

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS  
AND COLLEGES  
COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS**

**REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE**

**South Burlington High School**

**South Burlington, Vermont**

**September 24 through 27, 2006**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement on Limitations.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Overview of Findings.....	6
Quality of Self-Assessment	
Discussion of Significant Findings Regarding	
Teaching and Learning and the Support of	
Teaching and Learning	
School and Community Report.....	8
School’s Statement of Mission and Learning Expectations.....	13
Teaching and Learning Standards.....	14
Mission and Expectations.....	15
Curriculum.....	20
Instruction.....	26
Assessment of Student Learning.....	32
Support of Teaching and Learning Standards.....	37
Leadership and Organization.....	37
School Resources for Learning.....	43
Community Resources for Learning.....	50
Follow-Up Responsibilities.....	55
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
A. Commission Policy on Substantive Change.....	56
B. Roster of Team Members.....	58

## STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

### **The Distribution, Use, and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report**

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of South Burlington High School to be a privileged document submitted by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to the principal of the school and by the principal to the state department of education. Distribution of the report within the school community is the responsibility of the school principal. The final visiting committee report must be released in its entirety within sixty (60) days of its completion to the superintendent, school board, public library or town office and the appropriate news media.

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

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

## Teaching and Learning Standards

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of Student Learning

## Support Standards

Leadership and Organization

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning.

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

### **Preparation for the Evaluation Visit – The School Self-Study**

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At South Burlington High School, a committee of eight members with the principal serving in an *ex officio* capacity supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included numerous members of the community, students, central office staff and support staff.

The self-study of South Burlington High School extended over a period of eighteen school months from September 2004 to January 2006.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Commission, South Burlington High School also used questionnaires developed by the Global Institute at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

### **The Process Used by the Visiting Committee**

A visiting committee of 15 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the South Burlington High School in light of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Committee members spent four days in South Burlington, Vermont, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, and met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of South Burlington High School.

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

- ◆ review of the school's self-study materials
- ◆ a total of 30 hours of classroom observation
- ◆ numerous informal observations in and around the school
- ◆ tours of the facility
- ◆ shadowing of 15 students for a half day
- ◆ individual meetings with teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- ◆ group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- ◆ the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

This report of the findings of the visiting committee will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Secondary Schools, which will make a decision on the accreditation of South Burlington High School.

## **Overview of Findings**

Although the conclusions of the visiting committee on the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation appear in various sections of this report, the committee wishes to highlight some findings in the paragraphs that follow. These findings are not intended to be a summary of the report.

## **Quality of the Self-Assessment**

The self-assessment completed by the professional staff at South Burlington High School had a consistent quality for each component of the standards. For all of the Standards of Accreditation, the information provided the committee with findings reflective of the strengths and needs of the school. Each indicator was addressed and rated, and the staff members provided the committee with their judgment of where more work was needed. As a result of the thorough presentation, the visiting committee was able to use the report not only to confirm the school reform work underway but also to guide the future works of the school in those areas where needs remain unmet. It is clear that the self-assessment was done with great professional care and candor. This is consistent with the findings made during the visitation. South Burlington High School is staffed with dedicated and caring professionals and support staff members. Leadership in the completion of the self-assessment came from the faculty and the building administration. The steering committee maintained its focus and direction, producing a thorough and well-thought-through study.

## **Teaching and Learning at South Burlington High School**

South Burlington High School has an excellent reputation for success in promoting learning for all students and in being a strong college preparatory school. It has successfully established a new mission and expectations for student learning with the necessary rubrics to measure success in reaching these expectations. Members of the school are well versed as to the intent of the new mission but they are struggling with the application of the rubrics in measuring the success of students in completing the expectations for student learning. The faculty and students will benefit by continued discussion of the use of the new rubrics as well as the application of the rubrics throughout the school year and in all classes.

The curricular offerings at South Burlington High School are broad and diverse. This is truly a point of pride for the parents, students and teachers. Many of the courses are student interest-based and they offer a wide variety of choices for the students. The curriculum offerings are provided at different degrees of difficulty and support a highly tracked system of classes. There is a professed dedication to aligning the curriculum with the newly defined grade expectations produced by the State of Vermont as well as aligning the curriculum with the new expectations for student learning. The leaders have committed to working with a consultant in an effort to complete this task. As this work is completed, efforts should be made to integrate the curriculum across subject matter areas.

All constituencies within South Burlington High School are proud of the success of the majority of students on national and state examinations. The success of the school's student results on standardized testing is a model for other schools in the State of Vermont. The challenge that exists, however, is to align assessments with the newly developed curriculum and develop a diversified approach to assessment to make it meaningful and accessible to all learning styles. In the 1996 accreditation report, the chairperson of the visiting team wrote, "The need also exists to better define learning objectives for students and to measure the level of attainment by students. Moreover, the school needs to define and assess school goals more clearly, and to measure the effectiveness of curriculum and programs. The implementation of South Burlington strategic plan can do much to accomplish this assessment. Full implementation of the plan will correct deficiencies in the area of assessment of student learning and effectiveness of school programs. In order for this to happen, all members of the professional staff must make a commitment to the completion of the goals of the strategic plan." This challenge continues to exist ten years after this statement was written.

School leaders exemplify creative energy and the clarity in thinking that has been articulated by the principal. Many new ideas have been discussed and some have been piloted. Unfortunately, many of the ideas for whole-school renewal have not been allowed to become a permanent part of the culture and organization of the school. Again, the 1996 chairperson wrote, "The school has a proven record of success with students who plan to attend colleges upon graduation and provides strong support for special needs students. However, another group of students, approximately 20 to 30% of the student body, feel disenfranchised in the school, both socially and academically. Curricula and extracurricular programs which attempt to meet the needs of the students should be reviewed and revised when necessary to better meet the educational needs of this group." One of the most difficult aspects of self-renewal is the need to describe the initiatives that must be undertaken. This recognition that change is needed must be made within the context of the history of success for most students that has been enjoyed by South Burlington High School. Many of the professional staff have devoted their working career to educating the children within the community. To admit that there are better curriculums, school-wide practices, teaching techniques and organizations of school personnel, time and students requires that the informal and formal leaders set aside any complacency at their success and dedicate their energies to the pursuit of success for all students. It means setting aside the familiar to openly engage the unfamiliar. It means placing the compelling needs of all children over the provincial needs and wishes of the existing decision-makers. Efforts at renewal must include serious consideration of the efficacy of the present modified block scheduling and rigid tracking and the absence of a formalized plan for the personalization of all children's education.

There is a dedicated group of professionals within library, nurses' office, and the guidance and special services departments. As a group these specialists strongly support the learning objectives of the school. The thoughtful sharing of library space with the community opens additional opportunities for the students of South Burlington High School that are not ordinarily available to high school students.

From interviews with parents and board of education members, the visiting team was left with the strong impression that there is great pride within the community for the work that is being done within South Burlington High School. Efforts are continuously being made to support the

educational program. There are challenges of a financial nature that are articulated in many conversations, however. The physical plant, while it supports a diverse curriculum, is also a limiting factor in other aspects of the educational program. South Burlington is one of a number of communities within the State of Vermont that are wrestling with state financial aid formulas. Efforts must be made to clearly articulate the priorities and to find appropriate means of financial support.

### **School and Community Profile Report**

South Burlington High School is located in Chittenden County near Lake Champlain in northwestern Vermont. Similar towns and cities along with the adjacent city of Burlington make up the state's urban core. Most neighboring communities are within a five to fifteen-minute commute of South Burlington. Public transportation is also available to most of these nearby communities. South Burlington, known as a middle-income, suburban community, has historically been considered one of the more affluent communities in Vermont and has traditionally provided excellent support, particularly in financial resources, to its schools.

The greater Burlington community is in a period of growth and change. Currently, there is a shortage of rental property and the real estate market is strongly slanted in favor of the sellers. There has been significant growth in the development of condominiums including low-income housing units within South Burlington. Homebuyers are usually drawn to South Burlington because of the excellent school district reputation. IBM, IDX, Fletcher Allen Health Care, General Dynamics, the University of Vermont and other colleges in the vicinity employ many residents in South Burlington. The median income in the South Burlington community is \$51,566. The Vermont State median income is \$46,936. The percentage of population below the poverty level in South Burlington is 2.3 % as of December 2004. The unemployment rate is 1.7%.

South Burlington Schools serve a population of primarily middle-income families. The city contains approximately 6,501 housing units with a median value of \$196,085. The median value of a home in Vermont is \$174,359.

The total current population for the city of South Burlington stands at around 16,200 residents. The city has experienced some population growth in recent years. Demographic studies based on housing growth indicate the city will grow steadily in the next few years.

Schools in the district include three elementary schools with grades K through 5 and one middle school, which feed into South Burlington High School. South Burlington also offers Early Essential Education to 31 students. In addition to the public schools, there are three private elementary schools and two private secondary schools. The city has recently renovated the elementary schools to accommodate increases in enrollment. The district master plan is to relocate the central administrative offices from the middle and high schools to accommodate the anticipated enrollment increases at the 6-12 level over the next one to five years. The total student population in the South Burlington School District is 2,614. This figure also includes tuition and school choice students. This figure can be compared to 2,701 in November 2003. The November 2004 high school population was 967 students, compared to 985 students in

November of 2003. Typically, the middle and high school enrollments have stayed close to the same since the year 2000.

Currently, 112 tuition students attend the high school, most coming from Grand Isle County in the Lake Champlain Islands. Students from the Islands may choose to attend any of the eight area high schools. Typically many of the Island students, needing the provided bus transportation, elect to attend South Burlington High School. These tuition students make up about 11.3% of the South Burlington High School population.

For the 2004-5 school year, the per-pupil expenditure at the secondary school level for South Burlington is \$9,980. For the previous school year, the figure was \$8,848, as compared to the state average of \$7,923. Generally, the South Burlington School Board has strongly supported school programs and defended appropriate budgets, even during difficult economic times. Traditionally, citizens support the school, and budgets and special appropriations have been approved with few problems. Although it is worth noting that the city charter includes a clause that allows for an automatic increase in the annual school budget, most often the board will tailor the budget to remain within the allowed charter increase rather than go to the voters for approval. The proposed budget for this year went up 6.9%, which is at charter limit. This percentage increase reflects the charter constraints of the operating tax rate going up 2.7%, as it cannot go up more than the grand list growth of 2.7%. The operating budget cannot go up more than a maximum of 10%.

School funding is generated from a variety of sources. Approximately 76% of locally raised property tax dollars are allocated for school use; 30% of funding is generated by local taxation, tuition from non-South Burlington students provides 3%. Approximately 63% of funding comes from state sources including special education reimbursements; 1% of funding comes from federal grants; and 4% is derived from other sources. A major challenge in the next few years will be generating sufficient financial resources and careful utilization of existing funds to maintain a high-quality program in light of the anticipated loss of local, state, and federal monies resulting from legislation and property tax reforms.

The ethnic and cultural composition of the student body mirrors that of the adult population in the community. The school's population, based on self-reported student data from the SBHS Schoolmaster database, is 91% white, 5.0% Asian 1.8 % African American, 1.3 % Hispanic, less than 1.0 % Native American and Alaskan and less than 1.0 percent other. There has been an increase in non-English-speaking students. The South Burlington E.L.L. (English Language Learners) Program has recently been the recipient of two Title III grants, totaling over \$60,000.00. One half of that total amount is being used to fund a library for immigrants that will be housed in the South Burlington Community Library. Twenty high school students (2.06%) are registered as LEP (Limited English Proficient) and receive English language instruction. Various high school students registered as Non-English Language Background (NELB) speak twenty-one different languages. Those languages are Dinka, Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, French, Russian, Japanese, Portuguese, Swahili, Lingala, Polish, Thai, Bosnian, Marathi, Tibetan, Swedish, Korean, Serbian, Punjab and Czech.

Recent legislation has reformed property and income taxes as well as school-funding laws. Several critical economic factors including payments due on school construction projects, elimination of the *Machinery and Use* tax, and an increasing budget deficit coupled with reductions in state aid have forced the South Burlington School Board to make dramatic changes in the operating budget over the last decade. Some of these changes are perceived by the professional staff to be very severe in a school accustomed to strong financial support.

The current high school population of 967 is projected to increase over the next ten years to around 1,100. In the past ten years, the community's high school age population has remained stable. Approximately 184 out of the 216 expected graduates entered the school together as freshmen four years ago. Student daily attendance has averaged 94.37 % over the last three school years.

There are ninety teachers in the high school. Including part time educators, there is a full time equivalent of 78.35. There are four administrators and forty-four support staff. Average faculty attendance was 96.1 % in the 2003-4 school year. According to class enrollment figures, the current student to teacher ratio at the high school is 19 to 1. The 2004 South Burlington School District Report Card lists an average core class size of 22.5 students per teacher.

The school has a hybrid block schedule. Students have 215 minutes of instructional time per day and attend school 180 days per academic year. Wednesday and Thursday are respectively odd and even period days with four class periods of 85 minutes. Monday, Tuesday, and Friday are eight period days with periods of 43 minutes. There is no common planning time for teachers within the contractual school day. A half hour of common time at the end of the school day is used for meetings of the educational support team, IEP meetings, and teacher planning and collaboration.

Courses are offered in different levels: remedial, standard, college prep, accelerated, advanced placement and honors. Thirty-six percent of students is enrolled in accelerated or AP courses, 9.7 % of our student body is enrolled in the lowest level courses and 2.9 % of our student body is enrolled in our alternative education option titled the SBHS Progressive Program. This program is designed for students who perform better in a non-traditional setting with self-exploration opportunities woven into the academic core. In the high school, 29.8 % of the students is identified for educational support. This includes 16.5 % of students who are identified and monitored within regular education with educational support team plans; 6.7 % are on 504 plans with accommodations and 6.6% of the high school students who are special education students receiving special education services through IEPs. Students are supported academically through the high school enrichment center and in classrooms.

SBHS provides several opportunities for student recognition. Our student successes in their academic and athletic endeavors are celebrated at the All Sports Banquet, the school-wide Academic Awards Assembly, the Honor Society induction and the posting/publication of the quarterly honor roll. Students are also recognized in the Career Development Center newsletter ("Career Clues"), on the student designed and maintained CDC website, and on CDC Appreciation Day in May as well as in the local newspaper. Art exhibits and concert performances provide arenas for showcasing the talents and achievements of students as well.

The school's dropout rate has been 2.6 % over the last two years. The graduation rate, defined as the number who graduated divided by the October 1 senior census count, was 91.9 % in 2004, 91.8 % in 2003, and 98.5 % in 2002.

A minimum of twenty units of credit is required for graduation from South Burlington High School. There is no service-learning requirement for graduation. Service learning is embedded in some courses such as health and S.L.A.M., a component of a course called Peer Leadership where junior and senior participants help first year students acclimate to the high school environment. Students may participate in community service and senior challenge through the career development center.

The SBHS International Experience Student Exchange Program currently involves exchanges with students from France, Germany, Spain, and Japan. About fifty students travel abroad for approximately three weeks in the international experience program each year. The program alternates between France and Japan one year and Spain and Germany the next year. Twenty-four current faculty members and administrators have participated in the exchanges. In addition, seventeen faculty members and their spouses participated in a community service project at a partner school in Costa Rica.

A number of alternative learning programs is offered. The SBHS Career Development Center (CDC) meets the needs of students through placement in work settings in business, industry and academia appropriate to student interest. In addition, students whose academic talents go beyond the school's curriculum may receive financial support from the district for courses at local colleges and universities. Independent study projects are encouraged when appropriate. An alternative high school experience called the Progressive Program meets the needs of students best served in a small, non-traditional setting. Business partnerships are an integral part of the Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (R.E.A.L.) Program. This program is designed to empower participants to create their own small businesses. They develop business plans and strive to become successful entrepreneurs. Students at South Burlington also are able to enroll in one of two technical center programs at Burlington Technical Center and Essex Center for Technology. These programs are open only to juniors and seniors with the exception of the Essex Pre-Tech Program that is also open to sophomore students.

The parents of the South Burlington High School students have traditionally been very supportive and involved. Some decline in participation, however, has been noticed over the last few years. Typically, parents volunteer and participate in school-related activities through such venues as the *Parents' Association*, *Friends of Music Organization* and *The Rebel Boosters*. Parental attendance at school events and athletic contests is relatively high. Many concerts, athletic competitions, art shows, drama productions, open houses, parent-teacher conferences and other informational meetings are generally well attended. Parents of freshman are invited to attend freshman orientation day.

Statistics regarding post-graduate intentions for the class of 2003 reveal that 71.9% of the school's graduates planned to pursue higher education. Of those students, 87.5 % planned to attend four-year colleges, 11.5 % planned to attend two-year colleges, 1 % intended to pursue other postsecondary education, 18.4 % of the graduating class planned to directly enter the

workforce, and 3.2 % enlisted in military service. Postgraduate intentions were undecided in 6.5% of this group.

The ratio of participation of South Burlington High School students taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT I) has been significantly higher than the national and Vermont averages. Out of the 214 graduating seniors in 2004, 170 (79%) took the SAT I sometime in their high school career. For several years, the South Burlington High School average scores on both the verbal and math sections of the SATs have been higher than the national and state averages. In 2003-04 for math, the SBHS mean score was 546 while the VT mean was 512 and the national mean was 518. The verbal mean score for SBHS was 536 while the VT mean score was 516 and national mean was 508. Because colleges are moving away from using the SAT scores as an indicator of basic knowledge and ability in mathematics and verbal skills, South Burlington students are substituting other standardized tests for SATs in their résumés and college applications.

Recent school initiatives include Student Led Advisory Meetings (S.L.A.M.), personal learning plans (PLP), freshmen seminar, and High Schools on the Move. The freshmen seminar and PLPs are school-wide initiatives designed to help students take more ownership of their education, develop study skills and explore and prepare for post-secondary choices. The PLPs are electronic portfolio documents that include selected pieces of writing, artwork, résumés, and recommendations. Students are encouraged to revisit the work they complete in these documents throughout their high school careers. The South Burlington High School is also striving to align programs with the statewide *High Schools on the Move* Initiative. This year an enrichment center for math and science was also added.

**SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL**  
**Mission and Expectations for Student Learning**  
(Completed 02 February 2004)

**Mission**

The mission of South Burlington High School, a community committed to excellence in education, is to ensure that each student possess the knowledge, skills and character to create a successful and responsible life. We will do this by building safe, caring, challenging and diverse learning environments, cultivating family and community partnerships and inspiring life-long learning.

**Expectations for Student Learning**

**Academic Expectations**

1. The South Burlington High School student reads closely for a wide range of purposes.
2. The South Burlington High School student writes in a clear, concise and organized manner for a wide range of purposes.
3. The South Burlington High School student actively listens and responds to communication.
4. The South Burlington High School student expresses him/herself creatively and effectively in a variety of forms.
5. The South Burlington High School student uses technology for a variety of purposes.
6. The South Burlington High School student effectively solves problems.

**Civic / Social Expectations**

1. South Burlington High School students value service to others for its benefits to our community.
2. South Burlington High School students participate in the democratic process.
3. South Burlington High School students understand and express how different cultures communicate their important ideas and instill their values.
4. South Burlington High School students value and respect how diversity in all its forms enriches human experience.
5. South Burlington High School students demonstrate respect for self, others, and the environments in which we live, work and play.
6. South Burlington High School students set personal, academic, post-secondary and career planning goals.
7. South Burlington High School students demonstrate an awareness of learning styles and individual strengths and challenges.
8. South Burlington High School students make informed decisions based on the indicators of intellectual, physical, social and emotional health.

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS &  
COLLEGES, INC.  
COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION**

**For High Schools, Middle/High Schools, and K-12 Schools  
Effective for Schools Hosting Visiting Committees beginning in the Year 2005**

# Teaching and Learning Standards

## 1. Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that:
  - are measurable;
  - reflect the school's mission.
4. For each academic expectation in the mission the school shall have a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric.
5. The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations.
6. The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.
7. The school shall review regularly the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.

## **Mission and Expectations for Learning**

### **Conclusions**

The school's mission and expectation developed the mission and expectations for student learning of South Burlington High School (SBHS) for student learning committee, the faculty and the student body. They were approved and supported by the faculty and board of education. The mission and expectation committee examined the district's mission and decided to recommend to the faculty that this statement be used as an initial draft from which to make changes for use as their mission for the high school. The faculty voted to adopt the district's mission statement with few changes. Faculty members participated in full-faculty brainstorming sessions to decide on a set of academic, social, and civic student learning expectations. Students were polled about the relevance and rigor of the expectations and how they saw themselves meeting the expectations in their current coursework. The school board, high school administration, and faculty voted to adopt the mission and expectations. The school has displayed the mission and expectations in the school hallways, lobby and in classrooms, and has published them in the SBHS Handbook. Faculty, staff, student and the school board know and support the school's mission and expectation. This knowledge and support have the capacity to lead to a more mission-driven school community. (self-study, student work, students, parents, central office administrators)

The South Burlington High School Mission Statement is representative of the school community's fundamental beliefs and values about student learning. The school's faculty, student body, parents and school board believe the mission and expectations strongly reflect their fundamental beliefs and values about student learning. Teachers expressed their agreement with the sentiments contained in the mission statement and expectations. Although not too familiar with the actual wording of the mission statement and expectations, students and parents were able to discuss some key concepts. Parents expressed strong agreement with, and support for, the goals of the school and educational leadership. Parents felt their children are being held accountable for the civic, social, and academic expectations in most classes. The school board adopted a district mission statement created by a group of K-12 teachers, staff members, students, parents, and city officials, which South Burlington High School used as its mission statement with few changes. Although faculty and school leaders described the value of academic rigor for all students, that concept is not contained in the mission statement. At the same time, the South Burlington High School community expresses a strong sense of who they are and what they stand for. The school community is beginning to act on shared expectations for student learning. As actions on these beliefs continue, student learning will be maximized. (observation, self-study, student work, teachers)

South Burlington High School has defined school-wide academic, civic and social learning expectations. Through the development of a school-wide rubric, the academic learning expectations are beginning to be measured on a student level. All departments have divided the six expectations among its membership so that all expectations are included within the content areas. While technically measurable, all expectations are not utilized in all classes. Students and parents do not appear to be aware of the practice of the six expectations in classes. The civic and social expectations are measurable through a series of indicators, which are sorted by phrases from the mission statement. The academic, civic and social expectations are reflective of the mission. Further educating students about the student learning expectations will allow students and families to rise to the expectations of SBHS. (observation, self-study, teachers, students, parents)

For each of the six academic expectations in the mission statement, the school has a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric. Having adopted the rubrics directly from the Vermont Framework, SBHS wishes to have its students achieve "met standard" on each of the six academic expectations. While teachers voted agreement on the rubrics for the six expectations, they express a need for a rubric that goes beyond "met standard". Revisiting the school-wide rubric to allow changes can provide the opportunity for SBHS to grow into a more vigorous and challenging school. Teachers have begun to use rubrics to measure students; however, a plan to allow time for better calibration at a school-wide level is needed to assure continuity in effectively measuring student's achievement of the six standards. The school-wide rubric based on the six student learning expectations is not fully implemented at present in each academic discipline's curriculum and common practices of assessment; this compromises student understanding of school-wide expectations and the opportunity to measure students' level of successful achievement. (self-study, facility tour, student work, teachers)

SBHS has school-wide indicators to assess student involvement in completing the eight civic and social expectations. Indicators include, but are not limited to, involvement in community service, student government, student exchange programs and participation in school surveys. All indicators are evaluated based on student participation and local and national survey data. Completing the development of assessment methods for the civil and social expectations will allow SBHS students to graduate having demonstrated mastery of all eight of the expectations. (administrative interviews)

SBHS has begun to guide its procedures, policies, and decisions by a consideration of the school's mission and expectations. Through physical changes in the school such as the creation of space for students to gather in the school's lobby and the development of new programs, it is apparent that the culture is in the process of transforming into a more student-oriented institution. Students, school leaders and parents affirm that the school is a safe and caring place for students. However, student work, teacher observation, and student testimonials reveal that challenging students with a common intellectual mission and responding to diverse learners remain areas where the school must make a greater effort to grow. Although not all qualities of the school's mission are currently in consistent practice, faculty members, students and school board members express the drive and expectation of this occurring. Continuing the work on developing personal learning plans and student

showcase folders that would document each student's academic and personal growth and details of meeting the expectations will allow SBHS to track both student and school success, and would provide data to modify or create procedures, policies, and make decisions based on the mission statement and the school's expectations. (observation, facility tour, teachers, central office administrators)

South Burlington High School has started to review the mission statement and expectations for student learning using existing data to ensure that the documents reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission and state and national standards. Teachers have chosen one of the six student learning expectations (SLE) to focus on in class and have each used the school-wide rubric to assess their singular SLE at least once. The school has provided a variety of means to assess students' achievement in the social and civic expectations. In teacher meetings and a meeting with the mission and expectation committee, there is an understanding of the data that needs to be collected; however, currently there is no action plan to move towards gathering this needed data for assessing the academic expectations. A universal consistent application and measurement of the standards as well as an analysis of the assessment are needed to make SBHS a mission-driven school. The cycle of analysis and renewal will reveal degrees of student success and ensures that the mission remains a responsive living document. (self-study, student work, teachers)

### **Commendations**

1. Proud public display of the mission and expectations
2. Creation of school-wide rubrics for each of the six student learning expectations
3. The initial use of school-wide rubrics by all teachers to measure student achievement
4. Teachers initial work on personal learning plans and student showcase to document and track student achievement of each of the standards

### **Recommendations**

1. Expand the mission statement to include academic rigor for all students in all classes
2. Develop a procedure that includes input from all of the school's stakeholders, for the regular review and revisions, as needed, of the mission statement and expectations using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission and state and local standards
3. Regularly revise and improve the school-wide rubrics to challenge all students

4. Develop additional methods to document student achievement of the expectations such as student showcase folders
  
5. Identify a consistent set of indicators, and establish data benchmarks, to be used to measure the school's progress in achieving the civic and social expectations
  
6. Establish a procedure to ensure that all decisions related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, policy, and procedures, are judged against their ability to advance the mission and expectations

## **2. Curriculum**

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the professional staff's commitment to and involvement in a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

1. Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.
2. The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations.
3. The written curriculum shall:
  - prescribe content;
  - integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations;
  - identify course-specific learning goals;
  - suggest instructional strategies;
  - suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.
4. The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall:
  - be appropriately integrated;
  - emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.
7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

## CURRICULUM

### Conclusions

The SBHS Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) are not yet driving the curriculum and student learning, but they are in an emerging stage of recognition. South Burlington High School has rewritten its mission statement to include six academic expectations and eight civic and social expectations. These expectations are listed in the program of study, the student handbook and are posted prominently throughout the school. All departments have assumed responsibility for the six academic standards, with all but two departments accepting responsibility for all six. Within all departments, each course contains at least one learning activity that addresses one of the expectations. Because of this emergent stage, however, and until the SLEs become a familiar part of all class proceedings, impact on student learning is negligible. (observation, self-study, facility tour, 8)

Presently the written curriculum guides teachers in the content of specific courses and is aligned with the Vermont Curriculum Framework and the national standards where applicable. Because the curriculum is not yet aligned with the SLEs, however, students are not consistently provided with opportunities to practice and achieve these expectations. Increasing such opportunities and assessing progress are listed as a high priority in the Curriculum Committee Self-Study. Further work needs to be done to align the SLEs within the curriculum in order to provide opportunities for all students to practice and achieve each of the expectations prior to graduating from SBHS. Additionally, there were observations that question whether all course levels have a curriculum that are challenging and that offer equal opportunities to learn and practice skills. (observation, self-study, student work, student work, teachers)

The written curriculum is divided by department and exists in separate documents in varying formats; nowhere are these documents found together. Most department documents prescribe content, some provide course-specific learning goals, a few state instructional strategies and define assessment techniques, but none have integrated the new school-wide learning expectations or rubrics. The curriculum documents range in completion date from 1999 to 2002. Last year, a process was put in place for the proposal and approval of new curricular offerings. While the application form, "Request for Program and Course Review," moves the school forward in defining new curriculum, it does not specify that the applicant's link learning with the SLEs, suggest instructional strategies, or suggest assessment techniques including the use of the school-wide rubric. Updating this format and the entire written curriculum to meet this standard will provide a valuable tool for serving and evolving a more vital learning community. (self-study, student work, teachers)

There are many SBHS programs that challenge students beyond the traditional classroom environment and authentic learning experiences are scattered throughout the curriculum; however, a significant portion of students is not being engaged in rigorous inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking and activities that have applications beyond the classroom walls. As postulated in meetings with members of the school community, SBHS meets the needs of the "the top and bottom of the student population" much better than those in the middle. Classroom visits and student work collected from across the curriculum demonstrate only a limited degree

of student engagement in the rigors of inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking, and while notable, authentic learning activities occur within the curriculum, they are not an inherent part of the learning. Until all SBHS students are given the opportunity to be engaged by a curriculum of challenging and meaningful learning experiences they will not be able to realize their learning potential. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, student work, students, parents)

The curriculum at SBHS contains only a few integrated courses (Honors American Studies, integrating US History and English 10; Contemporary Issues in Health and Fiction, integrating fiction and health and human development; Holocaust Studies, integrating literature and history) and team teaching opportunities that integrate related content areas in different departments. These integrated and team-taught classes are extremely well received by parents and students; there is a clear desire for more. Beginning this year, writing has been identified as a focus area and it is being integrated across the curricula. Technology is also readily integrated across the curricula. While there are pockets of integrated learning, it is inconsistent across departments. Teachers, students and parents are enthusiastic about the diversity of the curriculum, but while this diverse curriculum allows for breadth it does not emphasize depth for achievement and proficiency in the learning expectations. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, student work, students, parents)

The school is exemplary in its provision of opportunities for students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and school campus. In this capacity, SBHS affords learning experiences that are alternative and/or accelerated in nature, that provide immersion and/or exposure to other cultures, and that offer exploration in career opportunities. These offerings are celebrated by: students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community with affirmations such as "valuable" and "transformative." Among the offerings are the Horizons Program, the Independent Diploma Program, two area technical centers, the Champlain Valley Regional Consortium, on-line correspondence courses, College Connection program for grades 10 through 12, The International Experience (TIE) student exchange program, the Dominican Republic Education and Mentoring service program (DREAM), a broad range of thirty two athletic and eighteen non-athletic activities, and last but not least, the Career Development Center (CDC) dedicated to career planning and exploration of community service opportunities (including Big Buddies, tutoring and Volunteers in Action). Programs such as these contribute richly to the learning community and impel meaningful student growth at SBHS. (self-study, presentation, teachers, students, parents)

Curricular coordination and articulation is confined to the schools within the South Burlington School District. Coordination and articulation take place at monthly department meetings, semi-monthly Curriculum Area Supervision (CAS) meetings, and varying 6 -12 vertical teaming meetings. Curricular coordination and articulation have begun to take place between departments through new in-service opportunities since the development of the SLEs. However, the self-study and teacher interviews indicate that only limited coordination and articulation has been arranged between SBHS and sending elementary schools from outside of the South Burlington School District especially impacting those students from the Lake Champlain Islands, which make-up approximately 11% of the school population. (self-study, student work, community members)

The SBHS curriculum is supported at a basic level with adequate instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, staffing levels, and resources in the library/media center, except in the physical education department's gym facilities. These facilities have inadequate space for classes to function effectively and for athletic equipment to be properly stored. This situation notably impedes the curriculum and student learning. The cut to this year's general budget is also having an impact on the availability of resources, especially in the area of technology, directly impacting one of the six SLEs. The technology replacement schedule was put on hold and a computer lab was eliminated as part of these cuts. The sufficiency of staffing levels has also been questioned in a handful of courses, specifically AP classes where sections have been eliminated. At the same time, in some cases, the school's equipment provides curricular and learning possibilities not often seen in a high school, such as Electronic Imaging and Smart Boards. Both teachers and students described relative ease in accessing the supplies and equipment necessary to support their learning goals. When the facility is free of unnecessary obstacles, dynamic and intentional learning can occur, such an obstacle-free facility must be created for the physical education department. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, facility tour, student work, school board)

The school has not had a mechanism for the ongoing development, evaluation and revision of the curriculum. Moreover, although the school's SLEs were piloted last year, the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum is not currently based on the school's academic expectations or assessment of student performance on those academic expectations. This year, a process was begun for curriculum evaluation and revision for two departments per year; prior to this, there was no comprehensive review of the school's curriculum using course-specific learning goals or any other formal data. The superintendent has retained a consultant who will conduct a curriculum audit to review needs and recommend future plans. Further use of the school-wide rubric (to assess the SLEs) and other common assessments that are linked to SLEs will yield data that will better inform a curricular review process. A curricular review process that includes the review of course specific learning goals and student performance on academic learning expectations is critical to targeting improvements to student learning. (self-study, observation, community members, school leadership)

The time, financial resources, and personnel committed to the development, evaluation and revision of the curriculum needs to be increased and clearly directed. While the administration has been committed to the vertical teaming of grades 6 – 12 to allow the school's core disciplines (English, fine arts, math, science, social studies, world languages) to meet once a month with a focus on curriculum and while individual teachers have pursued professional development to inform their curricular offerings, this is not enough to shape a cohesive school-wide curriculum whose mission is to graduate students who are each proficient in the school's fourteen SLEs. Several initiatives have begun that deserve fostering. The K - 12-curriculum audit will provide base-line information for examining the scope and sequence of the school's offerings. Beginning this year, the rolling schedule for the curriculum evaluation and revision of two departments per year is a positive start. Yet, in order to achieve a more integrated curriculum driven by the SLEs, an interdisciplinary process guided by clear objectives, action steps and criteria must be implemented. This may mean an organizational shift in how the school allocates its human, time and financial resources. The curriculum is currently dotted with innovative learning

opportunities driven by passionate individuals and available to a relatively small portion of students. A more comprehensive and collaborative approach to developing, evaluating and revising the SBHS curriculum will enrich the learning opportunities for all. (observation, self-study, student work, teachers, parents, school board, school leadership)

There are some professional development activities that support the development and implementation of the curriculum. Some activities this year have focused attention on writing. Summer work for teachers may provide a means to support and enhance curriculum. Teacher Learning Tuesdays have established the capacity for improvements made to some curricula as teachers may choose to bring their work to a Critical Friends Group or a study group to collaborate on improvements with peers. While these activities are beneficial to individual professionals and some students, there is no clear long-term plan for professional development that would effect focused curricular change across the school. Student learning loses depth when professional development is not cohesive. (self-study, student work, community members)

### **Commendations**

1. The integrated course offerings provided in English, social studies, and health and human development
2. The initiative to focus on writing across the curriculum
3. The efforts to integrate curriculum
4. The creativity within the curriculum
5. The broad range of opportunities for all students to extend their learning beyond normal course offerings and the school campus
6. The development of a cyclical curriculum review process, including the use of a curriculum consultant to oversee and ensure the regular review of all school curriculum
7. The establishment of Teacher Learning Tuesdays as a means of professional development

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that the written curriculum in all areas prescribes content, integrates relevant school-wide learning expectations, includes course-specific learning goals, suggests instructional strategies, and suggests assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics
2. Ensure the curriculum in all classes at all levels engages student inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills and provides opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills

3. Ensure that the curriculum is appropriately integrated at all levels and within and across all departments
4. Ensure that all curricula emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage
5. Ensure that the currently ongoing curriculum revision includes the thorough alignment of curriculum with the school's academic expectations
6. Provide a physical education facility to ensure full implementation of the physical education curriculum
7. Develop and implement local assessments that are linked to SLEs and collect and use data to revise curricula
8. With faculty input develop a long-term professional development plan that supports all aspects of curriculum work
9. Provide sufficient, formal, and structurally integrated time to faculty to contribute substantially to the curriculum review and revision process

### **3. Instruction**

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of the curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
  - personalize instruction;
  - make connections across disciplines;
  - engage students as active learners;
  - engage students as self-directed learners;
  - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
  - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
  - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection.
3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

## Instruction

### Conclusions

Instructional strategies and practices are not widely consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. There is very little use of the mission statement in the development of most instructional practices with the exception is the SLAM Program, a highly student-centered advisory program. In most academic classrooms, students do not easily see connections between what they are expected to know and be able to do and the school's mission statement. Additionally, students are rarely provided opportunities to reflect on how to improve their work and raise the final product's quality. The instructional practices prevalent in the school prevent students from improving their knowledge and skills through formative assessments. This approach creates an intellectual complacency on the part of the students, which has become a school-wide pattern. Thus both students and teachers would benefit from the professional development for teachers in best practices that will encourage risk-taking and creative methods of teaching. (observation, self-study, student work, teachers, students, parents).

SBHS has adopted the minimal credit graduation requirements mandated by the state of Vermont. In the middle and lower level ability groupings, a majority of students are not challenged to use higher order thinking skills. It is possible to graduate from this school without taking challenging courses putting a large segment of the student population at a disadvantage for post-secondary education. Parent meetings revealed that many families do not know of these low expectations for the lower and middle level courses, and parents have not been informed of colleges' perceptions of these low level courses. Raising expectations through engaging instruction for student learning beyond minimal standards, particularly for this segment of the student body, is critical to improving student learning. (self-study, parents, community members)

School Board members and parents tell conflicting stories about acquisition of educational resources. Board members believe that purchasing of textbooks and other necessary instructional materials may in some case be delayed for about a year after the need is established. Parents report that the purchasing of textbooks by parents, the sharing of textbooks by students and the copying of text material by teachers has been ongoing for several years. Families in lower socio-economic conditions may not be able to purchase textbooks and other required resources that should be part of the public school role guaranteeing equal opportunity. This practice jeopardizes student learning and creates inequities throughout the school. (parents, school board, community members)

Instructional strategies at SBHS attempt to personalize instruction, make connections across disciplines, engage students as active and self-directed learners, involve all students in higher order thinking skills, provide opportunities of students to apply knowledge and skills and promote student self-assessment. While some teachers are able to personalize instruction by acting as mentors and accommodating student learning styles, observations confirm that most teachers offer teacher-centered instruction. Active learning opportunities are more common for students in some subject areas than others. The imaging lab, science labs, the arts, travel, service, and internship programs are examples where active learning takes place. In most core subject

areas, opportunities for active learning are limited. Rich and varied student-centered instructional strategies are not the pattern across the school. Direct classroom observations reveal that approximately one-third of the school's teachers are employing varied instructional strategies while two-thirds of teachers are not. Student learning is compromised by this significant degree of ineffective instructional practice. For example, in one class, all students performed the same rote learning activity for the whole period; in another class, students spent the whole period filling out worksheets; in a third class, students read from a textbook and took notes for the entire period. Student learning is limited, as students are not given consistent opportunities to learn in multiple modalities, and there is very little encouragement for students to assume responsibility for learning nor to become actively engaged in the learning process. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, presentation, student work, students, community members)

While the school schedule does not create the structural conditions for interdisciplinary learning, there are some formal and informal attempts to make connections to other disciplines. The Holocaust Course makes formal connections between English and social studies. In science, informal connections are made between science and history; informal connections are also made between world languages and history. Student work shows that some students do have the opportunity to connect their learning experiences in class to other experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Teacher collaboration is shown to improve instruction, yet the school schedule inhibits these opportunities. Students are stronger learners when they are able to make connections among the disciplines they study but the climate and practice of the school must encourage and support deliberate connections. (self-study, teachers, students)

Teachers in AP classes routinely engage students with higher order skills while teachers of classes at other levels do not routinely model this practice. For example, too frequently, classes focus on worksheet completion, and in some classes students are unaware of the concept they are being taught. When all students have opportunities to learn higher order thinking skills, they are better able to organize their ideas and to solve problems and function in real life. Furthermore, the selective teaching of higher order thinking skills represents a lack of equity; this limits student learning and compromises the school's integrity. (observation, student work)

Most students are not provided with the opportunity for self-assessment and self-reflection. Student work indicates that some students are introduced to self-assessment. However, the majority of students were not given the opportunity to routinely engage in self-evaluation. The process of learning to use rubrics encourages awareness of the quality of one's own work and provides both the opportunity and practice in taking responsibility for one's own learning. In order for students to mature intellectually they need to have regular opportunities to reflect on and assess their own work. (observation, self-study, students)

Instructional improvement takes place when teachers use feedback from other teachers, students, supervisors and parents. Teachers in the same departments report sharing ideas with each other as their proximal location lends itself to this. Whereas, feedback from assessments of SLE accomplishment is limited and thus has not had a substantive impact on instructional practices, other feedback comes from collegial observations and from some available collaborations. Special educators are present in a few ninth grade English classes, and through these collaborations, staff members are in a continuous mode of feedback with one another to improve

instruction. "Teacher Learning Tuesdays" provides a number of venues for teacher feedback. One offering, a Critical Friends Group, promotes an increase in cross-curricular input and feedback on one another's work; expansion of this program will help even more to improve student learning and instructional practices. Some teachers indicate that they use student course evaluations at the end of the year. Finding a means to secure student feedback at various times throughout the year will make way for instructional changes in real time; adjusting practices to better support and challenge students increases their learning. Collaboration between Curriculum Area Supervisors (CAS) has the potential to provide feedback to faculty members about instructional practices. At present, CAS positions ensure vertical articulation of curricula in each discipline. The role of the CAS is also necessary in the development and improvement of school-wide curricula, providing awareness of scope and sequence in instructional practices. Their role as supervisors has the potential to improve instruction, but, at the present time, this potential is not being exploited. Teachers solicit feedback from parents on open house nights as well as during teacher-parent-student conferences. Teachers report being recipients of feedback that is e-mailed to them from parents. This information is often useful and allows them to look closer at their instructional practices to see where adjustments might help a given student. (student work, teachers, school leadership)]

In order to be experts in their content areas, teachers must be knowledgeable about current research practices on instructional approaches and reflective about their own practices. Teachers' educations are often matched to the courses which they teach. All teachers are Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT) as assessed by No Child Left Behind standards; all are fully certified with the exception of one teacher who is on a temporary license. All special education teachers have masters' degrees in special education. (self-study, teachers, school board)

Teachers today must be highly educated to teach to an ever-more diverse student population. Some teachers remain current in their research on instructional practices. They read educational journals and take workshops on teaching methods and strategies; some teachers mentor new teachers or take on student teachers. These roles create a responsibility to remain current in one's field and educational practices. Teachers are encouraged to be reflective about their teaching practices. Ongoing awareness of effective instructional practices is essential for improved student success in school. (self-study, observation, student work, teachers, students)

A major characteristic of the professional school culture is the discussion of instructional strategies. Informally, teachers are engaged in discussion about instructional strategies at SBHS. This occurs both formally and informally within the departments, but only informally on a school-wide basis. Teachers in interdisciplinary courses regularly discuss instructional strategies. Teacher Learning Tuesdays create the conditions for increased discussion of instructional strategies. Institutional improvement occurs when there is a culture that includes the regular discussion of instructional strategies. (observation, teachers)

At SBHS, technology is often an integral part of teaching and learning. Many teachers use various forms of technology to support instruction. Teachers use Smart Boards, audiovisuals and other technology devices in their classrooms. Most students are very computer literate. The use

of technology is more evident on the longer block days. Some teachers use technology to record grades and assign homework through Rebel Net. In some classes, students are required to use technology as a means to apply knowledge. In the learning of technology in computer classes and imaging classes, students are required to be computer literate to apply their knowledge. An e-commerce course planned for 2007- 2008 will require students to learn business principles on-line. In other subjects, the use of the computer is being required for Internet and data acquisition in science class research. The teachers are clearly willing to use technology, so if a commitment is made to keep the technology current, technological integration can have an increasingly important role at SBHS. The use of teacher and student technology is critical to student learning techniques and to the reinforcement of this learning. (observation, self-study, facility tour, teachers, students)

Professional development at SBHS is intended to provide opportunities for teachers to address identified instructional needs and to develop their instructional strategies. The school offers teachers ongoing professional development opportunities although some of these are not guided of identified instructional needs by the faculty. Teachers are also encouraged to collaborate with other teachers in the school and through the UVM School Development Institutes (SDI's) with UVM. Teachers are engaged in working on a writing program for all students across the curriculum. Also, common assessments for SLEs are under revision. School-wide, teachers have taken part in developing strategies for the SLAM program. Identifying instructional needs such as an emphasis on differentiation and the teaching of higher order thinking skills will give the faculty greater direction toward instructional improvement. (observation, self-study, teachers)

Vermont's Standards for Professional Development address as its fifth state standard on professional development that all children must have access to advocacy and equity in education. Leveling/tracking is the acceptable practice at the SBHS that prevents some students from acquiring an equitable education. For example, data shows that the most experienced teachers teach the higher-level courses, leaving less experienced teachers with the high instructional demands of lower level courses. While there is a perception among students and parents that all classes are equal and all students will learn the same material at different rates, observations and student work reveal a much more disparate reality. This disparity results in inequity in expectation and an institutional lack of opportunity and advocacy for some learners. (observation, self-study, presentation, student work, teachers, students)

Meeting student needs and enhancing student learning is accomplished through ongoing teacher supervision and evaluation processes. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes are structured to improve instruction and help meet student needs. (School policy, "Differentiated Evaluation and Supervision System, October 2003") The potential impact of the plan is a key and integral part of improving instruction. While the plan has not been revised or updated since 2003, the attempt to improve instruction by identifying strengths and areas of improvement is losing direction and drive. (observation, self-study, presentation, student work, teachers, students)

## **Commendations**

1. All teachers are highly qualified (HQT) in content areas
2. Teacher Learning Tuesdays is a strong step in the direction of creating greater opportunities for the discussion of instructional strategies

## **Recommendations**

1. Employ a variety of instructional modalities to ensure equity of opportunity among all learners
2. Review the efficacy of multiple tracks to ensure that all children have equitable access to the highest quality education
3. Collaborate to share and improve instructional strategies
4. Create opportunities for all students to practice higher order thinking skills on a regular basis
5. Ensure that instructional practices in all classes personalize instruction, make connections across disciplines, engage students as active, self-directed learners, involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding, provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills, and promote student self-assessment and self-reflection
6. Provide formal opportunities for school-wide and inter-departmental discussion about instructional strategies so that such discussions become a significant part of the professional culture of the school
7. Conduct an assessment of the degree to which instructional strategies are aligned with the school's mission and expectations and develop programs to ensure that instructional strategies are appropriately aligned
8. Provide professional development for identified instructional needs by the faculty for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs

#### **4. Assessment for Student Learning**

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

1. The school shall have a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics.
2. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations.
3. For each learning activity teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed.
4. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.
5. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
6. Teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies.
7. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies.
8. The school's professional staff shall communicate:
  - individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families;
  - the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community.

## Assessment

### Conclusion

South Burlington High School has begun a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics. SBHS prominently posts its SLEs in the form of six academic expectations, eight civic/social expectations and its mission statement in most classrooms. The SLEs are based on the Vermont Curriculum Standards. The academic expectations are also displayed in the halls, with expectations that seem especially appropriate to a particular department posted in that academic wing. For example, academic expectation number two, "...student writes in a clear, concise and organized manner for a wide range of purposes", appears in the hallway where the English department's classrooms are located. Students and teachers are aware of the SLEs, although many parents are not. As a result of the New Standards Reference Examination (NSRE) outcomes, this year teachers were directed to implement writing across the curriculum in all content areas. This relates to academic expectation number two. When a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress is in place, it can determine if academic expectations are being met and what changes in instruction and curriculum can improve student learning. (observation, self-study, presentation, teachers, students, community members)

According to the self-study, the school's professional staff has compiled some data points begin to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations. Some of the data points or indicators are the number of students participating in social responsibility organizations like Key Club, students registered to vote, student participation in TIE, YRBS, Vermont Senior Survey, and student records of "good citizenship". Using and interpreting these data points will enable the school to assess its success in achieving civic and social expectations. (self-study, student work, teachers)

Some teachers inform students of requirements for learning activities with course-specific rubrics, and a few teachers state what students will learn in class that day. Some course rubrics are designed to encourage student self-assessment. However, students are not consistently aware of how classroom assignments, rubrics, and assessments relate to the SLEs, mission statement, or civic/social expectations. Therefore, in order to inform student learning, continual and explicit reference to the SLEs, civic/social expectations, and mission statement must become part of all student experiences. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, teachers)

While there are rubrics for assessment of academic expectations, use of the system is sporadic. Rubrics adopted from the Vermont Frameworks address the SLEs across departments, but an "exceeds the standard" column is not included in the school's SLE rubrics limiting the pursuit and encouragement of additional rigor and higher levels of achievement. All nine departments incorporate the problem solving SLE, seven departments address the reading and technology SLEs, and eight departments incorporate the expression, listening, and writing SLEs. Although each teacher is responsible for using one of the academic expectations with his/her students, this implementation has often been limited to a one-time use with only one class rather than consistent practice. Examination of student work does not reveal widespread use of the SLE rubrics that would contribute to the school's knowledge of its achievement of school-wide academic expectations. The Assessment Standard Committee has produced grade-level data revealing the percentage of students who fall into each point on the SLE rubric (meets, almost

met, didn't meet, and no evidence). This “data” is based on teachers using the SLEs once with an unknown number of students. More consistent use of the SLEs across the school is necessary to produce more robust and useful data. At present, there are no grounds for assessment of the level of successful achievement across disciplines for each expectation. Thus, there can be no assessment of the effectiveness of nor analysis of student work within and across disciplines. To go beyond the experimental use of the school’s rubric system, it may be necessary to provide professional development for all teachers on the creation, use, and data analysis of rubrics to inform the assessment processes of the school (observation, self-study, student shadowing, facility tour, student work, community members)

Classroom observations revealed that paper and pencil tests and quizzes are extensively employed, and although departments reported through the self-study process that a variety of assessments is used to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies examination of student work and testimonials of students themselves does not support this report of a wide variety of assessments. Student growth over time as documented through formative and summative assessments is not currently measured using data from the SLEs. It appears that the primary means of assessing individual student growth over time is through PLAN and ACT. Data related to individual growth over time is a rich source of information to support students in allowing them to take responsibility for their own learning and to inform the school of the efficacy of instructional methods and specific needs for curriculum change. Progress reports, grades, and teacher comments are available to students and their parents through the Internet-based reporting system, Rebel Net, although not all teachers are currently utilizing it to its fullest potential. According to the SBHS Program of Studies Graduation Requirements, meeting SLEs and civic/social expectations are not tied to graduation requirements. This link must be established to give formal value to the school’s mission and expectations. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, facility tour, teachers)

SBHS teachers do not have formal opportunity to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies. They must meet on an informal basis to discuss student work and assessments, and the faculty has not developed or adopted a formal protocol for collegial examination or discussion of student work although some of the staff members are familiar with Critical Friends Group protocol. Consistent, organized examination of student work cannot have a significant effect on curriculum revision or improvement of instructional practices without some organized procedure as a vehicle for teachers to discuss student work and assessments. Teacher Learning Tuesdays, new in the school year 2006-'07, has the potential to provide a forum for such discussion. Although some faculty members use assessments to initiate change in the curriculum, this practice is not consistent across all the disciplines. Thus, curriculum development and revision based on student performance data is not a regular and universal practice that will assist in improvement of curriculum. In addition, while some teachers use the results of classroom assessments to improve their instructional practices in various ways, this also is not a widespread practice. Thus, teachers do not have access to data based on actual student assessment nor on collegial experiences to guide their practices and inform their efforts to improve teaching and learning and to provide meaningful assessment. (student work, student work, community members)

The school provides limited professional development opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. There is no professional development plan with a prioritized list of topics. Teachers have not been part of a systematic effort to provide school-wide approaches to gathering and examining student performance data created as a result of a broad range of assessment strategies. The self-study notes a need to upgrade teachers' knowledge of assessment and data use to improve curriculum and instruction. Thus, while some teachers have developed some varying or original assessment strategies, there is no mechanism in place for teachers to share assessment strategies that might lead to the improvement of student learning. (self-study, student work, community members)

Although the school is justifiably proud of its students' SAT scores that are above state and national results, student must also be taught more internal, self-defining, personally engaging processes for self-assessment and meaningful learning. This should be the result of shifting the focus to the school's SLEs and using them as benchmarks of achievement. The school's professional staff does not yet communicate individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families nor does the school communicate progress on the achievement of all school-wide expectations. When SBHS has implemented its assessment and communication system, students, parents and teachers will know students' levels of performance on the SLEs. (self-study, teachers, students, school board)

### **Commendations**

1. Starting a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations (SLEs) based on school-wide rubrics
2. Teachers frequently employ course-specific rubrics across content areas

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop a process to ensure the school assesses school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission through the use of school-wide rubrics
2. Identify appropriate indicators and establish benchmarks to be used to assess the school's progress in achieving the civic and social expectations articulated in the mission
3. Consistently clarify for students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals so they know the "What" and "Why" of their learning
4. Ensure that teachers use varied assessment tools to ensure that students of differing learning styles have been given an equal opportunity to perform successfully
5. Develop a means to allow educators to meet collaboratively to share and examine student work

6. Ensure that teachers are using the results of student work to revise the curriculum and improve instructional and assessment strategies
7. Develop a professional development program that will provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in creating and using rubrics and in developing a broad range of assessment strategies

## Support Standards

### 5. Leadership and Organization

The way in which a school organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices which supports student learning and well-being.

1. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
3. Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school.
4. The organization of the school and its educational programs shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
7. Meaningful roles in the decision-making process shall be accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.
11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.

14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

## Leadership and Organization

### Conclusions

The principal of South Burlington High School has autonomy in making decisions related to the operation of the school. Both the school board and co-superintendents have consistently granted the power to run the school to the principal. The principal is directly involved in the budget process including decisions related to program and implementing changes related to budget limitations. This past year has brought severe budget cuts. Rather than impart their budgetary dicta, the school board and superintendents have empowered the principal to determine which components of the budget would be cut. He has mandated professional development in the area of teaching writing in order to address data generated weaknesses in that area. Additionally, the principal has implemented a new school schedule based on data supporting the benefits of later start time for high school students. The school board and co-superintendents support his role and authority. The principal has regular meetings with curriculum area supervisors (CAS) to support and direct expectations for students. He directs the hiring of faculty and staff members, is responsible for the supervision and evaluation of teachers, and oversees all aspects of the high school. The principal is consistently described as being accessible, enthusiastic, visible and committed to the school. Faculty, parents and students appear to respect and praise his leadership. Evidence consistently supports that the principal has autonomy and decision-making authority and his leadership is vital to the continued growth of the school community in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, student work, students, parents, school board, central office administrators, school leadership, survey)

The principal provides leadership and promotes the mission, direction, and focus for student learning. All constituencies consistently view the principal as the instructional leader. He collaborates with the curriculum area supervisors, faculty, staff, parents, and students. He uses a variety of communication strategies, including newsletters, e-mail, newspaper articles, and forums to connect with the community. He attends board meetings as the high school liaison. Teachers say that there has been too little time provided for adoption and implementation of some initiatives. The principal, then, demonstrates strong engagement with all members of the school community. The provision of data and input for future planning will develop direction and foster further student learning. (self-study, student work, students, parents, school board, central office administrators, school leadership, survey)

Teachers and administrators are actively involved in leadership essential to the improvement of the school. Curriculum area supervisors support and collaborate with other teachers about curriculum development, actions plans, and department budgets. Teachers also participate in educational support teams, individual educational teams, and attend extracurricular activities. Teachers oversee the student led advisory meetings (SLAM) program and provide training in leadership techniques to eleventh and twelfth grade students who lead the program. Teachers participate in partners for equitable schools (PES) that supports anti-bullying and harassment initiatives. The assistant principal, athletic director/co-curricular director, the administrative dean, and the dean of students play myriad leadership roles at SBHS, such as overseeing all co-curricular activities, overseeing the behavior management team, supervising class advisors, and overseeing the career development center. The on-going active participation of additional

teachers and administrators in leadership roles will continue to benefit the school. (self-study, student shadowing, student work, student work, students, school board, central office administrators, school leadership, survey).

The organization of the school and its educational programs are influenced by a modified block schedule, CAS, and the recent change in the start of the school day. Although the latter is based on effective research, other schools are not in alignment with this schedule, and daily implementation has significantly reduced instructional time for athletes and, at times, impacts the flow of instruction. The school enjoys a variety of course offerings in each department from Japanese to Holocaust Studies. The leadership of CAS provides non-evaluative supervision and teacher support. The career development program, the progressive program, and the jazz band were noted as examples of the diversity of offerings. The recent adoption of a school-wide professional development program focusing on writing supports the expectations for students. Recent budget cuts have impacted the expansion of SLAM and the availability of course offerings and associated equipment and materials. Relative to student discipline, the administrative leadership team is structured by grade level. Disciplinary situations often benefit from strong relationships with students; at SBHS students move among three different administrators during their four years. This has the potential to impact personalization for students. On-going review and modification of organizational structures including school day, the modified block schedule, the CAS program, and course offerings will maximize student expectations for learning. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, student work, students, parents, central office administrators, school leadership)

While students may choose their classes, enrollment in required classes or one-section popular electives often adversely affects student schedules, which is compounded by the fact that students are grouped or tracked. Additionally, as noted in the self-study when the honors ninth grade language arts class is offered, the academically strong students are drawn out of the heterogeneously grouped ninth grade social studies classes, thus compromising the heterogeneity of those classes. Finally, the multiple levels of courses in the core areas reduce the opportunities for heterogeneity. The enrichment center, the English language learners' program, and the special education department provide individual support for students. The progressive program has allowed students to return to school and has given students the opportunity to have content area SBHS teachers. While this program is viewed as a positive step forward, it remains non-inclusionary as students are segregated from their peers. In addition, observations and student feedback brings to light that progressive program course content does not align with non-program courses of the same name. Additionally, progressive program students shared the belief that they are learning the same things as students in other classes, except at a slower pace. Data sources indicate this is not accurate. In order to meet the individual needs, equity, and diversity of students, SBHS should review current research and best practices to foster heterogeneity. It should also assure that students in alternative programs know pertinent details about their educational status. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, student work, community members, survey)

The modified block schedule was established to support the mission and expectations for student learning. The modified block was originally implemented with the intent of providing an opportunity for teachers to learn more about block scheduling and to further the diversity of

instructional strategies. While a number of years have passed, teachers have not moved to fully diversify instructional strategies. The absence of a full block scheduling may be creating unnecessary barriers to the effective implementation of the curriculum, the quality of instructional practices, and student expectations. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, student work, central office administrators, survey)

Meaningful roles in the decision-making process are evident in the existence of hiring committees, faculty meetings, parent forums, CAS meetings, student leadership groups, the use of surveys, and student members on the school board. The perception of the principal's accessibility and engagement with students promotes an atmosphere of participation. Relative to the decision-making process, students, faculty, and parents have expressed varying opinions, including concerns about relating to the process and level of participation. SBHS has established opportunities for meaningful roles in the decision-making process; expanding upon this base will further enhance the promotion of participation, responsibility, and ownership. (self-study, student shadowing, parents, school board, school leadership, survey)

Most teachers at SBHS have student loads that enable them to meet the learning needs and expectations of students. The self-study notes that class size varies, with some classes exceeding the recommended maximum number of twenty-five. The leveling of students prevents an even distribution of students among courses and is not conducive to maximize student learning. Further, the discrepancy between teacher class loads—from fifty-seven to ninety-seven—may produce tension among some faculty members. The ability of the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students is impacted by class sizes. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, teachers)

Teachers at SBHS exhibit genuine concern for and interest in their students both in and out of the classroom. Students and parents both recognize the efforts of teachers who support students. The SLAM Program has significantly contributed to the personalization of the education experiences of ninth grade students and eleventh and twelfth graders who lead students in these groups. There is a plan to establish an advisory program for tenth graders, but budget cuts precluded the implementation of this program. Expansion of the SLAM program will assure that each student has an adult member of the school community to personalize his or her educational experience. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, student work, students, school leadership)

Evidence of professional staff collaboration is present in the existence and function of the CAS, the collaboration among teachers in the educational support team process, and their involvement in the IEP and 504 team processes. Location of office space by department both promotes departmental opportunities and limits interdepartmental opportunities for collaboration. School-wide professional development has contributed to promoting interdepartmental collaboration, and team-taught classes have the potential of advancing interdepartmental collaboration. Continued efforts to identify scheduled and spontaneous opportunities for collaboration will benefit the continued growth of the school. (self-study, central office administrators, school leadership)

Members of the staff are involved and care deeply about students' well being. Many staff members attend co-curricular activities, serve as advisors and chaperones and as members of committees that directly focus on students, and provide before and after school extra help for students. In addition to guidance counselors, students have access to a social worker, a school resource officer, and a student assistance program counselor. Programs such as the enrichment center and the career development center provide additional supports. The SBHS staff promotes the well being of students. Observation, student work, and feedback from students indicated staff is limited in its capacity to promote student learning. Learning activities do not demonstrate a breadth of instructional and assessment strategies and therefore compromise student learning. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, student work, student work, students, parents, central office administrators, school leadership)

Evidence of student success is displayed throughout SBHS. Various artworks from paintings to murals are present in many of the hallways, conference rooms, and offices. Display cases hold both athletic and academic awards, and bulletin boards advertise upcoming events. Numerous student events include sports, Talent Night, musicals, theatrical performances, and academic award nights. Newspapers, a newsletter, and the website are used to publicize student successes. SBHS celebrates and recognizes student accomplishments; however, the type of student work represented was limited to the arts. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, presentation, students)

The school's leadership promotes a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive environment. A sense of pride is apparent in the school community through posters for spirit week, teacher/parent/student comments, and the principal's enthusiasm. The current condition of the building reflects the need for maintenance upgrades to insure a quality and safe learning environment, however. Vandalism is minimal, but students reported thefts had occurred. The existence of a school resource officer supports a safe environment. The establishment of the Gay/Straight Alliance and the Multicultural Club are positive examples of the promotion of tolerance. Although students have reported many positive aspects of the school climate, their concerns should be noted. For example, students site the survey to report that only 64% of students "respects teachers," only 58.4% "respects one another," 71.4% is "proud of their school," and 26% "thinks bullying is a problem" (Endicott Survey 34). Although the majority of students demonstrates a sense of pride and ownership, a significant number of students was not actively engaged in learning some actually wore headphones in class during periods of direct instruction and some were widely engaged in sidebar conversations during direct instruction. Facility improvements and continued attention to school climate and student responsibility will continue to enhance the level of safety and the sense of pride and ownership. (observation, self-study, student shadowing, presentation, survey)

The school board is very supportive of the principal's leadership role and responsibility in the implementation of the school's mission. Its members are committed to and value the school community. The board has begun the process of policy review and authorized a review of curriculum, finance, and special education by an outside consultant in order to assist with long-range planning, particularly in light of budget considerations. The continued support of the school board is crucial for the on-going effective implementation of the school's mission statement. (self-study, parents, central office administrators)

## **Commendations**

1. The principal's autonomy in running the school granted by the school board and co-superintendents
2. The principal's active involvement with students
3. The principal's regular communication with all members of the school community
4. The development of the SLAM program that promotes student engagement and support
5. The pride and celebration for student accomplishments apparent throughout the school and is recognized by the school community
6. The quality and quantity of student artwork displayed
7. The consistent promotion of a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive school environment
8. Supportive role played by the school board

## **Recommendations**

1. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school's current schedule, research alternative models and adopt a schedule driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the curriculum, instruction and assessment
2. Develop a system to monitor and collect faculty/student/parent data in order to evaluate new initiatives
3. Ensure that student grouping patterns reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for the learning of all students
4. Engage in long-range planning to address the organization of educational leadership, the educational program, and the student day
5. Expand the SLAM Program to additional grades
6. Identify and address facility improvements that will increase safety, school climate and learning and ensure that the facility supports the mission and expectations for student learning

## 6. School Resources for Learning

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

### All Student Support Services

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.
6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.
7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

### Guidance Services

8. The school shall provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:
  - individual and group meetings with counseling personnel;
  - personal, career, and college counseling;
  - student course selection assistance;
  - collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers;
  - appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

### Health Services

9. The school's health services shall provide:
  - preventive health services and direct intervention services;
  - appropriate referrals;
  - mandated services;
  - emergency response mechanisms;
  - ongoing student health assessments.

*(Standard continued to next page)*

## **6. School Resources for Learning**

### **Library Information Services**

10. The library/information services program and materials shall be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program.
11. Library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation.
12. A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population shall be available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
14. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.
15. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

### **Special Education Services**

16. The school shall provide special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws.

## School Resources for Learning

### Conclusions

Student support services are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Through routine screenings, assessments and appropriate referrals South Burlington High School's health services support the civic/social expectations by making informed decisions regarding the physical and emotional development of the students. The guidance services help set personal, academic, post-secondary and career planning goals through classroom mini-units, evening programs and individual student meetings. The library/ technology and media services support the school's mission through collection development, instruction and the community partnership with the town library. The special education services provide academic support for eligible students through team teaching and collaboration with content area teachers. Each service area is supporting students in their efforts towards achieving the school's mission. (self-study, students, student work, survey)

The guidance department meets with all students one or more times each year to assist in course selection and planning. There is a drop-in time at lunch for any student in need of services. The progressive program includes instruction from content area teachers. The enrichment center provides academic support and tutoring for students eligible for support services. The library-media specialist is currently providing instruction in accessing resources to all grade nine English classes through an orientation. The community library partnership affords a multi-level availability of materials and extended time for access. There are small peer tutoring areas throughout the building. Health services are available on a walk-in basis. Consequently, most students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. (self-study, presentation, student work)

The guidance staff has established collaborations with community-based agencies such as the Vermont Department of Children and Families, Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation, Spectrum Youth and Family Services, Howard Community Services and licensed professionals. A full-time district psychologist was hired to provide intervention services, consultation with staff and families and testing. The special educators and regular educators work together to ensure that classroom accommodations and curricular adaptations are provided. The library media-specialist works with teachers, support staff and students to provide materials needed for the curriculum. The community library enhances learning resources by presenting programs and reading discussions on a wide variety of topics. The nurse works with staff members to educate them about student health issues and refers students to outside resources when needed. The support services staff is remarkable for its dedication, cooperation and coordination efforts, especially in its outreach to the classrooms. The effectiveness of collaboration, cooperation and outreach of support services enhances student learning. (self-study, student work, support staff)

Student support services are being evaluated at present and revised to improve the way services are delivered. All areas are making progress towards more formalized and consistent

evaluations. The guidance department surveys graduating seniors and, as a result, has created period five walk-ins to see counselors. A pre-and post-survey is being developed to improve a career unit given in history classes to all sophomores by guidance counselors. Grade 9 students, the student leaders and the adults involved evaluate the SLAM program. The library media specialist has requested feedback for all new grade 9 orientation classes. The on-line searching tutorial has produced data on student success with these skills. There is a formal evaluation of library services given to the Global Studies classes to improve student learning. The enrichment program has ongoing and immediate feedback from the students and also has data regarding skill development. The school counselors and librarian are evaluated by Components of Professional Practices using the four domains. Special services has a parent group that provides feedback. Continuation and expansion of more formalized data gathering will improve services and student learning and performance. (self-study, student work, support staff)

Effective and ongoing communication between parents and student support personal is provided in a variety of ways. The guidance department maintains a webpage with information regarding evening workshops and events, testing dates, guidance curriculum, links for college and career planning, VSAC Workshops and the functions of guidance. Guidance services include progress reports, report cards, daily announcements, informational mailings, student handbook, program of studies, school profile, individual and small group meetings, classroom presentations, and newspapers. Special services use a variety of means to communicate with parents and students such as phone calls, e-mails, and letters. The SBHS Progressive Program meets with parents every two weeks to discuss student progress. The nurse communicates with parents via phone, e-mail, and meetings regarding student health issues and crisis management. In the Endicott Self-study Survey, 74.2 % of parents responded that they were knowledgeable about available support services. Discussions with parents show that, the level of satisfaction with special education services is high suggesting that school communication efforts are effective. (self-study, support staff, survey)

SBHS stores student records in various locations throughout the school. The guidance office has a secure, fireproof vault that houses student records. Special education records are maintained according to policies contained within FERPA and IEIA legislation. Each special educator/case manager maintains working files kept in locked file cabinets and locked offices. Official records for each special education student in the district are securely maintained at the office of curriculum and instruction. All student health records are locked in the health room when the nurses are not there, but these file cabinets are neither locked nor fireproof. While some records are stored in locked cabinets, guidance records cases are not fireproofed, thus leaving some records at risk of being destroyed by fire or water damage. Although all records are confidential and secure, their safety is not guaranteed because of the lack of fireproof storage units. (self-study, presentation, student work)

In some areas SBHS has been able to provide sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective support services. However, the special education services staff has been reduced to six paraprofessionals to meet the needs of all students. Health services do not have clerical support and the LPN is currently doing the clerical work. Direct efforts toward an additional support staff person would enable the nurse to provide more outreach time with classes. The lead counselor fulfills many of the director of guidance responsibilities on the high

school level while simultaneously maintaining a challenging caseload. The library-media personnel currently include a support staff person on the busy circulation desk and the librarian. Although most support service areas meet requirements, the lack of sufficient staff to meet student needs limits student learning. (observation, self-study, student work, support staff)

The guidance department seeks to provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services within existing space and time limitations. Small group meetings take place on an as-needed basis. Personal, career, and college counseling is done through classroom workshops, and evening programs according to counselor availability. Guidance staff members participate in IEP, EST, SST, 504, and 264 meetings. Even with this participation, however, the guidance staff is not able to provide as much individual counseling for students with special needs as special educators would like or deem appropriate. The guidance department provides student course selection assistance in the spring with parent collaboration and throughout the year with students. The Student Assistance Program is actively collaborating, co-teaching and integrating curriculum with classroom teachers. The guidance department is seeking to provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services. (observation, students, survey)

Health services provide for the immediate needs and safe well being of students and staff members providing one RN and an LPN for nine hundred sixty-seven students. Care of student immediate needs leaves limited time for integrating health services in the curriculum. The school nurse maintains confidentiality, despite the inadequacies of physical space in the health office; the office is not totally private as a result of inadequate wall construction. The nurse provides preventive health services and direct intervention services as well as on-going student health assessments. She provides appropriate referrals and mandated services. Emergency response mechanisms and on going student health assessments are in place. In the Endicott Self-study Survey 83.2% of students reported feeling comfortable going to the school nurse; 98.9% of the staff felt that the nurse kept them apprised of specific health needs of students in their classrooms; 93.9% of parents reported being comfortable with the school's procedures in the event their child became ill. Students are well served by the school's health services. (self-study, presentation, student work, support staff, survey)

The library/information services program strives to be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. In response to the elimination of the Ninth Grade Seminar, the library media specialist is now working with English classes through the Grade Nine Orientation. Math, science and history classes report collaboration and curriculum support, as well as specific instruction in accessing resources by the library-media specialist. The library-media specialist states that the staffing ratio and space limitations of the library media center have affected the degree of integration of the services into the curriculum. In the Endicott Self-study Survey, 40.8% of the students reported using the library often during classes and 54% of the staff include library information services components in their class work. During the 2004-5 school year, 459 classes brought students to the library. The library staff includes a full-time library-media specialist and a full-time instructional assistant. The school library shares the space and materials with the South Burlington Community Library. This provides students with access to the high school library after hours, evenings and Saturdays. This also represents a monetary savings by sharing the cost of some materials and a benefit to the overall robustness of

the collection. Students benefit from information services that are integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. (observation, self-study, student work, survey)

The library/information staff is knowledgeable about the curriculum and supports its implementation. In the Endicott Self-study Survey, 92% of the SBHS staff agrees that the school library media-specialist is knowledgeable about the curriculum and provides assistance with instructional needs. The library-media specialist is a member of both the high school and district technology committees. The library-media specialist also attends the curriculum area supervisor/administration meetings. (self-study, student work, support staff, survey)

The print collection provides a wide range of resources reflecting diversity and supporting the needs of the student population. This is achieved, in part, by its connection to the South Burlington Community Library. There are a variety of databases to support the curriculum and student learning. Audio-visual materials are located in the departments as well as catalogued to provide greater access for equipment. Currently, there are 13 filtered computers available in the library for student and class use. Computers are assigned to either students and/or classes at the circulation desk. Other computers are available in various locations throughout the school. According to the Endicott Survey, 58.6% of the staff uses the library to help prepare for classes. In addition, 74.7% of the staff agrees that the print and non-print technology sources are adequate in the library and 77.7% of the students agrees that the library has materials that are needed. The library-media specialist has expressed the need for more computers and space to improve teaching and learning in the library, however. While the wide range of materials and other library/information resources are located in the library media center, the audio-visual collection and most technology is dispersed throughout the school. (self-study, presentation, student work, parents)

Students gain access to the library on a daily basis by obtaining a pass from study hall, visiting during unscheduled time and by conducting research with an entire class. In addition, students may use the library from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. three days a week and from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. two days per week. On Saturday students have access from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The Endicott Survey data indicates that 89.5% of the students agrees that the library is available before and after school. The SBHS students have exceptional access to library/information services. (observation, student work survey)

The library-information services encourage independent inquiry through the use of information resources and technologies. The Grade 9 Orientation was created in response to the formal instruction of the Grade 9 Seminar. The librarian is in the process of gathering feedback from students and teachers regarding the implementation of this orientation. The online tutorial for independent student research was successfully piloted in the spring of 2006. The classroom teachers request specific instruction for classes and gathering of resource materials. Opportunities for independent inquiry are available through the use of information resources and technology. District policies are in place for the selection and removal of information sources and the use of technologies and the Internet. The policy for the removal of information sources has been implemented and challenges have been resolved in recent years without the removal of materials. The district librarians are in the process of revising the selection policy. The district technology committee is currently revising the acceptable use policy. The Endicott Survey

indicates that 84.1% of students knows the school policy regarding the use of the Internet. The policies are clear and thorough. (self-study, student work, survey)

The special education support service follows local, state and federal laws, including the Child Find/Child Count system and triennial monitoring. Special education services are described in the course of studies, the South Burlington Student Handbook and on the school website. In addition, information is conveyed at a grade 8 parent night and at tuition students' sending schools. The school is in compliance with local, state and federal laws in providing special education services. (self-study, support staff)

### **Commendations**

1. The support services staff for its dedication, cooperation and coordination efforts, especially in outreach to the classrooms
2. The high level of parental knowledge of support services
3. The successful efforts of the student assistance program for outreach into the classroom
4. The health services staff members who are caring, attentive and responsive to student needs
5. The successful efforts to share space and materials with the South Burlington Community Library to provide students with access to the library after hours, evenings and Saturdays
6. The librarian's knowledge and commitment to improving student learning

### **Recommendations**

1. Continue and expand more formalized data gathering on student support services to improve student learning and performance
2. Secure all student records in appropriate safe, fireproof cabinets
3. Allocate sufficient levels of support personnel to allow the most effective delivery of counseling, health, special education, and library media services
4. Provide suitably private meeting space to ensure student confidentiality

## **7. Community Resources for Learning**

Active community and parent participation, facilities which support school programs and services, and dependable and adequate funding are necessary for the school to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning.

1. The school shall engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and shall encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.
2. The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.
3. The school site and plant shall support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning.
4. The physical plant and facilities shall meet all applicable federal and state laws and shall be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
5. Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.
6. A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management shall ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant.
7. There shall be ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements.
8. The community and the district's governing body shall ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.
9. Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.

## Community Resources for Learning

### Conclusions

South Burlington High School engages parents as partners in students' education and encourages parent participation and support in a variety of ways. The school and faculty members frequently communicate with parents via phone calls, e-mail, Rebel Net (an Internet based grade-book and communications tool), and other forms of written communication such as newsletters. In addition, the school hosts ten events over the course of the school year that are designed to engage parents in their child's education, such as: step-up night, parent conferences, open houses and more as identified in the self-study. Parents are also encouraged to serve as chaperones for school field trips, to volunteer at the school during the day and after school, and to attend special classroom events. Organizations such as Fields& Dreams, Friends of Music, and a variety of other booster organizations work to support school programs and goals. The school extends an open invitation for parent involvement, fostering the partnership and encouraging a strong relationship between school and the families of students. (self-study, parents, students, teachers)

South Burlington High School fosters business, community, and higher education partnerships. Local businesses partner with the school through the career development center (CDC), to provide opportunities for students, such as: job shadowing, mentoring, internships, and more as identified in the self-study. The school also partners with community organizations to provide services and opportunities for students, such as: youth groups, homework and tutoring programs, fire and police junior associations, youth recreation opportunities, along with many others. In addition, students in this school have opportunities to participate in foreign exchange programs in Europe, South and Central America, and Asia. Higher education partnerships provide students with opportunities to use university facilities and resources for clubs. South Burlington High School is a professional development site for the University of Vermont's (UVM's) teacher education department. South Burlington's students can complete a specific program through the school's Imaging Lab and Networking Academy that allows students to earn college credits. South Burlington High School students benefit from business, higher education and local community partnerships. (self-study, presentation, teachers, parents)

The school site plant does not fully enhance all aspects of the educational program and support services for learning. Examples of where the program is supported include: the development of a nature trail, the new turf field, the resurfaced tennis courts, the community hockey center and fields, the imaging lab, the availability of the library after hours, and the senior common area. A number of academic areas need to be addressed, however. There is a serious need for private meeting space to be used for special education testing, parent meetings, guidance counselor meetings with parents and other outside agencies, as well as other related school meetings that require private space. Lack of privacy is also an issue in the nurse's office; the lack of complete walls negatively impacts the confidentiality of student disclosures and the nurse's treatment of her student patients. In addition, teachers express a need for a way to communicate confidentially with the main office. Currently the intercom system is the only manner of communication with the office from each room; messages are therefore quite public. There is a need to assess future plans for the community library in terms of space and staffing. There are also physical plant needs in the area of support services for student learning. Staff members and

students describe difficulties with the current configuration and use of the school's gymnasium and interior athletic facilities and storage; a review of these difficulties should be undertaken and documented. The school's problem with space constraints in the cafeterias has resulted in a bond that was passed to address this issue, but state funding of 30% of the cost has been withdrawn. The school must analyze how to move forward to address space and funding issues that are impacting student learning. (self-study, observation, facility tour, students, school leadership)

The physical plant and facilities are in compliance with the local fire, health, and safety regulations. The school has been deemed in compliance with state and local codes as of June 2005. Material safety data sheets are available at the school. The school is diligent in complying with federal and state guidelines. (facility tour, self-study)

While there is a belief that equipment is generally adequate (see Endicott Survey), a systemic approach to the adequate maintenance, replacement, and cataloging of equipment is needed. The administration reports that a plan exists but it was not produced. The lack of accessibility to and use of such a plan places equipment that contributes to improved student learning in jeopardy and prevents informed planning for future needs. (self-study, facility tour, school leadership, survey)

A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management does not currently exist at the school. The maintenance department uses a computerized program to handle requests for maintenance from staff members, and 51.7% of the staff believes that maintenance requests are handled in a timely manner. In addition, the maintenance staff has taken steps to reduce the overall energy use of the building by implementing several innovative devices and strategies. While the staff reports satisfaction with the overall cleanliness of the building, facilities findings indicate that there is deterioration of parts of the building including wall and ceiling tiles, exposed brick, and parking lot surfaces. The lack of funding for routine maintenance has had a negative impact on the structure of the school building. This lack of on-going upkeep is not a result of this year's budget defeat. Parents describe a lack of responsiveness on the part of the school and central office for changes in town/school funding. There is a need for closer collaboration on the part of the central office with school leaders to implement building needs. A long-term and systemic approach must to be developed for site and building management. (self-study, observation, facility tour, school leadership, support staff, students)

The school addresses future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs, but capitol improvements are not addressed and organized in a master plan. There are various facility projects being developed, such as: expansion of the cafeteria facility, the library study, and proposed enhancements to sports fields. A unified master plan should be developed to guide these projects. The technology department currently has a plan to implement technology in the classrooms, train staff members, and purchase and replace hardware and software on a scheduled plan. However, recent budget concerns have put the plan for replacement and new equipment on hold. The curriculum area supervisors meet to plan courses based on data from the guidance department and to plan staffing needs and budget requests. In addition, each November the school board employs a statistician to project future enrollment.

When organized master plans and strategic plans are not enacted student learning is compromised. (self-study, facility tour, school leadership)

The current budget is not an adequate source of revenue to support and maintain appropriate school programs, facilities, supplies and equipment. The budget is adequate for basic programs and services, but programs have been cut or curtailed by to budget shortfalls. In addition, the technology plan has been interrupted due to budget constraints. This impedes the implementation of the school's academic expectations for every student to use technology in a variety of ways. Routine and pro-active maintenance and upkeep of the facility has suffered in prior years in order to try to keep student programming and staffing at acceptable levels. The building is safe, but many repairs are needed to prevent future more costly repairs. As a result of this year's budget cuts, programs and services have been curtailed: the ninth grade SLAM participants were not able to receive training to become tenth grade student advisors; the transition and planning program was suspended; sections of honors and A.P. courses have been eliminated; the technology replacement schedule has been put on hold; a computer lab was eliminated due to lack of staffing; professional, custodial and support staff positions were cut; the supply budget was cut by 30%, books by 50%, and equipment by 50% along with other programs, supplies, and services as named by the faculty and administration. Collaboration among South Burlington school leaders and town leaders is critical to ensure adequate and dependable sources of revenue so that student learning is not affected. (self-study, facility tour, student work, school leadership, support staff)

The faculty and building administrators have an active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. Faculty members meet with the CAS committee during the fall and communicate budgetary needs. The CAS members then submit budgetary requests to the principal by early December. These requests drive the development of the budget. When school personnel have direct input on the development of budgets throughout the school, student learning is enhanced. (self-study, teachers)

### **Commendations**

1. The numerous outreach strategies employed to encourage parents to be involved in the school programs
2. The adoption of innovative devices and strategies to reduce overall energy use
3. The implementation of Rebel Net as a communication tool
4. The development and use of the career developmental center
5. The development of foreign exchange programs for student enrichment
6. The inclusion of faculty and staff in budget development

## **Recommendations**

1. Continue to explore and implement appropriate communication tools that are used by all teachers
2. Develop partnerships with local colleges to allow for professional development activities for teachers
3. Assess and address needs such as: private meeting space, maintenance, repairs and storage space
4. Engage in a systematic process that will yield strategic plans to address building, technological, and equipment needs
5. Provide the means for regular and confidential communication between all classrooms and the main office
6. Develop a planned and adequately funded program of building and site management to ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair and cleanliness of the school plant

## FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Since it is in the best interest of the students that the citizens of the district become aware of the strengths and limitations of the school and suggested recommendations for improvement, the Commission requires that the evaluation report be made public in accordance with the Commission's Policy on Distribution, Use and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report.

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

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

The Commission urges school officials to establish a formal follow-up program at once to review and implement all findings of the self-study and valid recommendations identified in the evaluation report. An outline of the Follow-Up Program is available in the Commission's *Accreditation Handbook* which was given to the school at the onset of the self-study. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by Commission staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting team wishes to express its gratitude for the quality of the pre-visitation effort and for the hospitality that was afforded during the visitation. All of the accommodations were thoughtfully arranged and the warmth conveyed by all of the members of the South Burlington school/community is recognized and acknowledged.

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

**SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

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

- ◆ available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities
- ◆ available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance
- ◆ level of funding
- ◆ school day and/or school year
- ◆ administrative structure, including the number of administrators and supervisors
- ◆ number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- ◆ number of support staff
- ◆ student services
- ◆ the use of distance educational programs or courses
- ◆ educational media services and personnel
- ◆ student enrollment
- ◆ grades served by the school
- ◆ the student population that causes program or staffing modification(s), e.g. number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency.



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To  
South Burlington High School**

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