student needs outside of the typical individual counseling sessions. Also, occasional college trips and visits are offered to students in all grades to promote college readiness and postsecondary planning at an early stage.

Minimally, counselors meet with all students during the course selection process each year. Additionally, all 9th graders meet with their counselor in the fall, while juniors and seniors are required to have at least one meeting with their counselor per year to discuss postsecondary college and career planning. In reality, most students meet with their counselors more than once, particularly seniors during college application season. Students and/or parents can make appointments with counselors at any time by filling out a meeting request form or e-mailing their counselor directly.

While counselors do not really engage in formal group counseling, they do meet with a group of students during ongoing lessons regarding course selection and Naviance. Counselors also conduct group discussions throughout the year on various topics such as college transitions and readiness. In conjunction with Family
Centers and the Center for Hope, a bereavement group meets once a week and this group is open to all students throughout the school year; this group is led by Linda Weatherseed, the program coordinator.

Developmental Guidance lessons are delivered in social studies classrooms during the course selection process. The 9-12 guidance curriculum provides a framework for services, but is a bit outdated and could benefit from being revised. As a department, counselors follow the framework of the curriculum, but at the same time utilize relevant and updated technology such as Naviance/Family Connection that was not present when the curriculum was developed. The use of this technology aligns with 21st century learning expectations and Connecticut state standards. Students and parents on an annual basis have access to the BMHS Guide for Students and Families, which on a basic level outlines the services and resources that the School Counseling Department provides.

Counselors also collaborate and communicate with outside providers, such as the in-house Teen Talk Counselor, adult mentors who work with the Norwalk Mentor Program and outside clinicians regarding student concerns and issues. Additionally, counselors regularly consult with personnel, the nurse practitioner and social worker in the on-site School-Based Health Center regarding students of concern. We have a standing School Preparedness Committee comprised of various faculty members, including the school psychologist and social worker, that meets once a month to develop ways to proactively address and respond to potential school-wide crises. In times of crisis, school counselors will often draw on community resources such as Kids in Crisis, 211, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and Juvenile Probation to provide additional support. Counselors also have a close network of other area school counselors and social workers whom they can access in times of crisis.

Regular contact is initiated with parents through e-mails, phone calls, and the BMHS website. Counselors regularly schedule 504 initial, review, and exit meetings, and are always part of the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting process. Also, counselors regularly contact parents to address student academic concerns, primarily after report cards are distributed to students. Often, parent meetings are scheduled as a result of this initial contact to discuss and develop strategies that will enable the student to meet with academic success.
Counselors also oversee the after-school RANSACK peer tutoring program in an effort to help academically struggling 9th graders with their homework.

School counselors collect relevant student data in Naviance and open ended survey based feedback throughout the course of the year, particularly with regards to special programs or events such as the College Life Program and the Junior/Senior College Panel in an ongoing effort to evaluate and improve services.

Developmental Counseling Services Program/Curriculum was created by Norwalk Public Schools Pupil Personnel Services in 2002. To better meet the needs of BMHS’ 21st century student learning expectations, counselors have created a more current Four Year Guide to Career and College Planning which includes a framework to aid students and families in identifying the importance of early academic planning. This guide is available in print and on the BMHS Guidance website.

The Guidance Department has a computer lab that also serves as a Career Center, a mentor meeting space, a meeting area for a volunteer financial aid counselor, after school tutoring, AP Testing, college representative presentations and more. However, it is not staffed on a regular basis. There is one counseling intern who can assist students and answer questions when available.

Brien McMahon High School’s health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel to provide health services and direct intervention services. They provide exemplar preventative health and direct intervention services as well as ongoing health assessments. In addition, while they use limited assessment data, feedback from the school community is made readily available.

Brien McMahon serves the students’ health needs through two separate organizations, the school nurse’s office and the School Based Health Center. Together, they provide individual resources and care for the student population of Brien McMahon High School.

The school nurse’s office is the primary care provider for the school, providing for an average of 2,000 visits for health services per year. The office employs two Registered Nurses, one for three days a week and one full time, and a medical aid/secretary. Students can utilize their services during the hours of each school day. Each visit and additional records are kept in CHR (Confidential Health Records) cabinets in the office as well as
digitally on the SNAP Health Center program, a comprehensive medical documentation and tracking software suite that manages every aspect of student health related data.

Students utilize the nurse’s office both by self-referral and through referral from the office itself, private physicians, and school administrators. The office provides preventative and ongoing care such as measuring blood pressure, conducting vision and hearing exams, and monitoring of students upon request from a doctor. The office also provides direct intervention by evaluating and servicing minor injuries and illness. The nurse’s office maintains records on the physical exam requirement for all sophomore students. They also act as a clearinghouse for monitoring sports physicals required for athletes and in concussion management. The school nurses take part in 504 meetings and PPTs as needed. The full time nurse is a member of the School Safety Committee. When students require more services than the nurse’s office can provide, they are referred home, to the hospital, or more frequently to the School Based Health Center. Communication between both offices is frequent, often daily, and thorough.

The School Based Health Center, funded by the Connecticut Department of Public Health as well as community organizations and corporations, provides accessible, high quality healthcare to adolescents while school is in session. About 790 (as of October 21, 2015, the entering of freshman files was not complete) students of the 1,663 (based on the BOE report Oct 1, 2015) total student population utilize the services provided by the SBHC. The SBHC staff includes a nurse practitioner, social worker, receptionist, and social work supervisor that are accessible from 9:00 to 2:00 on school days and are overseen by an off-site medical program director who is an MD.

Applications for the services of SBHC are available for all students enrolled at BMHS who complete a permission form given to each individual student during BMHS’s House Advisory Program at the start of the year and are included in the summer mailing for incoming 9th grade students. Informational brochures, translated in Spanish for ELL students and family, are provided in the school office and SBHC office. There is no out-of-pocket charge for any service that is provided.

Once registered with SBHC, provisions include medical and dental services as well as individual, group,
and family counseling. SBHC’s medical services include: dental exams, physicals, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses, care of minor injuries, sport physicals, immunizations, nutrition counseling, weight management, and health education. Additional counseling services and classes are provided, focusing specifically on issues including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse. Students have access to these classes during the school hours and receive passes to participate.

The SBHC communicates with the public through a website linked to the school’s main page. Freshmen receive information on how to register for the SBHC in the summer mailing. Records of visits and care are stored in secured file cabinets. When parents enroll their students in SHBC, they are informed that all services provided to the student and records of such are confidential to the student and will not be released without written or verbal permission from the student. This includes reproductive health services.

The SBHC has completed a school-wide assessment data survey. A 2012 student satisfaction survey was administered to the entire Norwalk public school district. The survey addressed 94 participants that had previously utilized the SBHC. The findings were published on their public domain.

Library/media services are minimally integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have a barely adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who are actively engaged in the implementation of the school’s curriculum; provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school’s curriculum; ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school, are responsive to students’ interests and needs in order to support independent learning, and conduct ongoing assessment, using relevant data including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school’s 21st century learning expectations. The library media specialist works with individual teachers as requested to help students develop information literacy skills that are imbedded into subject area curricula. While there are assured research experiences at every grade, genuine collaboration with the library media specialist is inconsistent from teacher to teacher. Some teachers utilize the library facility in the completion of research projects, while others use Chromebooks and teach research skills within the classroom. There is some Central Office input into library funding, initiatives, and
resources; however, there is currently no oversight development of the district library program. The library-media specialist has secured her own funding to attend conferences such as ALA Midwinter and Annual, the YALSA Symposium. With district support, she has also attended one AASL conference in Hartford and a series of countywide professional development workshops on implementing the Library Learning Commons model.

The BMHS Library Media Center provides a limited range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school’s curricula, due to budgetary constraints. District library funding for five consecutive school years has ranged from $0 to $2749, resulting in nearly nonexistent updating of an aging collection. The librarian actively seeks grants and discount sources to purchase resources. There is a small but robust print collection supporting all areas of the curriculum and a wide range of reading levels. There is a growing selection of fiction. Ebook selections are available via Brain Hive. The library houses a collection of audiobooks, and a selection of curriculum-related DVDs. Besides the databases available through iconn.org, the library provides access to several paid Gale subscripts such as Opposing Viewpoints, World History in Context, and CultureGrams. The WebPath Express enhancement to Follett Destiny was purchased in 2014-2015. The district subscribes to the extensive educational video database Classroom Videos on Demand. The library houses classroom sets of headphones and microphones, an LCD projector, and a FLIP video camera for student and teacher use. There are ten computers available for student use in the library, as well as an attached computer lab for class use providing twenty-seven computers for students and one for teacher use. In addition, there are five Chromebook carts available for classroom use through the library; four contain twenty-six laptops and one contains fifteen.

In 2011, the library media center staff was reduced from two specialists to one. The BMHS library is open from 7:15 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The library media specialist is available 7:15-2:30 while the paraprofessional stays until 3:00. A donation the Senators Success Fund, a parent group, allowed for extended hours of operation 2-3 days per week until 5 p.m. for school year 2013-2014. This time was staffed by building teachers.

The library media center is responsive to students’ interests and needs in order to support independent
learning. Print and non-print collections include items that reflect pop culture and student as well as faculty requests are given strong consideration for purchasing when grant monies are available. The fiction collection reflects the diversity of BMHS students. When the budget allowed prior to 2010, students were surveyed for favorite books, periodicals, or recommendations. In recent years, however, budget constraints have limited purchases to a very few nonfiction titles each year, all directly related to the curriculum. In school year 2014-2015, 107 items were purchased through the budget; over three times as many, 359 items, were added through donations or purchased with fine monies.

A noteworthy aspect of the BMHS library is a growing and active book club that meets throughout the year. The club is funded by grants, primarily DonorsChoose grants, through which the members are able to keep copies of the books they have read. In 2015, the library media specialist received a Patterson Foundation Grant to bring in Libba Bray as a visiting author in 2016.

The BMHS library gets informal feedback from students and staff regarding resources needed to compliment classroom instruction. The library has no formal assessment mechanism to ensure each student achieves the school’s 21st century learning expectations. An age and subject distribution analysis is done at least twice yearly via Titlewave, a feature of Follett Software’s library management package that allows users to create reports on library collections and link to online collection development tools. As of June 16, 2015, the average age of the print collection of just over 14,700 items was 1999.

Inventory is performed annually in June, and an effort is made to replace missing items with funds collected through late and lost book fines. In information literacy skills lessons, the library media specialist solicits student suggestions for appropriate emerging technologies and materials. Teachers are informally questioned after lessons to see whether the material met their expectations and what could be improved for the future. In a handful of instances, the library media specialist helped assess projects. Examples include incorporating Powtoon into Culinary Arts presentations and collaborative evaluation of stages of research writing with some World History teachers. Additionally, teachers receive the library’s newsletters, which almost always ask for input on some level.
The support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff, provides an inclusive learning environment for all students. Some assessment data is utilized but does not include feedback from the school community. There are 10 special education teachers, 1 department chair/special education teacher, 10 paraprofessionals, 1 secretary/paraprofessional, 1.8 social workers, 1 Kids-in-Crisis employee (social worker funded by an outside agency), 2 ELL teachers, 2 ELL paraprofessionals, 2 ELL teacher for Norwalk International Academy who are shared with Norwalk High School, 2 School Based Health Center employees, 2 nurses, 1 occupational therapist (district shared), 1 physical therapist (district shared), 1 adaptive PE teacher (district shared), 1 speech/language pathologist, 1 teacher of the visually impaired (district shared), 1 teacher of the hearing impaired (district shared), 1 School-to-Career Coordinator (high school shared and NECA Program shared), and 1 Transitional Skills Coordinator (high school shared). There is no change in support personnel for the 2015-16 school year.

Brien McMahon special education teachers’ caseloads range from 13-18 students with IEPs. Guidance counselors serve as case managers for students with 504 accommodations. The school adheres to the federal and state laws regarding the identification, monitoring, and referral of students for special education services. Special education teachers collaborate with most teachers, counselors, targeted service providers, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. Data collected by special education and classroom teachers include work samples, progress reports, observations, and student feedback. Most teachers who co-teach are able to collaborate with the case manager during class time or during a case manager's planning time. Other meetings that allow special educators to collaborate building/district-wide include monthly department meetings, quarterly district-wide special education meetings, and for a few teachers, Professional Learning Community meetings. In addition, two teacher/co-teacher pairs took advantage of summer 2015 professional development work focused on creating student-centered learning opportunities. The special education department chair meets with middle school special education staff to plan for needed services and staffing for services that may be recommended during bridging meetings. The bridging meetings, PPTs, occur in the spring.
All special education students are provided with inclusive opportunities throughout their day. At a minimum, each student has at least two classes with non-disabled peers. In addition to academic opportunities, there are extracurricular opportunities that BMHS encourages our disabled students to participate in. Programs such as Best Buddies, a Unified Sports Team, after-school clubs and sports are all opportunities that are encouraged.

Assessment data for initial or triennial evaluations is used to identify and place students into classes that support their learning needs. Assessments that are used but are not limited to, Woodcock Johnson, CMT, CAPT, Behavior Rating Scales, G.O.A.L (used by OT & PT), CELF-5, EOWPV2 and ROWPV2 (speech/language). Data from classroom teachers is also used in determining appropriate classroom level placement such as co-taught, level 8, Honors, or AP. Cognitive testing is conducted by the school psychologist and achievement testing is conducted by special education staff.

Due to an influx of Students with a Limited Interruption in Formal Education (SLIFE), Norwalk Public schools developed a program to support English Language Learners, ELL called the Norwalk International Academy. This new program will better address the needs of students and help to alleviate the overcrowding in ELL classes. There are a number of students who have missed several years in their education. Presently, many of the students participating have missed anywhere from two to three years of their education. The addition of this program helps with the number of students needing support in the Level I ESL classes. As of 2014, the total percentage of ELL students jumped from 12% to 14% district wide. In December 2014, additional classes and staff were added to accommodate more students receiving instruction time in the classroom to support ELL. To date, there 40 teachers in the building who are SIOP trained.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Brien McMahon High School (BMHS) has intervention strategies for all students that are timely and coordinated through counseling, health, and information services personnel. Families, especially those most in need, are fully informed about available student support services. BMHS provides a comprehensive range of counseling and health services to students and supplies a wide range of materials, technologies, and other
information services in support of the school’s curriculum. Additionally, personnel and leadership are adequate in school counseling, health/nursing services, and special education programs.

Counselors deliver a developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students, provide input to the House Advisory curriculum, and work closely with community and mental health agencies and social service providers to meet the needs of BMHS students. Health personnel provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, use an appropriate referral process, and conduct ongoing student health assessments.

Library/media services are poised to be integrated and responsive to students’ interests and needs in order to support independent learning with additional resources. Support services for identified students are integrated into heterogeneous classes and support services personnel consult with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff routinely in order to ensure all students achieve the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

Based on the CPSS Rating Guide for the Standard on School Resources, Brien McMahon High School judges its adherence to the Standard as ACCEPTABLE.

Summary of Strengths and Needs

Strengths:
- The school district uses the software PowerSchool to allow full access for guardians to monitor their students
- The school House Committee has written a nationally recognized age appropriate Advisory curriculum which is implemented by the faculty at each grade level
- The school Special Education department uses technology to inform faculty with information on its identified students
- The school provides array of student support services that allow students equal opportunity to achieve the school’s core values, beliefs and expectations.
- There is comprehensive post-secondary planning program, including college and career exploration
- The librarian has written grants to increase resource availability
- Significant teacher training in SIOP to better engage ELL students
- Norwalk International Academy
The counseling team approach used in grade 9 provides strong support for both students and faculty. All students have access to their own school Google Drive account.

**Needs:**

- Increase data collection in health services from families and the community to drive improvements in specialized programs, preparing teachers for needs of incoming students.
- Update written developmental guidance curriculum.
- Increase the number of parents using the parent portal PowerSchool.
- Integrate student medical documentation into PowerSchool including 504 students.
- Provide technical training for teachers and guidance counselors to support technological integration with, among others, Powerschool and integrate Naviance more broadly for parents.
- Provide consistent access to the current district/building wireless network.
- Improve student access to library facilities by increasing open hours and relevant technology.
- Increase scope and sequence of information literacy curriculum to fully integrate technology and media center resources.
- Increase the role of Naviance as a tool for post secondary planning.
- Increase amount and variety of technology to assist in the implementation of the district’s grade 9-12 technology benchmarks while also meeting the needs of technological integration between the school and the technological staff.
- Increase integration of the library into the implementation of the school’s curriculum.
- Develop and implement a program for the parents of special education students to network with relevant school professionals.
- Update core library facility, including computer access, expansion of collection to better support 21st century learning needs.
- Increase ELL staffing to reflect growing student population.
- Expand resources to identify mental health (Social Work, Support).
- Limited Regular Education interventions.
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Stockfisch, Chair</td>
<td>Mathematics Teacher</td>
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<td>Peter Sommer, Co-Chair</td>
<td>Social Studies Teacher</td>
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<td>Qadir Abdus-Salaam</td>
<td>Housemaster</td>
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<td>Cathy Andronik</td>
<td>Library/Media Specialist</td>
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<td>Frank Arcari</td>
<td>Music Teacher</td>
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<td>Eric Carroll</td>
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<td>John Castelluzzo</td>
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<td>Francesca Dattilo</td>
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<td>Edward Grillo</td>
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<td>Roni Olson</td>
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<td>Sarah Ritz Swain</td>
<td>Art Teacher</td>
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<td>James Tagariello</td>
<td>Special Education Teacher</td>
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<td>Daniel Wagenberg</td>
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<td>Danielle Williams</td>
<td>Special Ed. Dept. Chair</td>
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Community Resources for Learning

The community and the district’s governing body provide acceptable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

The Norwalk Public Schools Board of Education adequately funds a wide range of programs to prepare students for post-secondary life, including both academic and non-academic programs. There are many courses available to students to provide them with college level work including 20 AP classes and 7 Early College Experience courses affiliated with the University of Connecticut. Project Lead the Way offers a rigorous preengineering pathway to students, culminating with college-level engineering courses for which students can potentially earn college credits. In addition, the school is in the process of transitioning to becoming an IB World school; pending approval, IB courses will begin being offered in 2017-18. There is an array of programs the school offers, which cater to the post-secondary pathways of students: Naval Junior ROTC, Culinary Arts, Child Development (including a daycare facility staffed by students within the building), Medical Academy partnership with Norwalk Community College, 19 different art courses and 13 different business courses.

Students with additional learning needs are offered a continuum of programs including academic assistance, self-contained classrooms, and co-taught classes in core academic areas. It is important to note that 100% of identified student spends some portion of the school day in mainstream classes. Moreover, 95% of the students spend the majority of day in mainstream classes.

Staffing levels at Brien McMahon High School are sufficient. The current enrollment at Brien McMahon High School is 1661 students. For the 2015-16 school year, the school is staffed by 7 administrators (Principal, Director of Center for Global Studies, and 5 Housemasters), 105 certified teachers, 8 school counselors, 1.8 social workers (in addition to 2 social workers from outside agencies), 1 school psychologist, 1.5 nurses, 1 speech therapist, 9.8 special education paraprofessionals, 6 security guards, 11 administrative support staff/secretaries, 1
school resource officer and 15 custodial staff members. Although in the 2016-2017 school year, BMHS is moving to block scheduling, the district has not addressed the need for increased staffing.

Every year, the staff at Brien McMahon High School attends four full professional development days and two early dismissal days for professional development. In the Math, Science, English, ELL and Health departments, the district supervisor oversees the curriculum revisions process; this work is supported by district funds. In the absence of a supervisor, the Chief Academic Officer oversees curriculum revision and implementation. Currently, there are departments that do not have a district supervisor: Music, Art, SPED, Social Studies, World Language, Guidance, Physical Education and Business Education. For the 2014-2015 school year, funding was made available for curriculum revision during the school year; however, that required teachers to be pulled from their classes, but this is no longer the practice. Moving forward, curriculum revision and writing will be done during the summer. Curriculum revision has begun with the majority of these departments with funding allocated from the Title II grant in providing release time for teachers as well as subject specific consultants to provide expertise in the development of curriculum.

There are currently district IT specialists who handle all technological issues. BMHS currently has 16 sets of portable chromebooks for student use as well as 9 computer labs for classroom use. All teachers were recently given a laptop to use for classroom instruction. Out of the 105 classrooms, 31 have smartboards and 65 have projectors. Many of the smartboards are out of warranty, which means when they break, they cannot be repaired. According to the Endicott Survey, 43.6% of the faculty believe there is a sufficient amount of funding and support of the current technology applications at Brien McMahon. As detailed in the 2012 substantive changes report, a significant reduction in funding of the informational technology budget as well as the professional development budget to support our current and/or developing initiatives has greatly influenced this data. There is no plan for repairing Google Chromebooks that are out of warranty and the wifi is not reliable.

The Facilities Department of the Norwalk Board of Education is responsible for developing plans and to provide funding for programs to ensure maintenance and repair for the majority of the building and school plant, properly maintain and catalogue equipment, and keep the school clean on daily basis. At the present time,
equipment is sometimes maintained, repaired, replaced, and catalogued; however, the school is rarely sufficiently cleaned on a daily basis.

NPS is utilizing an online program called School Dude in which maintenance issues can be uploaded, prioritized and addressed in a more timely manner. When BMHS administrators submit work orders through School Dude, it generates a ticket to Central Office personnel, who assign the work order. One housemaster is the contact person for the Facilities Department.

There are people in both Central Office and in the high school that are in charge of maintenance repair and school cleanliness responsibilities. Despite the routines and procedures, the work is not always addressed or completed in a timely manner. At the end of every academic school year, each teacher is given the responsibility to document issues pertaining to such matters such as key inventory, furniture inventory, and equipment inventory as well as any maintenance issues that need to be resolved such as faulty blinds, leaky sinks, holes in drywall, or loose door hinges. School budgets have either been lowered or maintained at the number that was presented the year before. Services and cleaning is inconsistent in the building. Common areas such as hallways and stairwells are not cleaned thoroughly on a daily basis. The building cleanliness has become a union issue with the teachers and brought up through consultation with building administration. Staff communicates to administration as well as union liaisons through a monthly pre-consultation forms about daily issues that need to be addressed regarding cleanliness such as cleaning restrooms, classrooms and garbage cans. When it is determined that equipment needs to be replaced, staff will do research on the particular item. This research would normally include three different companies with three varying prices. Also included into the factoring is shipping and handling. Paperwork is then submitted to secretaries who make purchase orders to be submitted to Central Office which supplies the approved paperwork. It is then submitted directly to a vendor on the Norwalk Public Schools’ approved list.

The community rarely funds and the school therefore cannot implement a long range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. As of the moment, there are no long range plans for enrollment changes, staffing needs, facility
needs, or wholesale plans for capital improvement. However, there have been adjustments to unexpected enrollment increases. In 2015-2016 school year, BMHS added one new art teacher to accommodate the demand of art classes requested by students. In response to influx of immigrant students coming from South/Central America in 2014-2015 school year, Norwalk created the Norwalk International Academy to meet the needs of students with little formal education and limited knowledge of the English language. This academy offers ESL English Foundations and ESL Math Foundations, through a double period, and a flex period for additional resources help. In response to the influx, two new ESL teachers were hired and are being shared by NHS and BMHS. Norwalk adjusted to this influx; however, there is no formal long term staffing plan to address enrollment changes, the new state graduation requirements, or the new block scheduling that will be instituted in 2016-2017.

There was a major like-new $72 million renovation in 2006. Since then, there have been minimal capital improvements. Interior and exterior lighting fixtures were changed to LED bulb and new security cameras were installed. Other capital improvements, including replacing the sound system in auditorium and the sports complex, was funded by the Senators Success Fund, a parents group.

There is no formal long term facility plan. Repairs and maintenance are done by order request and not always done in a timely manner. Class utilization is at 75% occupancy.

Central Office is following the Connecticut State Department technology plan, but has no long term plans specific to the needs of the Norwalk community. Upgrades to our classrooms have included Smartboards, Mobi’s, document cameras, MacIntosh computers (for use in Art classrooms) and constant improvement to the bandwidth of our wifi system. There are concerns about maintaining current technology. For example, site licenses for software are not maintained.

At Brien McMahon High School the faculty and building administrators are collectively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. Teachers meet in departments to discuss budget needs. School instructional leaders meet with school administrators to submit budget requests. In the 2015-2016 school year, there was a shift to school based budgeting. The District CFO reports this will provide each school with an
equitable share of the net District budget based on the student enrollment in each school. Certain expenses will continue to be budgeted centrally. The remainder of the budget will be allocated directly to schools based on enrollment. High schools will be allotted $6,703 per student. BMHS will decide how to allocate those funds based on input received from school staff and the School Governance Council.

Materials and supplies are allocated to each department to meet the needs of the courses. When BMHS receives their district money, department chairs, the administration, and other school leaders meet in order to decide how to allocate it. Administrators and department chairs are responsible for allocating and spending monies designated for teaching purposes. School instructional leaders and administrators are given a completed summary sheet operating budget form to view the status of budget allocations each year. The principal can influence district budgets by student interests and needs. The principal and other administrators speak publicly on behalf of the school budget at open Board of Education and Finance meetings.

The school site and plant adequately supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services within BMHS. The delivery of high quality school programs and services has the space to offer a variety of programs, but there are some areas where BMHS lacks space. Presently, BMHS has 14 science labs, 6 conference rooms (main office, 2 counseling rooms, 2 rooms in library and 1 room in career counseling), 30 storage areas (janitorial supplies, physical education, culinary arts, art supplies, early childhood, office and paper supplies) and 5 performing arts areas (auditorium, CGS room, band room, orchestra room and choir room). BMHS also holds programs such as Driver's Education, Adult Education, afterschool programs, APEX, athletic events, and clubs. BMHS also has space to provide services such as the school-based health center (SBHC), dentist's office, and athletic training office. The expansion of services that BMHS provides have resulted in an increase of student participation and involvement. BMHS offers its students the Den for help with grieving, the garden club, the school store, Ransack (a tutoring program involving the National Honor Society student), tutoring, Youth Development Program, House Advisory program, school-to-career, SAT preparatory programs, computer labs, Kids in Crisis, career and counseling center, and the internship program. Each program requires space, and sometimes the building lacks the space needed to provide students with all support necessary. During PPT season,
it is difficult to use conference rooms in guidance because they are scheduled for PPTs. During PSAT/SAT day, it is difficult to fit all students in rooms with the appropriate accommodations. The School Climate Committee’s intention to keep the House advisories small has led to using every space in the building, including department meeting rooms, multiple groups in library and cafeteria. This utilization of space make some activities difficult to implement. Space can also be limited when doing whole-school events.

The hallways are often crowded at McMahon. Housemasters let students out of the cafeteria early so that they can make it to their classes on time. There are certain areas that are known for traffic, specifically in the stairwells and in the second floor hallways above the gym. 75% of classrooms at BMHS are being used at all times.

Through extensive planning, implementation and continued monitoring, the school meets all federal, state, and local laws in the areas of fire, health, and safety. All fire extinguishers, sprinklers, and alarms are required to be tested according to regulation as well fire prevention reports submitted monthly by custodians. The Fire Marshall audits the fire safety procedure and assures equipment is functioning and up to code. Any maintenance issues that impact student or staff safety are submitted to the housemaster in charge of building maintenance. If a complaint warrants immediate attention, it is sent to the head of the custodial staff and he/she delegates as needed. If it is beyond their skill, it then goes to maintenance person via School Dude. Central Office maintenance personnel monitor the HVAC systems to ensure that they are the functional. There are some concerns about air quality within the building, such as cleanliness of vents and how frequently air filters are changed. The school meets or exceeds all of the federal, state, and local laws with regard to IDEA. BMHS has elevators and ramps which are necessary for handicapped accessibility.

All professional staff actively engages parents and families as partners in each student’s education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. Brien McMahon counselors meet with each student individually throughout the school year. Meetings are based on on the student’s specific grade needs. Some of the topics discussed during the meetings include, but are not limited to, course selection, post-secondary planning, progress monitoring, advice on peer relations, graduation requirements, summer
programs, access to counseling support services, and standardized testing. Parents are invited to progress monitoring meetings as well as junior post-secondary planning meetings and senior post-secondary planning meetings. Parents have access to all student grades and current academic performance via Powerschool. Teachers are able to share grades and comments. Parents are also able to monitor their student’s attendance through Powerschool. Parents are informed of workshops, school events such as Open House Night, Financial Aid night, Academic Fair, parenting a high schooler 101, and Hispanic Night Workshops via fliers sent home, email blasts from the school and the Parent’s Club, and the Brien McMahon website. For all Hispanic evening events, parents are notified individually via telephone by volunteer parents. Students are recognized yearly through programs such as Student-of-the-Marking-Period, Junior Book Prize awards, and Senior Excellence Awards. Students are selected for their achievements by their teachers who monitor their successes closely. Report cards are given to students in their House, the student’s small advisory group. Parents are provided with report card release dates via the school’s web site. Teachers, counselors, and administrators communicate with parents via e-mail and phone calls. School counselors and Housemasters are the go-to people who set up a variety of parent/student meetings to address pressing issues that are academic, social, and emotional. Students are made aware of extra help programs (Ransack, YDP, extra help from teachers) during daily announcements. Endicott Survey results reveal 60.3% of parents believe that the professional staff actively engage families as a partner in the education of their child. The NEASC Survey also shows that 89.8% of faculty believe that they are active partners with families in their children’s education. While there are many avenues for parents to become involved in school community, BMHS is struggling to make all parents active participants in their children’s success.

The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Brien McMahon actively participates in collaborative partnerships with parents, community members, businesses, and higher education institutions. Parents in the community have recently started the Senator Success Fund in an effort to raise monies for the school and help further develop the parent/school partnership. This fund has financed AP training for teachers and new sound system for Jack Casagrande Field and the Forcellina Auditorium. The community involvement has been extremely successful as
Brien McMahon has established and developed partnerships with the Carver Center of Norwalk and the Maritime Aquarium. The Key Club, a teen service organization affiliated with Kiwanis International, has been heavily involved with further establishing relationships within the community. For example, the Key Club regularly volunteers at Brookside Elementary School working on assignments with students and helping teachers with a variety of tasks. They have also been involved with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society to raise money for research. In addition, the club also assists with the school’s annual college night.

Brien McMahon High School has developed a strong relationship with institutions of higher education including, the University of Connecticut (Early College Experience, ECE), The University of New Haven (Project Lead the Way, PLTW) and Norwalk Community College (Brien McMahon-Medical Academy). These relationships provide varied opportunities for students to engage in college level courses while still in high school. Brien McMahon offers eight ECE courses in social studies, science, and world language. Students complete college-level course work and can earn UCONN credit. The NCC Medical Academy provides approximately 50 students with exposure to six different medical careers to gain hands-on experience with NCC professors and students. In addition, Project Lead the Way offers students the opportunity to take a variety of engineering courses and earn college credit.

BMHS has also established strong relationships with businesses through the Senior Internship program and the Future Business Leaders of America club. School-To-Career has established a program called McMahon to Man initiative where young men get together to discuss career options and how to arrive at their goals. Women2Women is also a program where alumni foster relationships with current students. The Norwalk Mentoring Program also provides an avenue for local community members to support our current students. The school provides all students access to many businesses through the career fair held yearly at the school where students can talk to local, national, and global businesses. This year, BMHS has 27 different businesses presenting to the students to help them future develop a plan for post-secondary opportunities. David Levinson, president of NCC, is a current member of the School Governance Council which is a collaboration between
community leaders, parents, administrators, and students in order to enable parents, school staff, students, and community leaders to work together to improve student achievement.

Kids in Crisis (KIC) is a free agency that provides 24 hour emergency shelter, crisis counseling and community educational programs for children of all ages. BMHS has been able to partner with the organization and now has an additional full-time social worker, at no expense to the school system, to work with students and families in crisis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brien McMahon High School funding supports numerous programs to ensure student success for all types of learners. With the current schedule and state requirements, staffing is sufficient at Brien McMahon. Although there has been the adoption of block scheduling for the 2016-2017 school year and a 25 credit requirement for graduation for the class of 2020, district has not addressed the needs for increased staffing or materials. The district provides opportunities for professional development; specific activities are usually decided by the building level administrators to address the needs of BMHS students. While technology is supplied through Central Office, it can be better maintained by the district.

The district uses software to facilitate communication about building maintenance issues; however, the repairs are not always completed in a timely matter. Likewise, building cleanliness is a concern for students and faculty. BMHS catalogues equipment at the end of each school year.

Norwalk Public Schools lacks long term plans for enrollment changes, staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvement. While the district is quick to respond to enrollment changes, as seen with the influx of students with ELL needs, there is minimal long term planning. There have been minimal capital improvements since the major renovation in 2006. Class utilization is at 75% occupancy.

Central Office gives the school its operating budget. Once BMHS receives their budget, department
chairs, the administration, and other school leaders and the School Governance Council meet to decide how to allocate funding based on student and department needs.

BMHS has adequate space to offer multiple classes, programs, and activities. However, there are places that become crowded and it is sometimes difficult to find space when there are school-wide events. McMahon is also handicapped accessible. There is a process, through Central Office, in place to make sure Brien McMahon which meets federal and state health and safety regulations maintaining building up to code.

Brien McMahon High School fosters local community partnerships with the Carver Center, neighboring elementary schools, Maritime Aquarium, Senior Internship Program, and School to Career. BMHS also has partnerships with Higher Education institutions such as UCONN, Norwalk Community College and University of New Haven. Brien McMahon has struggle

d with getting adequate parent involvement even though the school works hard to reach out to families that have been less connected to the school. BMHS continuously fosters partnerships with Brien McMahon parents, community resources, local businesses, and higher education institutions.

Based on the CPSS Rating Guide for Community Resources, Brien McMahon High School judges its adherence to the Standard as ACCEPTABLE.

Strengths and Needs

Strengths:
- The school provides sufficient professional and support staff for students' academic and guidance needs
- The school provides sufficient equipment, instructional materials, and supplies to support student learning
- BMHS has met recent enrollment needs by adjusting staffing
- Teachers/staff have input in developing and implementing the budget
- The district maintains all required documentation for compliance with federal, state, and local safety laws.
- BMHS offers a wide variety of programs and services for students
- The grade report program enables students and parents to receive detailed standard and assignment-specific information via Power School
- BMHS actively searches for community outreach and business partnerships
- The school facilitates an internship program for seniors
- The school promotes and enjoys positive relationships with universities and colleges

Needs:
- The maintenance staff does not keep records that are up-to-date and complete for repair of the building and school plant
- The school grounds are not cleaned on a regular basis
- Lack of a long-range plan to address building maintenance and repair
- Lack of a long-range plan to address programs, services, and capital improvements
- Sustainable funding for ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
- Technology is not repaired or maintained in a timely manner
- Increase use of technology and other avenues to find new ways to engage parents, specifically those less connected to the school

**Community Resources for Learning**

**Standard**

- Stephanie Peckham, Chair
- Joseph LaPrad, Co-Chair
- Pan Auerbach
- Richard Barbour
- Lynn Gorsuch
- Ben Ingalls
- Joseph Madaffari
- Sarah Molinelli
- David Pascoe
- Paola Perez
- Marcy Sansolo
- Joseph Santa-Lucia
- Ronald Secchi
- Cathy Testa
- Rosa Waterhouse

- P.E./Health Teacher
- Science Teacher
- Social Studies Teacher
- Culinary Arts Teacher
- Social Studies Teacher
- Business Teacher
- P.E./Health Teacher & A.D.
- English Teacher
- ROTC Teacher
- School Counselor
- School Counselor
- Mathematics Teacher
- Music Teacher
- Mathematics Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
**Strengths**

1) Provide a large selection of AP, Early College Experience, PLTW (Engineering courses) and honor level classes in almost every content area with growing enrollment

2) Teachers are actively involved in the leadership of the school. Teachers create a host of new programs and implement core programs like Advisory, YDP, and the Summer Academy

3) Student responsibility is reinforced with the offering of PowerSchool that provides real time access to grades and attendance

4) There is a strong collegial atmosphere in PLC’s that allows for weekly discourse on content, analysis of data collection, student learning, progress towards SLO goals and reflection on curriculum by seventy-four academic teachers

5) BMHS has created and revised an advisory program that has four years of specific grade level lessons. “House” students create and review their SMART Goals, interim reports, transcripts, and report cards with their House advisor to help build a strong student-adult connection and smooth plan for assimilation into the BMHS community

6) There are several diverse groups of clubs, sports and service oriented programs that provide ample opportunities for all students and staff to become involved

7) Technology is utilized to enhance instruction

8) Teachers regularly use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning

9) BMHS offers a wide variety of programs and services for students

10) Teachers continually examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning

11) Through faculty professional development, professional learning communities, housemaster and parent meetings, the principal provides an extensive amount of instructional leadership that is rooted in the school’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
Needs

1) Frequent changes in the superintendent of Norwalk Public School have resulted in district wide direction and coordination being interrupted

2) Curricular coordination and articulation between departments and with sending schools could be improved

3) Technology and school facilities present challenges to implementing the curriculum, co-curricular programs, and other learning experiences

4) Technology is not repaired or maintained in a timely manner

5) Insufficient common planning time for all teachers in PLCs and co-teacher pairs

6) Greater opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning experiences would improve student outcomes

7) The school grounds are not cleaned on a regular basis

8) The district does not provide the school’s professional staff with sufficient time for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum

9) The library/media center is not sufficient for implementing the curriculum

10) Limited Regular Ed interventions

11) No student data available from sending/post-secondary schools

12) Still in the process of full implementation of school-wide rubrics
TWO AND FIVE-YEAR TARGET PLAN

Two-Year Targeted Areas

- Continue to embed the core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations as part of decision making processes
- Continue to develop a process to incorporate school-wide rubrics in an inclusive, meaningful way
- Develop a mechanism to record and report student and school-wide progress on school-wide analytic rubrics
- Evaluate the new block schedule, implemented for 2016 – 2017, to increase formal opportunities for teacher collaboration
- Increase cross-disciplinary experiences for students
- Continue to use technology to enhance instruction
- Continue to support teachers in the implementation of student-centered learning/21st century instruction through meaningful professional development
- Continue to refine House Advisory activities to build strong connections between students and adults within the building
- Explore formal interventions for regular education students

Five-Year Targeted Areas

- Share with the school community aggregate achievement by the school on the learning expectations
- Provide students and families with report of individual student achievement on each of the learning expectations
- Complete the integration of 21st century learning expectations into all curricular areas
- Implement formal interventions for regular education students
CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED SELF-STUDY MATERIALS

The following checklist may be used by the Steering Committee to ensure that the appropriate materials are prepared and finalized.

If self-study materials are not available for timely distribution to the members of the visiting committee or are of a quality that precludes their effective use by the visiting committee, the accreditation visit will be postponed or canceled.

The chair of the visiting committee will ask for the following information at the time of the preliminary visit:

I. Information on School and Community Summary
   - [X] School and Community
     Summary completed

II. Standards for Accreditation Essays

   Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
   - [X] Essay Completed
   - [X] Executive Summary
     Completed
     Date of faculty approval - 01/25/2016
     Number of Committee Meetings - 30

   Curriculum
   - [X] Essay Completed
   - [X] Executive Summary
     Completed
     Date of faculty approval - 01/25/2016
     Number of Committee Meetings - 30

   Instruction
   - [X] Essay Completed
   - [X] Executive Summary
     Completed
     Date of faculty approval - 02/22/2016
     Number of Committee Meetings - 30

   Assessment of and for Student Learning
   - [X] Essay Completed
Executive Summary
Completed
Date of faculty approval - 01/25/2016
Number of Committee Meetings - 30

School Culture and Leadership
Essay Completed
Executive Summary
Completed
Date of faculty approval - 02/22/2016
Number of Committee Meetings - 30

School Resources for Learning
Essay Completed
Executive Summary
Completed
Date of faculty approval - 02/22/2016
Number of Committee Meetings - 30

Community Resources for Learning
Essay Completed
Executive Summary
Completed
Date of faculty approval - 02/22/2016
Number of Committee Meetings - 30

III. Statement of School’s Critical Strengths and Needs
Date of Statement of Critical Strengths/Needs completed - 03/10/2016
Date of faculty approval - 03/14/2016

IV. Two-Year and Five-Year Targeted Plan
Date of Two-Year and Five-Year Targeted Plan Completion - 03/10/2016

V. Endicott Opinion Surveys
Date(s) when surveys were started - 12/15/2015
concluded - 03/20/2016
### Groups Surveyed:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Students Responded</th>
<th>Size of Population</th>
<th># Returned</th>
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<td>77.1%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>196</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>% of Professional Staff, Faculty Responded</th>
<th>Size of Population</th>
<th># Returned</th>
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<tr>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>108</td>
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