New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for E-Cubed Academy

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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 located in Bedford, Massachusetts considers this visiting committee report of E-Cubed Academy 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 days (60) of its completion to the superintendent, school board, public library or town office, and the appropriate news media.

The prime concern of the visiting committee has been to assess the quality of the educational program at E-Cubed Academy in terms of 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 and Middle Schools (CPEMS), 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 of Teaching and Learning 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 show 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 E-Cubed Academy, a committee of eight (8) members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included twenty-five (25) students, five (5) parents, one (1) central office professional, two (2) citizens, and two (2) noncertified staff members.   The self-study of E-Cubed Academy extended over a period of 18-24 school months from 2008 to 2010.

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, E-Cubed Academy 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 it had been approved by the entire professional staff.

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of fourteen (14) evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the E-Cubed Academy. The Committee members spent four days in East Windsor, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school 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 E-Cubed Academy.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials

- forty (40) hours shadowing fourteen (14) students for a half day

- a total of fifteen (15) hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school

- tours of the facility

- individual meetings with twenty-eight (28) 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 E-Cubed Academy.

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.

The fourteen (14) members of the E-Cubed Academy Visiting Team were grateful for the hospitality afforded by the school and the community at large. The team welcomed everyone's responsiveness as the team sought to get to know and understand this distinctive school community. The community should be justifiably proud of the E-Cubed Academy teachers and administrators who were so candid and of the students who, throughout the four days of the visit, consistently demonstrated maturity and sincerity.

E-Cubed Academy has used the self-study process as a means of examining available programs and services it delivers to students as well as its shared beliefs about teaching and learning. Through reflection, it has delineated its accomplishments and significant needs within the self-study documents. Its identification of strengths and needs along with the conclusions and recommendations found in this report will form the basis for continued school improvement at E-Cubed Academy.

In its sixth academic year, E-Cubed Academy is striving to maintain its unique identity. Established by the Providence School District as a small, student-centered, learning community, whose organization and infrastructure were based on all the principles of best practice: small learning communities of students who attend advisories and experience personalized, engaged teaching to produce active participating, respectful students experienced in leadership and learning. Systemic change is taking place in the district that threatens the foundation on which E-Cubed Academy was built. Seeking to implement a viable and guaranteed curriculum for all of Providence's high school students, regardless of which high school they attend, the district has implemented scheduling mandates and revised curriculum accordingly. In response to the mandated transformation, veteran faculty members and building level administration have accepted the changes and chosen to become as actively involved in the district decision-making process and curriculum revision as possible; they have left their mark. Their voices have been included throughout curricular revision and remain the key factor in whether the original vision for E-Cubed Academy will remain intact and will be viable for future students.

E-Cubed Academy has a resilient faculty. Kudos have been earned by the veteran faculty that has remained stalwart through successive administrative changes and high faculty turnover caused by those individuals being hired for other positions within the district. The school's tagline "We know we can, we know we will" is not exclusive to students, it could also be considered the faculty's mantra in light of what was originally undertaken in the establishment of the school. Faculty members as well as building and district-level administration are well aware of the fact that E-Cubed Academy is in the midst of a struggle to uphold the principles on which it was founded. Continued collaboration among all stakeholders is imperative to see the school through its transition period and maintain its idealistic founding principles. In order to negate any negative impact the mandates the curriculum and scheduling may have, the faculty will need

district and building-level support in the form of professional development and training. It is imperative that E-Cubed Academy's mission must stay intact; how that is to be accomplished remains the school's biggest challenge.

Teaching and Learning at E-Cubed Academy

Teaching and learning are important to everyone at E-Cubed Academy. There is a strong sense of partnership among members of the faculty and staff, students, and administrators; they remain steadfast in their commitment to providing high quality programs and services. The mission statement and expectations for student learning reflect the values of the E-Cubed Academy community "to create a vibrant student-centered community that will eliminate all barriers to learning." Stakeholders in the E-Cubed Academy community are familiar with the mission statement and are able to discuss the concepts and principles of the document.

Previous to the 2009-2010 school year, E-Cubed Academy was a mission-driven school. The school was created to fulfill the principles of its mission. Many protocols, procedures, and programs were developed and implemented in alignment with the school's mission. In order for the mission to continue to be realized, to be a living document, the school's mission and district mandates must be reconciled. While ownership of the E-Cubed Academy's direction is shared and everyone is committed to student attainment in meeting the school's expectations, the mission must be the cornerstone for the decision-making process.

In the district process of curriculum revision, math and science content areas have been completed and implemented. English and social studies have been revised and are slated to be implemented during the 2010-2011 school year. While the revised curriculum aligns with the school's academic, civic, and social expectations, it does not align with the spirit of the school's mission in that the new curriculum emphasizes breadth over depth whereas the school was focusing on depth over breadth. To surmount this basic contradiction, the school is considering that while the content may be prescriptive, how it is delivered will be the deciding factor in whether it supports the school's overarching goals and mission. The newly revised curriculum does ensure that students at E-Cubed Academy are provided consistent, equal opportunities to practice and achieve the school's expectations. Opportunities abound in the array of programs available to students, and many structures are in place to extend learning beyond the classroom.

Personalized instruction is a strength at E-Cubed Academy. Personalization takes place consistently in teachers' skill in crafting assignments that connect with areas of student interest and the school's providing structures that support students in and outside of the classroom, including the school's strong advisory program. The senior project embodies the school's commitment to personalization. While instruction practices personalize learning for students, there is still work to be done making connections across disciplines, developing higher-order thinking skills in all students, and promoting all students' self-assessment.

The school has developed school-wide rubrics which align with its mission and expectations. The intention of these rubrics is to assess how well the students and the school are meeting the corresponding academic student expectations for learning. While the rubrics are being used by some teachers to assess students, there is no formal process to assess school-wide

and individual progress in achieving the academic expectations set forth in the mission. A consistently implemented school-wide plan for assessing how well individual students meet these learning goals will allow faculty members to monitor and revise curriculum delivery and adjust their instructional practices to enable more students to achieve success. Thus, all students will be guaranteed multiple opportunities to practice and achieve the expectations for student learning, and the intent of creating both expectations and rubrics will be fulfilled as they become the source of formative data that is the driving force for improvement of teaching and learning.

Support of Teaching and Learning at E-Cubed Academy

The committed, caring leadership at E-Cubed Academy is an asset to the school community. In her short, yet decisive tenure, the principal has taken control of the day to day events of the school as well as maintaining and helping direct the school's shared vision. That vision is in part sustained by the staff's commitment to collaboration and to the principles on which the school was founded. The collaborative work that was begun at E-Cubed Academy must continue. Because of current time constraints, in order for that integral work to be accomplished, efforts must be focused, directed, and goal-oriented. Professional development and teacher support in the areas of instruction and assessment must also be part of the continuing necessary work. Because there has been a high teacher turnover in recent years, many new faculty members are not versed in the mission-based techniques and best practices so essential to accomplishing the school's goals and supporting the fundamental beliefs of the school.

E-Cubed Academy is a unique school and faces unique challenges belief that all barriers to learning should be removed for all students. All school staff members are devoted to promoting the well-being and learning of students. There is a true partnership between the students, parents, faculty, support staff members and administrators as well as caregivers and the community at large. It is very clear that student support services members at E-Cubed Academy has put forth giant efforts to know their students well and meet their needs. While programs are plentiful, and the adults involved in those programs are dedicated, there is a disparity between existing the programs and sufficient personnel to implement them effectively. Staffing shortages in the areas of guidance and library media services as well as the part-time status of the nurse challenge the school's basic principle to" eliminate all barriers to learning". Augmentation in staffing in all three areas would ensure the school's ability to implement its mission. Also used in support of student learning, technology at E-Cubed Academy is woefully inadequate to meet the school's academic expectation to "Use technology to find, analyze, organize and communicate information". Computers in the classrooms and library are slow, often in a state of disrepair, and run outdated software, thus negating their intention.

The E-Cubed physical plant is clean and obviously well-maintained, a direct reflection of the positive culture of the school. Student success is on display and regularly celebrated in the hallways. Up to this point, the building has been able to support the teaching and learning that is taking place. However, there are growing pains in terms of classroom and storage space.

E-Cubed Academy is an excellent school. At the heart of its success is a supportive and talented faculty and staff and administrators, a student body eager to be engaged, and parents who genuinely care about their students and the school community. All of those stakeholders

must stand strong and uphold the integrity of the school's mission during this period of change. While there are issues that must be addressed and further programs that must be developed and implemented to ensure students' ability to achieve the expectations for student learning, E-Cubed Academy will continue to be a school that capitalizes "upon the academic, social, and civic potentials of all learners".

School and Community Profile

The Community

E-Cubed Academy serves students from the city of Providence, RI. Providence is located in the center of Rhode Island, within an hour of Boston, Massachusetts and three hours of New York, New York via I-95.

Providence is the capital city of the state of Rhode Island. With a population of approximately 175,255, the demographics of Providence break down into 59 percent Hispanic, 22 percent African American, 12 percent Caucasian, 6 percent Asian, and 1 percent Native American. Though English is the primary language of state business, Providence includes large numbers of Spanish, Laotian, and Portuguese speakers, with 43% of the city's population speaking another language than English at home. The city has experienced a 0.9% growth in population over the last 6 years.

Public Services make up the primary sources of employment in the city of Providence. Major employers in the city include Rhode Island Hospital, the City of Providence, The Catholic Diocese of Providence and The US Post Office. The median income of Providence is $26,867. In 2009, the unemployment rate was 11.9%. In 2008, 66 percent of the Providence school district population lived below the low-income level established by the Federal Free Lunch Program. Providence has a home ownership rate of 43%.

In addition to E-Cubed Academy, Providence Public Schools, serving 24,907 students, include 13 high schools, 8 middle feeder schools, and 29 elementary schools. Providence Public Schools implements school choice, and schools are not necessarily comprised of neighborhood students. This city also includes 15 private and charter high schools, and 47 private and charter elementary and middle schools, accounting for 29.2% of the school aged population.

The Providence Public School District, ranked in the top third in the state in terms of per pupil expenditure, expended $13,782 per pupil compared to a state average expenditure of $13,660 in 2006-2007. In 2007-2008, Providence spent $13,572 per pupil, compared to the state average expenditure of $12,700 per pupil. In fiscal year 2006-2007, state, federal and other resources accounted for 67 percent of all funds received in the district, leaving 32 percent of finding to be obtained through local resources. Thirty percent of local property taxes are allocated to the public schools.

The School and Students

E-Cubed Academy includes 370 students in grades 9-12, with 46 percent males and 54 percent females. The school population is fairly transient with a 15.4 percent attrition rate. The demographics of the school include 47 percent Hispanic, 36 percent African American, 15 percent White, 1.6 percent Asian, and 0.65 percent Native American. Students attend school for 180 days. The average drop-out rate for the past two years has been 25 percent, the average daily student attendance 88 percent, and the average attendance rate among teachers 80.3 percent.

There are 26 teachers at E-Cubed Academy, creating a ratio of 15:1. Individual teachers can contractually carry an average load of 130 students with an average class size of 26. Prior to the 2009-10 school year, provisions for common planning time is available four days a week through the use of four by four block scheduling. In addition, whole staff and small division work is imbedded in an early release day each week. As of 2009-10, due to new district initiatives, the school no longer runs on block scheduling. Instead, each day runs six periods. Content areas meet twice a month on early release days for a half hour to discuss and implement district initiatives. Division work, school as a whole (SAW) meetings, and professional development occurs after these meetings and often runs over allotted school time.

Prior to 2009, all freshmen were placed in the Foundation Level I team, coalesced through common English, Science, Social Studies and Math core classes. Students progressed through Foundation Level II, Presentation Level, and Plus Phase Level on their path to graduation, all scheduled with four years of English, Math, History, and Physical Education, three years of Science and Health, two years of Foreign Language or Language development, and one year of Fine Arts. As of 2009, the school is no longer able to team due to new district directives. However, students continue to progress through the grade levels with similar course offerings. All students were, and still are asked to maintain a working portfolio each year, and complete a senior project and exhibition in their junior and senior year combined. In addition, students are still required to complete an Advisory program with community service each year. Twenty percent of students receive special education services.

E-Cubed Academy partners with larger high-schools so that students have access to a variety of sports programs. E-Cubed Academy also offers an intramural Basketball league on early release days. Teachers offer varied extracurricular programs and tutoring after school during the week, and the school has implemented a Saturday school two weekends a month. Fifty percent of students participate in at least one of these activities.

In the class of 2007, thirty-one percent of graduates attended four-year colleges, twenty-four percent enrolled in two year colleges, one percent went to business and technical programs, forty-three entering the workforce, and less than one percent entering the military. E-Cubed students have attended or been accepted to schools such as The College of the Holy Cross, Hampshire College in Massachusetts, Morgan State in Maryland, and Providence College, Rhode Island College, University of Rhode Island, Roger Williams University, Salve Regina, and the Community College of Rhode Island.

E-Cubed Academy has begun several school initiatives to improve student learning.

Based on E-Cubed's mission and expectations, the school has implemented over twenty nine whole school and seventeen senior/Plus Phase initiatives. Among these include mandatory SAT registration, college and career nights, Read 180 and Ramp up to Algebra, Team based school rituals and celebrations, college readiness visits and financial aid nights.

E-Cubed Academy has partnerships with several community organizations and institutions of higher education. As a Diploma Plus school, E-Cubed is a member of the DP Network. Students and teachers are invited to attend workshops, present at network wide celebrations of student achievement, and communicate in online communities. Through the University of Rhode Island, E-Cubed offers students a dual-enrollment writing course, where students earn three college credits. In order to complete a senior project practicum, students have partnered with such institutions as the RI Attorney General's Office, New Urban Arts, WJAR Channel 10, Providence Boys and Girls Club, and the Providence Public Library as well as a variety of other community businesses and agencies.

The School Improvement Plan

There are several ways in which the school plans its improvement. First, the school has established a School Improvement Team comprised of five teachers, and one parent who meets monthly with the principal to develop a school improvement plan and provide direction to school's five divisions. Secondly, the school's model of distributive leadership organizes the faculty and staff into the aforesaid five divisions: Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment, Capacity, Policies-and-Procedures, Data, and Climate-and-Culture who develop, examine, and revise school wide documents, policies, curricula, and school rituals. Additionally, students are involved in the principal's council, and are responsible for developing and participating in the leadership divisions and School Improvement Team, as well as student affairs activities. Finally, the School as a Whole meets monthly to discuss and approve school policies and documents presented by all the leadership groups.

School improvement planning at E-Cubed Academy is focused on the collection of data regarding student achievement. The involved planning groups include a wide variety of stakeholders and they are regularly provided with assessment data from the school. The School Improvement Team develops targets and plans which the Divisions will implement. Since the school's mission and expectations for learning are understood and referenced by all groups, and finalized in School as a Whole meeting, the stakeholders' goals complement one another well.

The current goals set by the POP plan developed by the SIT team flows straight from available data and the school's mission. Through an analysis of NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program) and Stanford 10 scores, the School Improvement Team has established the following targets: E-Cubed Academy has a goal of increasing the percentage of students in grade 11 scoring in the Proficient range on NECAP Reading from 67% to 75% and NECAP Writing from 35% to 75% by 2012. E-Cubed Academy has also set a goal of increasing the percentage of all students in grade 11 scoring in the Proficient range on the NECAP Math and Science from 4% to 75% by 2012.

In addition, a review of Parent Involvement in School governance, after school

participation, and in school support has also prompted the school to target the following: E-Cubed Academy has a goal of increasing parental involvement, according to summaries provided by the Parent Engagement Center, in annual increments of 10% to reach 35% participation by 2011-2012.

Mission Statement for E-Cubed Academy

The mission of E-Cubed Academy is to create a vibrant student-centered community that will eliminate all barriers to learning, thus capitalizing upon the academic, social, and civic potentials of all learners.

We believe all students will demonstrate competency when:
- A variety of differentiated learning instructional experiences is provided through a rigorous curriculum that communicates high expectations for all.
- A range of teaching strategies is used, including active, inquiry and project based learning.
- Assessed through authentic projects and tasks.
- Provided a safe, nurturing community that addresses their personal, social and academic needs.
- Participating in an empowered and compassionate school community where everyone's voice is recognized and everyone's participation is expected.

Expectations for Student Learning

Academic Expectations

Students at E-Cubed will:
A1 Demonstrate the use of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies across disciplines.
A2 Read, write, and communicate effectively across disciplines and genres.
A3 Use technology to find, analyze, organize, and communicate information.
A4 Maintain and reflect upon their learning through the use of a senior project portfolio.
A5 Attain proficiency in at least one of the arts.

Social Expectations

Students at E-Cubed will:
S1 Develop life-long habits of physical, social and emotional well-being
S2 Develop the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand, assist, and respect self and others.

Civic Expectations

Students at E-Cubed will:
C1 Actively participate in a variety of school and community programs that provide experience in leadership, decision-making, and service.
C2 Recognize and respect the ethnic and cultural differences within our school community in an effort to create a tolerant and just society.
C3 Explore a variety of academic and career pathways by applying and extending their learning to real world settings.

COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS

**MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS
FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT
LEARNING**

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

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.

Conclusions

E-Cubed Academy's mission statement and expectations for student learning was developed through a collaborative process that included representatives from all areas of faculty and administration. Neither parents nor students were included in the development of the mission statement or expectations for student learning, however. The first draft of the mission and expectations was brought to a meeting of School as a Whole (SAW) in November 2006 and reviewed and edited by the entire faculty and a final version was approved in December 2006. In the spring of 2009, the expectations for student learning document was revised and approved by SAW. The mission and expectations for student learning are widely publicized in the school and are referenced by the school improvement team (SIT) when deciding on funding and developing new school goals in the Providence One Plan (POP). In addition to being printed in the student handbook, the mission statement and expectations for student learning are posted in all classrooms, the library, and cafeteria, and the mission is stated on a daily basis on the morning announcements. The E-Cubed Academy's Mission and Expectations for learning is a viable document and is embedded in learning expectations across content areas. Its establishment and implementation have had a positive impact on the school culture and have evolved into a shared vision for the E-Cubed Academy school community. (teachers, parents, observations, facilities tour, self-study)

The mission statement of E-Cubed Academy represents the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning. Most teachers, parents, and students are able to discuss not only its contents but the implications it has on student learning as well as how it will shape student educational goals after their high school tenure. E-Cubed Academy prides itself on building a "student-centered" environment; the students and their needs are the driving force of the school's philosophy. Each student is valuable and important. The school community is committed to providing an educational setting conducive to student achievement, enabling them to "eliminate all barriers to learning". Parents of E-Cubed Academy students speak enthusiastically and optimistically of the education their children receive at the school, and they are motivated to help their students succeed. The school offers varied extra-curricular and community-based programs with which students may become involved. Students may also participate in the collaborative sports programs at Hope High School. These opportunities allow students to become actively engaged in the school community, to develop as individuals, and thus to meet the goals of the mission to capitalize "upon the academic, social, and civic potentials of all learners". The mission statement of E-Cubed Academy articulates the school community's beliefs and provides students with opportunities to practice and fulfill its mission. (teachers, parents, students, self- study, team leaders)

E-Cubed Academy has established school-wide academic, civic, and social

learning expectations that are measurable and reflect its mission.   These expectations come with clear indicators that define the characteristics of each expectation.   Rubrics have been created to monitor student progress toward achieving each of the five academic expectations. Social and civic expectations are met through class participation, social outreach to the community, and the senior completion of a portfolio, all of which are outlined in separate rubrics discussed in student advisory sessions. Students are able to further their civic and social responsibilities at E-Cubed by participating in things such as a blood drive for Haitian earthquake victims, providing Thanksgiving baskets to people within the community, and sending care packages to troops overseas. An additional example includes students in financial hardships themselves, grouping together to raise money for the family of a student who recently passed away. The manner in which E-Cubed Academy students conduct themselves as responsible citizens attest to the profound impact the civic and social expectations have had on their lives. The academic, civic, and social expectations are monitored and reported upon monthly by guidance record reports.   The expectations defined within the E-Cubed community reflect the school's mission and provide students with the tools in which to measure their progress throughout their high school years. (teachers, students, parents, team leaders, , self-study)

For each of the five academic expectations delineated in its mission, E-Cubed Academy has a targeted level of successful achievement identified in school-wide rubrics. These rubrics directly correlate to Grade Span Expectation (GSE) rubrics for each curriculum area. Each expectation is specific in its language and defines the achievement level of proficiency. The four-tiered rubrics are broken down into levels of performance: below proficient, partly proficient, proficient, and proficient with distinction. The rubrics assessing the five academic expectations involve critical thinking, implementation of a plan, reflection of results, creation of an organizing structure and analyzing information. Students are familiar with the rubrics and are informed about their purpose; it is evident the rubrics are used throughout E-Cubed Academy. With the consistent use of school-wide expectations and rubrics, the school can determine student progress and help students meet E-Cubed Academy's learning expectations to further inform their own decisions. Rubrics provide the necessary feedback vital for measuring student success at the school. Regular use and the establishment of a targeted level of achievement allow the school to monitor student progress in achieving the academic expectations, therefore informing the school's instructional and curricular decisions. (student work, student shadowing, observations, teachers, Endicott survey, self-study)

E-Cubed Academy has indicators by which it assesses student's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations. There are specifically defined benchmarks in the Health and Research Seminar/Senior Project that measure student achievement of the civic and social expectations. There are opportunities to meet the civic and social expectations in advisory sessions with their peers and also in

community programs, such as "Crusaders," which allows students from different grades to visit local college campuses and learn of college life in preparation for their post-secondary school career. Civic and social expectations can further be met in class on a daily basis with real-world applications and in health and gym class as that allow students to develop life-long habits of physical, social, and emotional well-being. The expectations are defined in the student handbook and communicated to parents during parent/teacher nights held quarterly and through a letter sent to the parents at the beginning of the school year. E-Cubed Academy regularly assesses how well the student body is achieving these civic and social expectations by tracking data such as dropout rates, attendance and suspensions. This data is available on the school website. E-Cubed Academy provides students regular opportunities to practice and achieve the civic and social expectations in their mission, allowing students to become productive members of their school and community.   (student work, students, observations, teachers, self-study)

E-Cubed Academy's mission and expectations for student learning guide many of the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and are evident in the culture of the school. This mission statement is included in key documents, such as the student handbook, letters to parents, and student daily planners, and is posted throughout all areas of the school. Since the school's grade span expectations (GSEs) parallel the mission and expectations for learning through rubrics, the mission's concepts are further cemented within the school's ethos. Teachers post expectations for student learning in their classrooms but do not consistently reference them in specific lessons. According to the 2009 Endicott Survey, 71% of the faculty believes that E-Cubed Academy adheres to its mission; however, due to recent faculty turnover, not all teachers are equally familiar with the mission's tenets. Continued commitment and professional development will help all faculty members, regardless of their tenure at the school, be guided by the mission to become a unified body that promotes these goals. Although parents speak highly of the school and the programs it offers and are proud of their children attending E-Cubed Academy, only 53% of parents feels that the mission and expectations for student learning are used as a guiding force. E-Cubed Academy's mission and expectations for student learning are a vital element for unifying all members of the school community and have the potential to be the driving force that will help students succeed in this mission-driven school community. (student shadowing, observations, teachers, Endicott Survey, self-study, facilities tour)

E-Cubed Academy regularly reviews the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that the document reflects student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards. Its relevance is continually discussed during professional development meetings. Originally created for the opening of the school, the expectations for student learning was reviewed and revised less than three years later to include the faculty's and administration's views.   The school improvement team (SIT) has plans in place to

recurrently revise the expectations. When any revisions are made the SAW must approve or deny the suggestions. The mission of the Providence School District echoes the mission of E-Cubed Academy and the two strive to work in concert with one another. While faculty and leadership turnover has been high in recent years, the overall mission and expectations for student learning has not faltered, due in large part to the commitment of the founding faculty of the school. Their vision is clear and unwavering. Teacher interviews reveal that the staff wrote and approved the expectations for student learning yet echoed discouragement in that not all members adhere to it, particularly newer staff members. The State of Rhode Island requires that students become proficient in one of the arts. It is difficult for E-Cubed Academy to meet this requirement because the school offers only half-year courses for art programs and therefore cannot guarantee any student's proficiency level given the short time-frame and staffing levels. With review of this district expectation and the school's need to meet this state mandate, student needs concerning this goal may be more effectively met in the future. There is a shared understanding by staff members and administrators that continuous review of the expectations for student learning is critical to accurately reflect the goals not only of E-Cubed Academy but of the district, state, and national standards. (teachers, administrators, self-study)

Commendations

1. The wide display of the mission statement and expectations for learning

2. The high degree to which E-Cubed Academy's mission and expectations represents the values and beliefs of the school community

3. The school's ability to measure student progress in meeting academic expectations through rubrics

4. The widespread use of school-wide rubrics at E-Cubed Academy

5. Student familiarity with the school-wide rubrics

6. The many programs and activities that give students opportunities to practice and meet the school's civic and social expectations

7. The public sharing of data garnered from the assessment of how well the student body is achieving the school's civic and social expectations

8. The direct correlation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning and its Grade Span Expectations

9. The use of data to inform the revision of the school's mission and expectations for learning

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a plan to ensure all E-Cubed Academy's stakeholders' participation in further revision of the school's mission and expectations for learning

2. Develop and implement a plan to ensure that all members of the faculty are familiar with the tenets of the school's mission and expectations for learning and consistently implement its goals

3. Evaluate ways in which students may meet the state-mandated, school-wide learning expectation of proficiency in the arts

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

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.

Conclusions

E-Cubed Academy was conceived and established as a standards-based school. All curriculum in the school was developed using a backwards planning model, mapped to either the Rhode Island Department of Education's Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) or the national standards in the content area. The school community also identified ten expectations for student learning which reflect the school's mission. Proficiency-based graduation requirements (PBGR) and school-wide rubrics clearly delineate what departments are responsible for particular academic expectations. Civic and social expectations are not delineated in the PBGR, but they are present in the E-Cubed Advisory Framework, and they are clearly outlined in the daily schedule rationales for the advisory curriculum. Civic and social expectations are instilled by classroom teachers as common codes of conduct. Two of the content areas, math and science, have implemented a new district-wide curriculum and have mapped their curricula to include the E-Cubed Academy expectations for student learning. Most content areas at E-cubed Academy have identified school-wide academic expectations for which they are responsible although most expectations for student learning are applicable to several content areas and are therefore joint responsibilities of more than one department. Teachers readily articulate the expectations for which they have begun to have individual ownership. As a result of the clear delineation of academic expectations, E-Cubed Academy is knowledgeable about what all students should know and be able to do, and there is faculty accountability to ensure that these responsibilities are carried out. This year the Providence School District, in response to the 33% mobility of students between schools has mandated a six-period class day for all high schools, established a pre-scripted curriculum sequence, and is currently creating unifying core curriculum for schools in the district. The curriculum is being designed on the district level with the involvement of some E-Cubed teachers to align instruction with the NECAP and SAT-10 assessments. (self-study, teachers, students)

While many content areas are addressing the E-Cubed Academy learner expectations in their courses/curricula, documented curriculum alignment with school-wide academic expectations is inconsistent. Math and science, areas that have been recently revised do align, but areas that have not been revised do not. E-Cubed Academy has done some work to develop curriculum that assures each student will meet the academic expectations. In addition to the opportunities offered during the school day, a plethora of extended day activities and structures is in place such as the Ramp-Up Program, Saturday School, after school tutoring, credit recovery and Summer School; these programs are designed to allow sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve expectations beyond the school day. Because the school's original intent is to provide equal opportunities for all students by removing all barriers to learning and heterogeneity and differentiation are basic principles, when all curriculum has been aligned with the school-wide expectations, students will be guaranteed sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. (observations, student shadowing, student work, students, team leaders, Endicott Survey, self-study)

Most written curricula prescribe content and identify course-specific learning goals; some integrate relevant school-wide expectations, suggest assessment techniques, including the use of school-wide rubrics and suggest instructional strategies. The degree to which E-Cubed Academy's curriculum is complete is largely dependent upon whether or not the department's

curriculum has been revised. The science and math departments have a newly created curriculum document that was implemented during the 2009-10 school year. The English and history departments plan to implement their new curricula during the 2010-11 school year. Other curricular areas must follow their lead and work to align their documents with the newly created models.   E-Cubed Academy's current program of studies lists each course offered at the school. Most course descriptions explain course content and goals and/or Essential Questions that will be addressed. Prior to fall 2009, no course descriptions listed standards or made reference to the learner expectations. Beginning in 2009-10, E-Cubed Academy, Policy and Procedure Division began the revision process, adding the expectations for student learning to each course description. In the 2008-09 school year, E-Cubed Academy began to create a course overview handbook which requires a common format for listing course requirements. All course overviews include the standards assessed as well as which expectations for student learning are covered. The same time and energy put into the revision of the course description and creation of a course overview handbook must be directed at all curricula. Having a written curriculum that consistently prescribes content, identifies course-specific learning goals, integrates relevant school-wide learning expectations, includes course-specific strategies and suggests assessment techniques including rubrics that ensures all students have equal opportunity to practice and meet academic expectations and that consistently complete curricula are used every time. (curriculum documents, teachers, self-study)

While the curriculum is designed to engage students in inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking as well as providing opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skill, the delivered curriculum does not consistently reflect that level of completeness or engagement. Although both teachers and parents express satisfaction with the frequency of problem-solving and use of higher order thinking applications, classroom observations and review of student work do not validate that confidence. Students do not consistently engage in instruction and learning that demands and develops higher levels of thinking and inquiry. Currently, teachers are trying to integrate authentic cross curricular projects, but without common planning and teaming, this is proving difficult. The change in the portfolio project, currently absorbed into the senior project and the effects of district-directed scheduling changes that have reconfigured class meeting time are factors that have diminished the valued project-based learning of the past that was used in all classrooms. The result is a need for evaluating teacher strategies and instructional practices to ensure that they continue to focus on authentic application of knowledge, problem-solving and higher-order thinking so that every classroom can remain engaged and productive as intended in the mission. (observations, panel presentation, student work, teachers, students)

The newly implemented math and science curriculum focuses on breadth of content rather than depth of understanding; English and history curriculum is currently under revision at the district level and will be piloted next year although new textbooks have been delivered by the district for all core classes. When the Endicott Survey demonstrated the majority of teachers, students, and parents believe that depth over breadth has been the focus of curriculum, the survey results are based on previous practices as the survey was administered before changes had been made and curriculum revised and adopted. Currently, there has been overwhelming teacher frustration over the broad curricular coverage required by the recent curriculum directives over depth of subject matter knowledge that has served the school well in the past. Some teachers and

teacher leaders have observed that the district-dictated curricular changes do not take the individual student into account in the learning process, a principle that E-Cubed Academy was founded upon. Teachers understand the needs of their individual students and are struggling to balance the district's expectations with individual student's needs. The recent imposition of a common schedule and elimination of common planning time and the teaming structure by the Providence School District has moved E-Cubed Academy away from cross-curricular integration as a model for the school, changing an element in the school that many other systems are adopting to add meaning to learning for students. The newly implemented math and science curriculum and pacing guides, the model for other curricular revision do not allow time for teachers to integrate with other subject areas.   Thus, a curricular framework is being implemented that is not appropriately integrated and is disconnected from the diverse needs of students to have guidance to achieve depth of understanding. (student shadowing, student work, teachers, self-study, teacher leaders)

Varied opportunities are offered to students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and school campus of E-Cubed Academy. One particular structure that is instrumental in supporting student learning is the Diploma Plus system. The use of Diploma Plus is pervasive and aligned with the academic, civic and social expectations of E-Cubed Academy, facilitating communication between teachers, students, and families via Internet accessibility. Formal programs such as Saturday School, after school tutoring, community service, credit recovery, and the Ramp-Up program, connected to summer instruction and the senior project as well as the senior internship exemplify the E-Cube Academy's commitment to extended learning activities. The school offers electives in computer science, music, AP Statistics, AP Spanish, and AP Environmental Science. Despite the reduction of the original graduation requirement of 40 hours of community service requirement to 15 internship hours which are now absorbed into the senior project, the value of community service as an extension of learning is currently well recognized in educational research. In particular, certain advisories, notably those where the students are receiving special education support, participate in robust service learning. Partnerships with the University of Rhode Island; Brown University; and the Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) mentoring program provide rich opportunities for students to extend and apply their learning beyond the regular class day in authentic ways. As a result, a commitment to meeting the needs of students through extended learning is clear, and an obvious priority at E-Cubed Academy. (student shadowing, panel presentation, teachers, students, self-study)

There is very little curricular coordination between and among academic areas within the school and there is no active curricular coordination between E-Cubed Academy and sending schools in the district although the district management of curriculum may include alignment of fundamentals from elementary through middle school to high school. Teachers strongly advocate for more common planning time in the school and often reference their "lost Wednesdays," referring to the professional development time allocated every other Wednesday which replaced their daily common planning time available before the district scheduling initiative implementation. Currently within E-Cubed Academy, teachers report that as a result of district initiatives, co-curricular coordination time is rare. Although the school previously had a Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Cadre (CIA) to coordinate all curricula, there is no designated meeting time in the busy schedule. Thus, interdisciplinary projects, highly

recommended in effective curriculum, have become unsustainable and have been dropped from the curriculum. The central office notes that although urgently necessary, there is no direct vertical articulation between sending schools and high schools. At this time, coordination between sending schools and E-Cubed Academy is done by team leaders who collect departmental data and convey the information to the district. Team leaders in the district meet monthly. The data suggests meetings are guided by immediate need rather than a formal vision or articulated goals. There is no formal plan for general as well as co-curricular coordination and articulation that outlines the expectations and vision of the district committee. As a result, there is no continuum of curricular expectations that is clearly articulated between academic areas and sending schools. (self-study, teachers, teacher leaders, documents, central office administration)

Instructional materials, supplies, and staffing levels are adequate to allow the implementation of the curriculum but technology and facility space is not sufficient. Most assignments are submitted and managed via the electronic Diploma Plus system. New textbooks with complete online accessibility have been mandated and purchased by the district for use in all core subjects. Staffing levels have been managed with the newly implemented Criterion Hiring System; a favorable change supported by the E-Cubed Academy faculty. Teachers have expressed frustration with the district's former "bumping" practice which fostered a high turnover rate and negatively impacted the culture of the school. Many teachers have identified hopefulness in the new Criterion Hiring process. There has been revitalization in personal investment in the school and curricular development as a result of feeling a part of the E-Cubed Academy "family," whose principles have had to be clearly defined in light of new curriculum mandates.   All observed classrooms have at least five computers, but many of those computers do not function at an acceptable level; the technology is dated and the computers themselves are obsolete. This greatly hinders student access to a vital tool to effective curricular delivery and does not encourage teachers to plan to use technology in the classroom. Further, the library space is limited, and its technology and equipment are neither sufficient nor adequately maintained. As much of the available non-fiction and research material at E-Cubed Academy is only accessible via online databases, and all assignments and feedback are managed through the online Diploma Plus computer system, barriers to technological access are barriers to implementing curriculum. While it is organized and accessible to small groups, the library is not big enough to contain classes, forcing the media specialist to teach media and research skills by traveling to classrooms. Four wireless laptop carts managed by the librarian are available and are allocated during all periods every day, but there is widespread dissatisfaction with the lack of predictable functioning of electronic equipment. The computer room, designed to be a shared space for teachers bringing their classes to use the facilities and for technology classes scheduled for the space is being used exclusively as technology classrooms during the school day. There is a further space problem for the music class that, with no home base or adequate facilities, resides in the cafetorium.   The implementation of the curriculum is impeded by inadequate classroom, computer room, and library space, dated technology and the lack of predictable, timely technology maintenance. (observations, self-study, teachers, students)

Some of the professional staff members are actively involved in curriculum development, evaluation, and revision based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals. The math and science teachers describe detailed involvement in the development of the new guaranteed curriculum. Prior to the

2009-10 school year, teachers and teams in the school were urged to make curricular revisions based on student performance on standardized testing. To aid in this effort, the Data Division for the school was responsible for doing preliminary data analysis and disseminating suggestions to the school as a whole (SAW). From there, the school improvement team (SIT) developed a Providence One Plan (POP) to set curriculum policy based on identified student and school need. From this, agendas were set for professional development and school initiatives. Although the Data Division, SIT and POP were in full operation during the 2009-2010 school year, it is the intent of the Providence School District now to coordinate the review of the "guaranteed and viable curriculum". As a result of this procedural change, faculty members have expressed the desire to develop a process to evaluate district-mandated curriculum based on their student's performance in achieving the school's learner expectations. They want to remain an integral part of the revision process. The formal connection must be made between curriculum revision and the student achievement of the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals, regardless of the entity overseeing the revision. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators)

E-Cubed Academy has historically committed time, resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. A great deal of professional development has taken place in backward planning (starting with desired results) and curriculum design. Since the school's inception, Diploma Plus has provided its services during team and individual mentoring, professional workshops, and yearly retreats for faculty members. This professional development has focused on use of rubrics for assessment, instructional strategies, use of Portfolio, and development of content and advisory curriculum. Diploma Plus funds allow the school to offer professional development related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Changes in the schedule beginning in the 2008-09 school year, removed the adequate time for teachers to meet during school to analyze and adjust curriculum. The newly implemented common schedule does not allow this, and common planning time has been all but eliminated. Most teachers expressed relief at the 2010-11 plan to reinstate weekly professional development time. During the 2009-10 school year, all professional development hours were district-mandated with no school-based hours available except through Title 1 and other funds. District level professional development is still designed to aid in the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.   This shift in paradigm requires the E-Cubed faculty to think district-wide instead of school-wide concerning curriculum. While navigating the new district requirements, professional development activities need to be focused on adapting and reconciling the school's vision to the district initiatives. E-Cubed faculty members have been an integral part of the district curricular revision thus far. They must remain involved to this high degree to ensure the integrity of the district-wide guaranteed curriculum. Since approximately 33% of the current faculty has served less than two years because of the teacher turnover rate, continued involvement in professional development at the district-wide revision level will ensure ownership of all forthcoming curriculum. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

In some areas, district-wide professional development activities for teachers support the development and implementation of the curriculum. During the 2009-10 school year, there was support for the development and implementation of curriculum for math, science, English, and social studies. District financial resources have been focused on these areas, but little has been available for revision of foreign language, art, music, health, physical education, or computer

courses. A K-12 Aligned Curriculum is the long-term plan of the Providence School District. The impact on the curriculum of the district support and its professional development is difficult to ascertain since only math and science have been newly revised and implemented. As future curriculum is developed, revised and implemented, the cumulative effect of professional development will become apparent, so also will be the effort of district management of the curriculum. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators)

Commendations

1. Mapping the new math and science curriculum to the E-Cubed expectations for student learning

2. The clear delineation of which departments are responsible for particular academic expectations

3. The varied opportunities offered to students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and school campus

4. The use of the online program Diploma Plus to manage assignments

5. The purchase of new textbooks for use in all core area

6. The implementation of the Criterion Hiring system to ensure staffing adequate to deliver the curriculum

7. The high degree of involvement of the school's math and science teachers in the development of the new guaranteed curriculum

8. The longstanding commitment of time, resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum

9. The quality and wide range of professional development provided by Diploma Plus

Recommendations

1. Align all curricula with school-wide expectations

2. Ensure that all written curriculum prescribes content, integrates relevant school-wide expectations, includes course-specific learning goals, suggests instructional strategies, and suggests assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics

3. Ensure that the delivered curriculum is close to the written curriculum, engaging all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as providing opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills

4. Reconcile the newly implemented curriculum and E-Cubed Academy's commitment to emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage

5. Dedicate formal time for the curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school

6. Develop and implement a plan that outlines curricular coordination and articulation with sending schools in the district

7. Update obsolete technology and dated software to allow the school to fulfill the curriculum

8. Dedicate computer room space that allows whole classes to utilize it for curriculum support and delivery

9. Provide classroom space for the music class to allow effective curriculum delivery

10. Ensure E-Cubed Academy teachers remain actively involved in curriculum revision, regardless of the school's role in its oversight

11. Ensure adequate common planning time to ensure effective curriculum delivery and maintain or renew interdisciplinary work

12. Direct professional development efforts toward participating in the development and implementation of curriculum in the areas of foreign language, art, music, health, physical education, and computers

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

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.

Conclusions

Although the E-Cubed Academy Mission Statement expresses the proud intent to provide a student-centered learning environment that respects the unique gifts of each student, many of the academy's instructional strategies are inconsistent with the school's mission statement. While some student work samples indicating differentiated instructional strategies, the majority of the assignments was not tailored to individual student needs. In the majority of classroom observations, there is very little use of differentiation or even a range of teaching strategies although there are multiple examples of teachers in all departments providing students with an opportunity to complete quarterly projects. Given that a third of the teaching staff is new to the building this year however, it is understandable that it will take time to align instructional practices consistent with the mission and expectations for student learning. However, if E-Cubed Academy is to create a "vibrant student-centered" community there must be a consistent focus on differentiated instruction in the classroom, and new teachers must learn and use these strategies in all of their work, assisted by the school's driving force and deep well of experience of original faculty members. (classroom observation, student shadowing, student work, teachers)

Teachers strive to provide personalized instruction both in terms of crafting assignments that connect with areas of student interest and creating structures that provide support for students in and out of the classroom. The senior project, the culminating assessment of a student's career at E-Cubed, embodies the school's commitment to personalization. Over 76% of the E-Cubed Academy students taking the Endicott Survey reports feeling comfortable going to their teachers for help. Parents overwhelmingly report their child feels connected to the school. Personal literacy plans (PLPs) provide a structured intervention for any student reading below grade level and there are multiple structures to provide other academic support for struggling students such as a Saturday tutoring program. When students benefit from personalized instruction they gain a sense of belonging to the school and the community and they are empowered to be self-directed learners who can aspire to higher goals and who know how to ask for the help they need. (self-study, teachers, student shadowing, panel presentation)

E-Cubed Academy's written curriculum affords students opportunities to demonstrate proficiency through the application of knowledge and skills. Using a concept in a new situation requires higher order thinking skills and a measure of self-confidence, however, not merely recall of information or comprehension, and 64.5% of the students taking the Endicott Survey believes they can apply their learning outside of the classroom. The senior project and partnerships with a variety of agencies, community businesses, higher education institution are some examples of how students can apply classroom knowledge in the "real world". The newly revised math and science curriculum also provides opportunities for students to apply their knowledge through labs and projects. However, classroom observations and a review of student work reveals that the delivered curriculum does not consistently engage students at this high a level. Engagement in learning and in application of knowledge encourages the development of more complex intellectual abilities and skills. (observations, panel presentation, parents, student shadowing, teachers, student work)

Teachers at E-Cubed Academy make every effort to engage students as active learners; prior to the 2009-2010 school year, as a result of the 90 minute block schedule, there were many,

opportunities. Ample time allowed for student presentations, labs, short field trips, Socratic seminars, panel presentations, simulations and many other activities. The scheduling change in in 2009-10 to the current 54 minutes per period mandated by the district has resulted in a change in student learning patterns: they do not consistently engage in instruction and learning that demands higher levels of thinking and inquiry. Both students and teachers are trying to adjust to the new schedule and trying to cope with shorter periods of time that do not allow for opportunities for students to delve deeper into their learning. Both founding faculty and new staff members, unfamiliar with the school instructional models need more professional development in applying active learning instructional techniques within shortened periods. Engaging students as self-directed learners should be maintained as well as possible as it prompts students to take ownership of their own learning. (self-study, observations, teachers)

There is still work to be done making connections across disciplines, engaging students as self-directed learners, developing higher-order thinking skills, and promoting student self-assessment and reflection. With the abolition of the teaming model after the 2008-09 school year, opportunities for making connections across disciplines have been reduced. There is no formal dedicated time for teachers to collaborate. This year, common planning time was reduced significantly from a daily occurrence to twice a month and those meetings are now mostly focused on departmental teaching and learning issues. (teachers, student shadowing, administrators)

There is inconsistency throughout the building in engaging students as self-directed learners. E-Cubed Academy provides a proficiency-based graduation requirement that engages students as self-directed learners. The senior project provides an opportunity for students to choose an area of interest, develop a thesis statement, and conduct a literature review. Students develop a core question, participate in a 15-hour internship, write a reflective essay and orally defend their senior project practicing self-sufficiency and illustrating achievements in research and communication skills. However, beyond this one opportunity, classroom observations indicated relatively few examples of students currently taking ownership of their learning, although some of the summative, project-based learning also provides students an opportunity to make choices regarding their learning. Student work now shows predominantly teacher-centered assignments which provide relatively few opportunities for students to explore learning opportunities on their own. Furthermore, many teachers tolerate students in class who are not engaged and eventually become disruptive, leading to classroom management issues that negatively impact the total learning environment. (student shadowing, student work, observations)

In-class instructional strategies and tasks prompt students to engage with a wide variety of texts and materials, some of which offer opportunities for higher-order thinking. In some ESL and English classes, students are provided opportunities to engage in higher order thinking activities. However, it is not obvious that all students are afforded consistent opportunities to practice and develop higher-order thinking skills. The majority of classrooms management currently shows students responding to teacher-prompted worksheets and directives which do not encourage application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation of knowledge. (student shadowing, student work, self-study, observations)

Project-based learning requires a strong self-reflective component. While many teachers continue to provide opportunities and require student self-assessment, it is an inconsistently applied practice. Teachers frequently discuss the use of formative assessment as a part of their classroom instruction, but there was little use of such formative assessments observed in the classroom. (self-study, student shadowing, student work, observations)

The implications of teachers not using the personalizing strategies just mentioned and not making connections across disciplines, not engaging students as self-directed learners, not consistently developing higher-order thinking skills, and inconsistently promoting student self-assessment and reflection is manifested by varying negative effects on high expectations and rigor for E-Cubed Academy students. The school had established a schedule, system, and climate that engaged and challenged students. Thus, there is a baseline for assessing the effectiveness of changes as related to student learning.

Further school development of mechanisms for collection and use of feedback is needed, especially pertaining to feedback from students and parents, although mechanisms for receiving and utilizing feedback are in place. Students have a reflection component in their quarterly projects, but the results of this feedback are not obviously discussed and used to improve classroom instruction. Currently, teachers feel challenged to create ways to obtain meaningful feedback from parents about instructional practices. There are parent teacher conferences every quarter where parents have the opportunity to meet with teachers for academic conferences. According to Endicott Survey results, 54.1% of the responding parents reports that teachers ask for their input regarding their child's instruction. In 2009 teachers at E-Cubed received professional development regarding the use of feedback to improve instruction. The current teacher evaluation tool that is in the process of being revised is not an effective tool for providing teachers feedback on classroom practice. A recent effort to utilize a walkthrough protocol from the Dana Center is providing departmental feedback on instructional practices, but teachers have mixed reactions as to the effectiveness of this protocol. The newly created teacher leader positions provide another opportunity for teachers to receive feedback through classroom visitations but like the Dana Center protocol, the teacher leaders' role as an avenue for feedback needs to be clarified. During team and content area meetings in the past teachers have used tuning protocols and Critical Friends Groups to offer feedback on each others' practices, but recently the focus of these meetings has been to inform teachers of the new district expectations. Classroom instruction can be greatly improved by consistent constructive feedback from students, parents, supervisors, and peers. (self-study, Endicott Survey, teachers)

Teachers at E-Cubed Academy are highly qualified in their content area according to the federally-mandated No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. It is not clear that teachers are employing the most current strategies to educate students however, as many of the classrooms observed are structured traditionally. These traditional, teacher centered strategies do not align with the school's mission statement. While co-teaching has been utilized as a way to give more individualized attention to students its potential is not currently fully realized in the classroom. Professional development has been offered, but more support for collaboration between regular education and special education teachers is required. Common planning time (CPT) does not allow as much time for structured teacher reflection as the past CPT model. High turnover among staff members creates further need for providing support for new professionals to the

building. Continued professional development and time for teachers to reflect on their instruction will be a central component to increasing student achievement at E-Cubed Academy. Reflecting on one's work allows a teacher to set important goals and incorporate the feedback of others. (self-study, observations, teachers)

The E-Cubed staff and administration is committed to the discussion of instructional practices in the school but is hampered by reduced common planning time, a high rate of staff turnover, and implementation of district initiatives. Agendas for common planning time indicate a variety of school initiatives, and teacher professional development is discussed, but instructional strategies do not appear to be the predominant focus of these meetings. Math and science teachers report that some of the time devoted to curriculum development over the past year has included discussions of instructional strategies. Teacher leaders play a role in supporting new teachers to the building by sharing materials and familiarizing them with recent initiatives, but there is no formal mechanism for supporting new teachers through discussion of instructional strategies. With so many changes to the structure of the school through district initiatives, reduced opportunities for common planning time, and the high teacher turnover, it is understandable that discussion of classroom instructional practices has become less a priority than making sense of a new schedule, new staff, and a revised proficiency-based graduation requirement. It will be important in the future for administrators and teacher leaders to devote purposeful time to discussion of instructional strategies if its discussion is to authentically permeate the school culture and regain its importance in relation, particularly, to the school mission. (teachers, administrators, documents)

Although E-Cubed Academy teachers utilize technology in a variety of ways to support students in their classroom, the technology available to support teaching and learning is not consistently effective nor even operative due to computers being in a state of disrepair and the school's collection of outdated software and hardware. According to the Endicott Survey, 80% of the students reports that their teachers utilize technology to support instruction while 86% of the faculty believes they use technology to enhance instruction. There are opportunities for students to utilize technology in most classrooms; there are four laptop carts in the building regularly accessible to all four grades. A few teachers have SMARTBoards in their classroom; one teacher has 18 computers in her English classroom. However, most classrooms have only four to six computers, and many of the computers are the ones that were in the building when it opened six years ago, and updates have not been made. The operating platform does not support some software applications causing some students who own them to bring in their own laptops. Through the school's partnership with Diploma Plus, every teacher and student has their own website. The majority of teachers encourage parents and students to utilize their website to access classroom expectations, homework assignments and supporting documents. Students are expected to use their website to organize their graduation portfolio. All ninth grade students are expected to take a computer applications class which provides all freshmen with the tools necessary to navigate and utilize the Microsoft Office Suite. There is no technology data base that allows teachers to conduct simple administrative tasks like taking attendance or submitting grades although, through the REG system, teachers can access student data. Thus, as a result of the uneven technological support, and outdates equipment technology is predictably able to play an important supportive role in augmenting classroom instruction and fulfilling mission intentions. (self-study, teachers, student shadowing, Endicott Survey)

There are some opportunities for teachers to work on improving their instructional strategies although competing professional development initiatives and reduced common planning time have reduced the number of opportunities for professional development and collegial sharing connected to instructional strategies. During the 2008-09 school year, E-Cubed Academy administrators and teachers had 45 minutes of common planning time a day. One of those days was devoted to some aspect of best-practice instructional strategies. At that time, more than 96.4 % of the faculty recalls regularly discussing instructional strategies with their colleagues. Professional development for teachers, that now takes place twice a month rather than daily, touches on a wide variety of topics from E-portfolio management to analyzing school data to student-led conferences. Summer professional opportunities provide extensive offerings for teachers, but the focus is not now specifically on instruction. It is a challenge to sustain professional development focused on instructional strategies because there are so many student needs and state and district initiatives to fulfill in reduced time. Time and focus are a pre-requisite to improve instruction in the classroom, particularly with a high percentage of new teachers. The focus of professional development on instruction will be vital for improved student achievement. (teachers, administrators, self-study)

The current teacher evaluation process has not helped teachers to improve their instruction at E-Cubed Academy. The Providence School District evaluation process for teachers is expected to be revised in the near future. Teachers have expressed concern that the current evaluation system does not support their professional growth as educators. Currently, teachers are evaluated annually for the first three years of employment until they are tenured. Teachers who receive a critical review can be put on an improvement plan to address any shortcomings. After tenure, teachers are evaluated only every five years. Until the evaluation plan is revised, teachers will not receive appropriate guidance to be able to improve instruction in order to enhance student learning and meet the diverse needs of their students. (teachers, administrators, central office administrators)

Commendations

1. The personalization of instruction at E-Cubed Academy

2. The high qualifications of teachers in their content areas

3. The use of the Diploma Plus teacher websites for parents to access classroom expectations, homework assignments, supporting documents and for students to organize their graduation portfolio

4. The computer class that provides all ninth graders the tools necessary to navigate and utilize the Microsoft Office Suite

5. The experience and dedication of founding faculty members who are determined to maintain their vision and high standards

Recommendations

1. Provide professional development in the area of engaging students as active learners within shortened class periods

2. Provide students with consistent opportunities for self-reflection and self-assessment

3. Provide more opportunities for common planning time dedicated to best practices across departments

4. Embed additional activities that use higher order thinking skills into regular classroom activities to promote depth of understanding

5. Develop and implement a plan to ensure that all teachers are using a variety of teaching strategies in each lesson

6. Ensure that all teachers are self-reflective about their own practices

7. Incorporate activities that provide students the resources to explore self-directed-learning opportunities

8. Develop a process to provide support to teachers who are having difficulty creating a learning atmosphere conducive to the pursuit of practicing and achieving the school's academic learning expectations

9. Implement a new teacher evaluation process focused on improving student learning and meeting student needs

10. Utilize current structures and develop new ones for teachers to solicit feedback from other teachers, students, supervisors and parents with the aim of improving instruction

11. Renew emphasis on structured, collegial discussions used to improve instructional practice

12. Upgrade and maintain obsolete hardware and software to support teachers and students in the classroom

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

4 ASSESSMENT OF 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.

Conclusions

E-Cubed Academy's school-wide rubrics were developed in alignment with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The school created school-wide rubrics that were presented to staff members with professional development in their use provided during the winter of 2009-2010. Many teachers and departments have developed and utilize course-specific rubrics that are independent of the school-wide rubrics. As yet, the school does not have a formal process in place to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission. So, it has created the infrastructure of school-wide academic, civic, and social rubrics to measure student progress in achieving expectations, the school has confined the implementation of the school-wide rubrics to support student learning as related only to individual classroom practice so far because there is no identified protocol to collaboratively assess student work or calibrate the associated scoring. Although teachers have distributed the school-wide rubrics to all students, they are not used on a consistent basis to assess student progress, but rather they are used by some teachers to determine the achievement on a specific assignment to assign a grade. Thus, E-Cubed is not in a position to be able to use school-wide assessment data to make its own decisions to improve learning and teaching. (teachers, classroom observations, self-study)

E-Cubed Academy's professional staff inconsistently uses data to assess the success of the school in achieving academic expectations. Although E-Cubed has an active school improvement team and data-based school improvement plan, teachers report that the DAT (Data and Assessment Team) at the school and district level is not fully functional and is still in the development stage. Currently, the E-Cubed Academy Guidance Department runs academic reports and shares them with the director of guidance and principal on a monthly basis as well as to reporting them as grades. As a result, students are required to take mandatory tutorials and/or are recommended to Saturday sessions if not meeting the school-wide standards and grades. Furthermore, math, science, and English departments review New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) data and released items to determine gaps in instruction. The school uses the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 10s) to screen and monitor for progress with goals linked to the student's personal literacy plan and reading course. In addition, the special education teachers align NECAP data to drive the individual educational plan's (IEP) current levels of performance and to create baselines. Transition data from the Transition Performance Inventory (TPI) is maintained by the special education teachers and is utilized in determining goals. Teachers also have access to data dashboard which is a tool to look at NECAP, attendance, and other student records. Although this data is readily available, there is no collected data available from the use of the school-wide rubrics to assess academic, civic, and social expectations for learning. In addition, data connected to student performance on summative assessments linked to the new "guaranteed and viable" curriculum are not yet available for teacher analysis. Therefore, the school has not yet focused on whether E-Cubed Academy is achieving the academic expectations tied into the school's mission. (teachers, observations, self-study, POP One Plan)

E-Cubed Academy teachers do not consistently communicate and clarify relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals assessed on learning activities.

While many departments have quarterly projects and on-demand tasks with academic expectations delineated; other classes have expectations linked only with class assignment objectives. The mission and expectations are displayed in all classrooms, but rubrics and objectives are displayed only in some classrooms. Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) are indicated on all quarterly project assessments and department common tasks as well as on some classroom assessments. Many students report that they struggle to understand how teachers use the rubrics in the assessment of their work, and are unable to independently make connections to the Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) and academic expectations. Although most teachers report that students are provided the rubrics and checklists prior to commencing an assessment, observations reveal inconsistencies in this practice. Although there is consistency in the practice of allowing students to revise their work to demonstrate proficiency, student work from a variety of departments reveals numerous instances in which the work has been evaluated for the school-wide learning expectations with little or no feedback on performance on course-specific learning goals. As a result, students do not have a clear and concise understanding of the language of the school-wide and departmental rubrics nor do they seem to have a clear and concise understanding of the language of the standards. Thus, it must be clarified for both students and teachers that there are goals and school-wide expectations while the school implements district imperatives. This dual awareness will enable the school to assess the effectiveness of all attempts to improve teaching and learning. (students, observations, parents, student work, student shadowing).

Most teachers base some classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics, but student performance on the rubric is currently assessed through selection of the proficiency level of each indicator without direct, formative feedback. A direct connection is not made for students between the overall number they receive on the indicator and the individual formative narrative feedback of each indicator. "Grading" is correlated with assessment on the school-wide rubrics and course-specific rubrics through a grading system developed through the Diploma Plus system. Quarterly projects and on-demand department tasks include the GSEs and school-wide expectations that will be assessed. Some quarterly projects and on-demand tasks include assessment information and directions, but this is inconsistent in assessment examples. Many assignments are evaluated only using the school-wide rubrics, with no course-specific rubric provided. While a few departments, such as English language arts, have developed course-specific rubrics, the majority of departments are still in the process of rubric development. Because most students are not receiving consistent, specific, rubric-based feedback on their performance on school-wide or course-specific expectations, they do not have adequate information to improve their performance during the revision cycle or over time nor are they experiencing the formative effectiveness of rubric use. (student work, students, panel presentation, self-study)

Some teachers are using a wide variety of assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies but have not devised a clear means of gap analysis or progress monitoring. For example, the math department utilizes on-demand tasks while the science department utilizes quarterly projects. The art teacher assesses student work through whole-group critiques, self-assessment critiques, and peer reviews. Many teachers employ the "do now" entry strategy. English and social studies teachers report that they employ performance-based assessments. Although the district has adopted common course assessments

and senior project exhibition as the district's performance-based graduation requirements (PBGRs), a few teachers continue to employ use of a portfolio that demonstrates growth and mastery of academic, social, and civic expectations. All graduating seniors are required to complete a career research paper, internship, and exhibition as components of the PBGR requirements. The new guaranteed math and science curricula provide a series of suggested formative and summative assessments consisting of a bank of multiple choice questions and inquiry questions whereas the school was using more project-based learning and assessment. According to teacher and central office reports, feedback on the pacing guides is taken into consideration during the curriculum revision process. Because the curricula are still in the development process, there is a deficit of assessments designed to provide benchmarking and progress monitoring data. Although some teachers are using a wide variety of instructional strategies, the majority of classroom observations reveal an overuse of "do nows" as an instructional strategy with inconsistent use of varied strategies. Inconsistent variety of instructional and assessment strategies coupled with the inception of the new "guaranteed and viable" curriculum in math and science has created a deficit of data reflecting student knowledge, skills, and competencies over time. Thus, a return to departmental focus on a variety of assessment is called for. (teachers, central office personnel, observation, self-study)

Prior to the 2009-2010 school year, teachers met on a daily basis for departmental and interdisciplinary common planning time. As a result of district initiatives resulting in a schedule change, teachers now meet collaboratively two times per month within their departments. Although they have had professional development in protocols to use in looking at student work and have some opportunity to collaborate, teachers no longer discuss, share work, and results of student assessments for the purpose of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies at the building level. Further, teachers do not have opportunities to meet in cross-curricular teams or with inclusion teachers to share student work, collaborate, or analyze assessment data for the purpose of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies. Teachers cite the decrease in common planning time and limited access to teachers of the same course as deterrents to discussing students' work and their instructional strategies formally. The faculty has not developed or adopted a formal protocol for collegial examination or discussion of student work in the school. E-Cubed teachers provide district-level feedback on the guaranteed and viable curriculum for the purpose of revising the curriculum based upon their professional experiences with implementation and pacing. Teachers report that the district curriculum team incorporates this feedback into decisions related to curriculum pacing and revision. Currently, the "guaranteed and viable" curriculum is in place for math and science only, but is in the development process for English and social studies, to be implemented in the 2010-11 school year. There is no common district curriculum in any other courses offered at E-Cubed. Further, due to the 33% mobility rate in the Providence student population, teachers at E-Cubed report challenges in using student assessment data to determine gaps in instruction and student needs. The high number of new-hires creates a need for on-going professional development and mentoring related to instruction and assessment aligned to the school's mission and expectations. Curriculum development and revision based on school-level student performance data is a newly established district process that includes many E-Cubed teachers and should be continued and supported to increase student achievement through consistent instructional and assessment strategies and techniques in a highly transient community. (teachers, self-study, student work)

E-Cubed Academy's professional development program provides some opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessments. The school has an early release every other Wednesday for teachers to work on professional development activities within the school and district in addition to after-hours professional development sessions. Currently, professional development activities provide opportunities for collaboration in developing assessments through the curriculum re-write. Some E-Cubed teachers are involved with the revision of the curriculum and common assessments; however, others are concerned with the format of assessment in the new curriculum. Many teachers comment that there are very few opportunities in the curriculum for the project-based learning that took place during the previous block schedule format so that there is a need to provide professional development in project-based assessments aligned to the new six-period schedule. Further, teachers say they need additional time to collaborate on creating common tasks, developing student work protocols, and calibrating rubric assessments. Although common formative and summative assessments from the new guaranteed and viable curricula have been administered to students, data on the results will not be provided to teachers during the 2009-10 pilot year. As a result of a decrease in collaborative planning time, teachers lack opportunity required for formal cross curricular and interdepartmental collaboration in developing assessments, resulting in difficulty in meeting the assessment needs of the student body. Because there are insufficient opportunities for teachers to collaborate in the development of a broad range of student assessment strategies, students do not receive a consistent educational experience nor assessment. (teachers, student work, principal, central office administrations)

Although E-Cubed Academy faculty members and leaders communicate student grades to students and parents regularly, E-Cubed Academy does not yet have a formal mechanism to clearly communicate individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families. The school provides students and parents with quarterly sessions intended to instruct students and families on the connection of standards-based assessment reporting to the school-wide academic expectations, but parents and student interviews reveal a lack of understanding of the connection of current school assessments with the student's and school's progress toward meeting school-wide academic expectations. Advisory rubrics are utilized to assess civic and social expectations in some advisories, but there is no formal mechanism to measure and report on student progress toward achieving all school-wide expectations. The guidance department collects and reports data on discipline, grades, and attendance on a monthly basis, but school-wide progress is not communicated to parents. The self-study indicates that the school needs to increase the communication to parents and students of student and school-wide progress toward meeting school-wide expectations. The self-study also reports a need to formalize a process to acquire and use data to assess and report the school's progress toward the civic and social expectations. The lack of a mechanism to collect and report student progress toward meeting all of the school-wide expectations results in students, their families, and the community being uncertain how students are performing in relation to the school's academic, social, and civic expectations. (teachers, parents, students, administrators, panel presentation, self-study)

Commendations

1. The alignment of the school-wide rubrics with the school's mission and expectations

2. The development and utilization of course-specific rubrics

3. The alignment of the advisory framework to the school's civic and social expectations

4. The active involvement of E-Cubed Academy core content area teachers in curriculum writing and revision, including the development of related formative and summative assessments

5. The process by which student report cards are reviewed and the resulting requirement of tutoring and Saturday sessions as needed

6. The implementation by math and science teachers of suggested summative assessments attached to the new guaranteed and viable curriculum

Recommendations

1. Utilize the existing Data and Assessment Team (DAT) framework to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics

2. Create and implement a consistent process for recording, measuring, and reporting students' progress in achieving civic and social expectations

3. Develop and implement a process to determine student growth over time

4. Ensure that teachers consistently base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics

5. Ensure that all teachers use a variety of assessment strategies

6. Expand formal opportunities for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional strategies

7. Develop and implement a formal protocol for collegial examination and discussion of student work

8. Provide professional development on project-based assessment in the context of the new six-period schedule

9. Communicate individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families

10. Communicate the school's progress in achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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.

Conclusions

In the areas of personnel, planning, implementation of initiatives, and budgeting, the principal has sufficient autonomy to lead the school. However, in areas that have recently impacted in the learning community at E Cubed academy, that sovereignty is not clear. The superintendent entrusts the principal to be the keeper of the school's mission, and he views the school, a small learning community, as unique. However, the district has mandated systemic change that threatens the school's very identity. The school's mission thus far has not been compromised, but faculty members and administrators have had to direct great effort towards maintaining founding principles. Changes to a uniform district-wide daily schedule for all high schools in the Providence and a Common Core "guaranteed" curriculum have been implemented to counteract the negative effects of 33% student mobility. Stakeholders in the E-Cubed Academy community have had a strong voice in the development of those district initiatives. In the face of high administrative turnover in the school, veteran faculty members can be credited with remaining stalwart and maintaining the school's mission, and now, by serving for the last two years, the principal has become the anchor for the school and has successfully established a strong leadership structure within the school. While many of the faculty members feel the weight of adjusting to the district initiatives, they support the principal as the leader of the school, they continue to work for improvement of student learning. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators, administrators)

The principal provides leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning. She is described by staff members as empowering, supportive, and as a person who leads by example. In cooperation with the faculty, she is actively involved with the vision of the school. The leadership of the principal provides E-Cubed Academy with stability and a direction for academic success. The principal uses common planning time (CPT) to address school-related issues. Although CPT has been reduced this year from daily to bi-weekly, the principal has developed a plan to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment at E-Cubed Academy. The curriculum, instruction, and assessment committee (CIA) and school improvement team (SIT) are building initiatives of the principal with faculty collaboration. The principal has also incorporated the data team (DAT) to provide accurate data and statistics to support the implementation of these committees. The principal is supported by the superintendent, school board, and faculty and staff as the leader of the school. This support has given the principal an opportunity to provide a positive learning environment for students at E-Cubed Academy. As a result of the principal's leadership a sense of pride and community has developed within the school and there is also a renewal of mission values. (teachers, self-study, administrators)

The principal delegates authority to a number of willing and able individuals at E-Cubed Academy. She uses the consensus model for decision making, which requires her to rely on the input of faculty and staff members. Using evidence from the distributive leadership model, the principal utilizes departmental teacher leaders' content expertise to reach out to the entire staff. These faculty members are given the authority to lead in a number of areas critical to the continued development of the school. They are used as a support staff for department teacher, and they provide onsite content area leadership through "best practices" and positive feedback. The principal requires staff members to take the initiative of joining one of the five school-based

teams: curriculum-instruction-and-assessment, capacity, policies-and-procedures, data, and climate-and-culture. Each team has been implemented based on statistical data provided by DAT and they are all part of the school improvement team (SIT), which includes faculty members and parents who meet monthly to develop, examine, and revise school-wide documents, policies, curricula, and school rituals and to review progress on the Providence One Plan (POP). Veteran teachers provide leadership at E-Cubed Academy. These experienced teachers share a vision with the principal and are considered to be informal mentors for teachers who are new to E-Cubed Academy. Several teachers note the fact that they would have difficulty at E-Cubed Academy if it were not for teacher leaders and veteran teachers in their content area. The assistant principal also provides leadership throughout the school. Staff members consider him to be a well-respected disciplinarian who regards each of the students as individuals. They feel that he is an excellent listener who provides students and teachers with positive feedback. He is also required to observe teachers throughout the school year. E-Cubed Academy uses methods provided by the Dana Center as guides for walk-through evaluations. According to the staff members, the walkthroughs have been sporadic and have not always met the monthly schedule, however. It is important for the administrators to observe staff members and provide consistent valuable feedback. Students are encouraged by the fact that both the principal and assistant principal are visible throughout the day, in the hallways or during class periods. The sense of community at E-Cubed Academy is a credit to the principal and other leaders in the school who share a common vision. (teachers, administrators, self-study)

The principal has developed a system of organization within the school and its educational program that promotes the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The school represents the model of a small learning community and support and provides opportunity for personalization. Per teacher contract, class sizes may not exceed 30 students or an average of 26 students per class based on the teacher's student load. Physical education classes have no cap on student class size, but most classes are below 26:1. The ratio of students to guidance counselors meets appropriate guidelines. School counselor activities are provided in town meetings by grade level, English classes, one-to-one, or in small groups.

In spite of changes made by the district, the principal has collaborated with staff to formulate creative ideas and ways to organize the school. According to the staff, the biggest problem facing E-Cubed Academy is the change from a block scheduling model to a six period school day. The principal has taken the initiative of creating a positive outlook on this change, as opposed to using it as an excuse for problems. She has been able to organize the school in a way that best suits the student population. The mission statement is posted in every teacher's classroom, along with the appropriate GSE. All courses are aligned with the GSEs, and elective courses use the national standards along with school-wide rubrics. The written curriculum prompts students to think critically through reading, writing, and communication. Each of these skills is a required initiative under the mission statement. Although technology is an important part of the mission statement, older computers and outdated software and calculators are not meeting the needs of students. These items need to be replaced. SMARTBoard equipment is available for only a few teachers. Teachers are no longer able to create interdisciplinary units because there been core changes to the school. Some teachers consider interdisciplinary units an integral part of the mission statement, but understand the need for change. They believe the biggest changes have involved the schedule and moving away from a four-period, 90-minute

block-scheduling model. Although this has been a difficult adjustment, the faculty has noted several times that the new schedule gives them an opportunity to meet with the students every day.   E-Cubed Academy also promotes social and civic aspects of the mission statement. The school is currently aligned with the Hope High School Athletic Department and has several outstanding athletes on the track and football teams. Students must also complete fifteen hours of community service in order to graduate from E-Cubed Academy. Community service is currently required through the senior portfolio project, but students are expected to find their own community service program. It would be helpful to many students, especially in view of the city's student mobility, if the school provided students with several community service opportunities and directed students through this process. Students participate in the principal's council, which promotes leadership and gives them an opportunity to have a voice at the school. The organization of E-Cubed Academy and its educational programs, even in the face of change, promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning, creating a mission-driven school. (self-study, curriculum documents, teachers, administrators)

E-Cubed Academy is a college preparatory school that offers several pathways to meet postsecondary academic goals. Student grouping patterns reflect the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity in all classes. The students enjoy the diversity in their classes, and all stakeholders believe this has helped to build a sense of community at E-Cubed Academy. All classes support the achievement of the school's mission statement, but some instructional and assessment practices do not reflect best practices and current research. The school is currently making efforts to improve instructional practices to reflect current research, but many teachers are not using differentiated instruction to reach out to students of varying ability levels, a necessity in effective heterogeneous instruction. The school has also begun to develop an advanced- placement (AP) program for students to allow them to achieve at a college level. Developing AP classes is a supporting element of the mission statement of the school. Thus students at E-Cubed Academy are afforded opportunities to achieve at high levels, and mission-driven heterogeneity is maintained. (self-study, students, teachers, observations, student shadowing)

The E-Cubed Academy schedule is not driven by the school's mission and expectations for learning, but it does support the implementation of the new curriculum, and its embedded instructional and assessment practices. Prior to the 2009-10 school year, E-Cubed Academy was functioning through a block scheduling model. Currently, the district model is a six period non-rotating schedule with 54 minutes of instructional time in each period. The condensed periods have had an impact on the identity of the school and have detracted from the school's quest to fulfill its mission statement; the new schedule and its shortened periods also support the new curriculum focus of breadth over depth. Although these changes in curriculum and scheduling have been made, the mission and expectations for student learning have not been revised. Instead, the administrators and staff members have chosen to reconcile the new schedule and new curriculum, remaining steadfast in their pursuit of the school's mission. They are trying to work and develop strategies that will meet the students' needs, but they must receive professional development support in the areas of instructional and assessment practice to deliver the curriculum under the constrictions of the new schedule.   The current schedule sometimes inhibits extended learning activities such as science labs, but practitioners of the new district core curricula in science are currently reviewing how to accommodate hands-on science inquiry in a

shorter block. Although teachers have been vocal in opposition to the changes, the new schedule has allowed the school to gain 105 hours of instructional time. The teachers, staff, and students have a clear understanding of the revised schedule and are beginning to accept the tradeoff of less time per period to have additional instructional hours during the year. However, fulfillment of the school mission is undermined until professional development has been provided to train teachers to maximize opportunities for learning in current conditions. Otherwise, the diverse needs of the student population will not be met. (teachers, central office administrators, self-study, administrators)

Students, parents, and members of the school staff feel they have a role in the decision-making process at E-Cubed Academy. E-Cubed Academy is described as a "community" that respects the opinion that each of these groups provides. The principal has an open-door, collaborative policy at the school, and teachers feel that their voices are heard and that their feedback is important to the administrative team. There is a monthly or School as a Whole (SAW) meeting for all faculty. At these meetings, concerns and problems are addressed using a consensus model. Teachers are able to submit new ideas to be considered, and one teacher successfully lobbied to add enrichment classes to the curriculum. Teachers feedback is an integral part of the decision-making process at E-Cubed Academy. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

This year, teacher leaders have replaced the role of department heads, and there are four teachers in this position. Teacher leaders have a reduced work schedule and teach 4 out of the 6 periods each day. Teacher leaders meet two to three times a week during their 6th period block. The responsibilities of a teacher leader include modeling classroom instruction, non-evaluation observations of teachers in their departments, monitoring books and stock, attending city-wide curriculum meetings, leading departmental meetings, and weekly meetings with the principal. Teacher leaders are an important part of leadership at E-Cubed Academy; they do have some influence on what happens at the school, especially at the building level. (teachers, teacher leaders, administrators, self-study)

The school improvement team (SIT) is a committee that meets once a month and includes administrators, teachers, parents, students, and members of the community. Students have the opportunity to be heard through the principal's council, which is organized in a fashion similar to a student council; it is viewed as an avenue to stay actively involved in school. Students consistently state that they feel a sense of participation, responsibility, and ownership at school. Parents are encouraged to join the PTO and sit in on interview committees when hiring new staff members. The PTO is assisting with the initiative to garner more active participation by other parents. The superintendent does not involve parents at the district level but believes parents should be involved in the school. There are many opportunities for leadership roles at E-Cubed Academy. Teachers, parents, and students feel their voices are heard and have a sense of ownership and pride. (central office administrators, self-study, students, parents)

There is a wide range of class sizes at E Cubed Academy, with the grade 9 and 10 classes the largest. Several teachers of grade 9 classes also have an upper-level class, balancing the total student load for which teachers are responsible. Some teachers feel that there is an imbalance in class size, but observations do not support this; in fact, most classes observed had class sizes of

less than 20 students. School counselors verify the count in each course section before enrolling students and make a concerted effort to keep all classes at no more than 26 students with the exception of the physical education class which can maximize to 31. Seventy-nine percent of teachers feels that teaching loads and assignments are fair and equitable. The student load enables teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. (self-study, teachers, counselors, observations)

Each student has a personal connection with an adult in the building beyond their relationship with the guidance counselor. Numerous students attest to the personalized attention they receive, not only from their own teachers and other teachers in the school, but also from the principal. The students believe that the principal knows each one of them by name and has a personal, vested interest in them. There is a well-established advisory council that meets every other Wednesday for 60 minutes. Its goal is to empower all students to succeed at achieving the academic, civic, and social expectations at E-Cubed Academy and carry those expectations into adult life. The original framework includes work by grade level in four key areas: personal development; academic success; social and leadership development; and college and career readiness. Teachers follow this advisory curriculum in these sessions and mentor from 10-16 students. Most students feel comfortable at these meetings and have developed trusting relationships with their advisors. Many students approach their advisors for help with personal problems and situations at home. Teachers believe that the model employed last year, with advisory 30 minute meetings occurring every day, was far more beneficial to personalizing relationships than this year's schedule. They feel they are meeting too infrequently with their students in advisory to maximize a personal connection, but they feel committed to making this new model work.   As a result of these established relationships, students have a sense of being part of the E-Cubed Academy community and have an adult member of that community to support them in all of their high school endeavors. (students, teachers, administrators, self-study)

The professional staff tries to collaborate within and across their departments. Teachers express great interest in having meaningful departmental and interdepartmental discussions. Within departments, they would like to have enough time to share assessment tools and instructional techniques, evaluate student work, calibrate their assessment tools, and revise curriculum based on tangible data. There are some teacher-driven efforts to restore cross-curricular activities at E-Cubed Academy, but there is no formal meeting time to explore an interdepartmental approach, so there is no guarantee it will happen. The new 55-minute schedule has greatly affected the amount of time available for meetings, and teachers express concern and frustration about trying to fit in all they need to do. A return to interdepartmental meetings, slated to begin during the 2010-11 year will give teachers more opportunities to collaborate. Increased opportunities to collaborate across disciplines and departmentally would have a positive impact on school-wide vision and student learning. (teachers, self-study, administrators)

All staff members are actively engaged in the promotion of the well-being and learning of students. There are several initiatives in place at E-Cubed Academy that are geared at reaching at-risk students including a mandated after-school tutoring program, a bi-monthly Saturday School, a Ramp-Up remediation program, and a summer program. There is a wellness committee that focuses on students with academic, behavioral, and/or emotional needs. This

committee consists of the assistant principal, the nurse, a guidance counselor, the student assistance counselor, and the school's social worker. Teachers make confidential referrals to this support team and rate their concerns on a scale of 1-5, depending on its urgency. Data is collected concerning both the kinds of and frequency of referrals, and assessments are made as to the impact of this intervention. During the 2009-2010 school year, 26% of the 85 referrals showed improvement in one of the three areas of attendance, behavior or academics. Out of necessity, teachers have formed an emergency team to ensure the well-being of all students when the nurse is not in the school. Some teachers have voluntarily learned CPR, and several have been trained on how to give Epipen injections. The nurse is a .5 position and is in the school for 2.5 days a week. Despite this potential for an unsafe environment, she is close by and, in cases of extreme emergencies, she often arrives at the school before the ambulance. The cafeteria is clean and attractive, and care is given to offer healthy food choices. In addition to keeping the school clean and orderly, custodians regularly monitor the bathrooms by unlocking the doors when needed and checking for graffiti after students leave. Support staff members, including secretaries who schedule appointments for students and take messages generally have positive interactions with students. Faculty and staff members work in concert to promote the well-being and learning of students which supports the mission of the school as well as its learning expectations. (self-study, counselors, teachers, administrators, nurse)

Student success is regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed at E-Cubed Academy. All seniors create an individual tile that commemorates their upcoming commencement. These tiles are displayed at the entrance of the school and create a celebratory welcome to all visitors. Also evident in the main lobby of the school are many lists of students who have achieved academic success. Student accomplishments are regularly broadcast during the morning PA announcements. Most teachers create a Rising Star poster that highlights students who have improved academically in their class. Although there is some confusion as to exactly what constitutes a Rising Star, teachers make every effort to involve as many students as possible including those who have made an effort to improve. There is a quarterly honors' night in which students who have made the honor roll are invited, with their parents, to celebrate this accomplishment. Every classroom at E-Cubed Academy has documentation of school work posted on the walls and some student work is presented on the main office windows. Student-made totem poles and art exhibits adorn the hallways and lobby of E-Cubed Academy. Students express great pleasure at seeing their work exhibited and this contributes to the sense of pride that permeates the climate. Celebrations of student success are an integral component of the E-Cubed Academy culture. (observations, self-study, students, teachers)

The climate of E-Cubed Academy is safe, generally respectful, positive, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. Students state they feel very safe at E-Cubed Academy. Parents also believe that E-Cubed Academy offers a safe environment for their children, and they are genuinely pleased with the climate at the school. Behavioral expectations and discipline are outlined in the student agenda book, and students believe consequences are fair and enforced consistently. Teachers meet with students regularly beyond the school day and often reach out to students who are having difficulties. Students agree that teachers care about them as people. This was born out in student interviews in which they reported feeling that the teachers know them and care about their individual needs. Students report that they have seldom seen any instances of bullying or disrespect towards other students. A group of 9th grade

students conveyed that "everyone likes everyone" at E-Cubed Academy and that "it is like a family." The school prides itself on being a school that does not need the services of a school resource officer as the level and frequency of discipline issues does not warrant one. While there is a true sense of community and security at E-Cubed Academy, there is a pattern of disrespect in many classrooms. Some students are off-task and engage in conversations not relevant to the lesson being taught. Teachers end up spending valuable teaching time dealing with classroom management. This climate of comfortable, casual, chatty interactions within the classroom does not align with the mission statement of E-Cubed Academy. Students may have a diminished appreciation of the value of their education if the classroom climate does not demand the best of them in terms of behavior. (classroom observations, students, parents, teachers, student shadowing)

The school board has provided the necessary resources to support and foster the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Although there is some discord among faculty members regarding new district mandates, the board's support for the school's mission and expectations has generally been consistent and favorable seen in their revision of hiring practices, professional development opportunities for faculty members, and adequate resource support. There is consensus that the school board supports the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

Commendations

1. The veteran faculty's role in maintaining the school's mission

2. The strong leadership structure within the school

3. The principal's plan to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the face of systemic change

4. The ongoing promotion of the school's civic and social expectations through collaborative sports programs, community service programs, and student leadership opportunities

5. The school's student grouping patterns that foster heterogeneity

6. The sense of community at E-Cubed Academy

7. The ongoing development of the college-level advanced placement program

8. The building level use of teacher leaders as a model for new and new to the building teachers

9. The contributive voices of the community stakeholders at the building and district levels

10. The favorable class size and student load of teachers at E-Cubed Academy

11. The successful advisory program

12. The many varied initiatives at E-Cubed Academy aimed at reaching at-risk students

13. The support staff's dedication to the promotion of the student body's well-being

14. The exemplary acknowledgement, celebration, and display of student success at E-Cubed Academy

15. The safe, positive, and supportive climate of the school

Recommendations

1. Develop a process of thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse between the school board and superintendent with the principal which will ensure the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.

2. Update the school's technology program to promote the school's mission and expectations for learning

3. Ensure the consistent classroom use of differentiated instruction to meet the needs of students in heterogeneously grouped classes

4. Provide professional development in the areas of instruction and assessment in order to reconcile the school's schedule to its mission

5. Align classroom behavior with the principles of the school's mission statement

6. Implement the principal's plan to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment

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.

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.

Conclusions

E-Cubed has formal programming across most areas of support services, consistent with the school's mission and expectations for school learning. E-Cubed Academy support personnel, in conjunction with teachers, administrators, and school staff members, work to "remove the barriers" for all students in accessing the necessary school resources, to meet the academic, civic, and social expectations of all learners. The guidance and counseling programs are aligned with the school's mission statement and expectations. E-Cubed utilizes the Providence School Department guidance curriculum which is based on national standards and the *Rhode Island School Counselor Association Framework*. The guidance program operates through the school advisory frameworks to promote self-worth, positive relationship building, and civic engagement and community involvement. In addition to the guidance and counseling program, E-Cubed provides a variety of health services connected with the social expectations that are designed to promote healthy-life choices. The special education and intervention services are multi-tiered and support the student achievement of the mission and expectations. Although E-Cubed provides library media services, these have no formal connection with the mission and expectations for student learning. The library media specialist incorporates the *Standards for the 21st Century Learner* as stated in the Association of American of School Librarian's *National Information Literacy Standards* in her lessons. However, the district library and information literacy framework has not been revised since 1998. Overall, student support services providers are committed to assisting students at E-Cubed achieve academic, social and civic success. (teachers, support service personnel, self-study)

The school allocates resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. The guidance department provides services in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social while delivering services individually, in small groups, and in classroom settings. The part-time, school social worker, psychologist, and student assistance officers work closely with the guidance department and special education department in program implementation and in meeting individual student needs. Although there is an array of programs and services, there are only 1.5 guidance counselors to implement and maintain those programs and to meet the very demanding needs of the school's student population.

E-Cubed leaders and teachers report that there is a need to increase the half-time nurse to full-time status in order to provide necessary services in monitoring the physical and emotional needs of all students to provide student health information to teachers and staff members, to maintain student confidentiality, and to provide additional information to teachers, staff, students, and community members on current health topics such as teen pregnancy and communicable diseases. Special education and intervention services are provided on a continuum ranging from a self-contained class, inclusion classes, ramp-up classes, credit recovery courses, mandatory tutorials, and optional Saturday sessions. Students are heterogeneously grouped, with best-practice ratios in all inclusion and college preparatory classes. Special education teams, student support teams, and the wellness team regularly review student academic, social/emotional, and health needs. Special education and intervention services ensure that barriers to learning are removed for the majority of students. Two ESL sessions are in place for beginner (3 hour session) and intermediate (2 hour session) ESL

students who are also integrated into the regular population for math, science, history and elective classes. Elective class offerings have been expanded this year to include computer science, music, and advanced placement (AP) courses. In addition to student support services and special programs, all educators are available throughout the school day to assist students in the classrooms, and at scheduled times before and after school. Rising Star awards are given to all students who demonstrate a commitment to the academic, social, and civic expectations of the school regardless of ability level.

Additional opportunities for social and civic involvement are afforded to all E-Cubed students through the senior project requirement and the student advisory program. The senior students complete internships as a part of their senior project and may elect to participate in a dual-enrollment program with a local university. College visits have been a tradition for juniors and seniors since the school opened in 2004. These visits are now offered also to freshmen and sophomores. A full-time college guide along with a 'College Crusade' advisor assists Crusade students in the same manner. Both college guides assist the guidance counselors in delivering a college awareness and readiness program, targeting both students and their families. Community service projects are guided through several advisory classrooms, including all special education advisories.

In addition to providing library-media services for students and staff members, the library media specialist (LMS) acts as the technology support in the building. Technology is outdated and in varying states of disrepair, and there are not enough computers in the Library Media Center (LMC) for a full class to be engaged in inquiry, research, and application through technology usage. Further, the LMC is not regularly available to students beyond the school day. Although there are numerous programs, services, and resources available to students, there are deficits in the areas of personnel as well as technology resources and availability which may negatively impact students' ability to achieve all of the school's expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers and students).

Although student support personnel enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff members, more collaborative time is needed between special and regular education teachers to address the needs of all students. The guidance counselors work with the advisory teachers, including all E-Cubed Academy regular and special educators, to provide and deliver services to students proactively and, when necessary to make appropriate referrals for individual students. Any member of the E-Cubed Academy community may refer a student to the wellness team comprised of the teachers, principal, assistant principal, school nurse, counselors, and school psychologists meets weekly to ensure the social-emotional well-being of referred students based upon teacher and staff reports, suspension data, discipline data, attendance data, and grades reports. The wellness team may appoint a case manager to support the student and to provide updates to the team and others concerned. Therefore, the wellness team provides a collaborative approach to school and community resources to support the academic, social, and physical needs of the students. School data delineate the supportive degree to which the schools counselors, the school social worker, and student assistance counselor work with agencies throughout the city including Gateway Mental Health, Family Services of RI, The Providence Center, and numerous other private practitioners. Staff members report that difficulty accessing these services can be a barrier to

receiving treatment; however, to overcome this barrier, support personnel often assist families by contacting, financing, and finding transportation to the services. Contact with outside agencies to which students are referred as well as a number of other state and local agencies is maintained when permissions are granted by all parties. The student assistance counselor's services assist students who are at risk for drug and alcohol use and/or who have a family member dealing with these issues. There is a crisis team in place to work with students and staff in the event of an emergency. Members of this team include the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselors, social worker, and school nurse-teacher. Transition meetings are held with local hospitals when students are discharged and ready to return to school, in order to help transition the student into the regular school routine. Student confidentiality is always maintained when coordinating services for students and families.   In addition to supporting student social, emotional, and physical well-being, counselors also work closely with the local colleges to ensure access to college courses for all seniors interested in dual enrollment and/or post high school experience. Special education teachers work collaboratively within classrooms with regular education teachers. However, both regular and special educators have identified the need for more common planning time for collaboration. Dedicated time is needed to address accommodations and to develop instructional strategies to support student achievement of the expectations for student learning. There is a strong tradition of collaboration between student support personnel and other staff members, addressing the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of most of E-Cubed Academy students. In order for the needs of all E-Cubed Academy' students' needs to be met, including special education students, regular and special education teachers must have formal time to collaborate. (self-study, teachers, parents)

Student support services staff members meet weekly with the school principal and assistant principal, for the purpose of program planning and evaluation. Support services staff members also meet regularly with teams of teachers to evaluate student needs and implement necessary programming for student success. The district director of guidance and the principal are provided with monthly reports by school counselors and school nurse detailing services provided. Also, lead counselors meet approximately six times per year to assess program planning and concerns. Parent and student feedback is requested at the end of most formal presentations. There is limited formal evaluation of the LMS, school social-worker, and psychologist other than the individual's principal evaluation during an evaluation year. The programs as well as personnel must be evaluated consistently. Without a formal system of program evaluation in all areas, there is no assurance that all support services programs enhance improved student learning to the fullest extent possible. (self-study, teachers, counselors)

Communication between school and home takes place on a regular basis, and is designed to inform parents and students of available student services, student needs, and to foster parent engagement. A Connect Ed system has been purchased by the district, allowing the principal to place automated calls to all concerned families on a regular basis to inform them of upcoming events at the school as well as any special issues that might arise. Parents are contacted through e-mail and telephone calls. Wake-up calls are placed to chronically tardy students. Upon enrollment, students receive a student handbook outlining support services. The support services staff meets formally on a bi-weekly basis with teams to discuss student concerns and they also meet with individual teachers as concerns arise. In addition to the teachers in the building, members of the student support services team also maintain school-based webpages for parents

and students. The school librarian sends out information on collection updates to students and teachers. These updates include library happenings as well as regular e-mail updates to teachers regarding new library materials related to their discipline. The results of the Endicott Survey indicate that 65.7 % of students surveyed knows whom to ask for help if they have a personal problem; 70.7 % of parents surveyed states they know what support services are available for their son/daughter at school; and 77.8 % of parents surveyed reports they are able to meet with their son's/daughter's guidance counselor if necessary. Reports on student progress are sent home at the mid-quarter and quarter. At each progress reporting point, any student not making sufficient progress is notified of the need to attend mandatory tutoring sessions and or optional Saturday sessions with teachers. Parents are also notified with dates and times of tutoring sessions available to students. Furthermore, guidance and special education departments implement the use of daily, weekly, and monthly progress reports for students in need of close progress monitoring. This ongoing, effective contact ensures an open-line of communication between parents, teachers, students, and support staff to maximize student achievement. (teachers, students, parents, Endicott Survey)

The security and confidentiality of student records is maintained in a manner consistent with federal and state law. Student permanent record folders are kept in locked storage cabinets within the guidance counselor's office. Records for students who graduate are kept in a locked fireproof storage cabinet in the office workroom for seven years. Special education records, including student IEPs, are maintained in locked storage by the individual special education teachers. Special education testing, data, and evaluations are maintained by the district at the central special education office. All student health records are kept in a locked storage cabinet within the nurse's office. Academic and health records for students who transfer from E-Cubed Academy are sent to the district central records office. Parents are given the opportunity at the beginning of each school year to keep all of their child's information, including directory information, confidential. The district maintains this list and indicates such in the main student database, and 88.9 % of parents state that they trust that their son's/daughter's health and medical information will remain confidential. E-Cubed staff and central office staff members, obtain a release of confidential information prior to providing student confidential records to outside sources. The library circulation software stores only the current, checked-out titles and fine information under a student's name, thus protecting the student's privacy regarding his or her reading interests. Student information is released as requested in accordance with Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws. Continuation of these professional practices will ensure student confidentiality. (self-study, guidance, support staff, Endicott Survey)

Student support staffing at E-Cubed meets state requirements. However, due to the high need and demand for these services at E-Cubed Academy would be better served with additional guidance, health, and library-media service personnel in order to support the mission and expectations of the school. In an effort to provide services for all students, there are one and a half guidance counselors, a career counselor, a part-time school social worker, a part-time school psychologist, a shared guidance secretary, a part-time school nurse teacher, a part-time student assistance counselor, and a full-time library media specialist. Although academic service delivery is individualized and students are supported in the least restrictive environments, social/emotional and physical services are constrained by the part-time status of the school nurse and second guidance counselor. Since the nurse is not present for all emergencies, other

noncertified staff have had to been relied upon to deliver services which they are not qualified to deliver. Guidance provides strong and far-reaching programs in accordance with student need. Due to the high demand, guidance personnel are stretched thin. In addition, teachers report difficulty in accessing the support of the library media specialist because of her increased role in supporting the academic expectations of the school as well as the technology needs of E-Cubed Academy as a whole. Although it is evident that student academic, civic, and social needs are supported by the cooperative efforts of student support personnel, additional support staff is necessary to provide effective guidance, health, and media services to all students. (teachers, team leaders, students, staff members, self-study)

In response to high student need, the school provides 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; and appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students. The guidance counselors at E-Cubed Academy follow the Providence School Department Curriculum and Framework for School Counseling and Student Support Services. This framework is based on the American School Counselor Association, National Standards and RI School Counselor Association Framework and encompasses services in three strands: Personal/Social; Academic; and Career. (counselors, self-study, documents)

Guidance services provided to students as individuals, in small groups and in large groups depending on the nature of the work to be addressed. The school counselor may also visit individual classrooms and/or advisories to help support a theme or activity being presented. In the area of personal/social development, the school counselor meets with students to help with high school transition, resolving personal conflicts, safe dating/health relationships, and general healthy development. At the sophomore and/or junior level, the counselor administers and interprets career development interest inventories and helps to organize the career research paper in conjunction with the junior level English teacher. WaytoGoRI, a web-based tool, provided by the state for all students, is the primary tool used to help implement the career development activities which students complete. During the senior year, the advisory mentor helps students access job shadowing experiences and internship placements. (counselors, self-study, teachers, parents)

College counseling is a major function of the counseling department. A $60,000 grant through E-Cubed Academy's partner organization Diploma Plus and the Lumina Foundation helps to fund college access activities for all students. Beginning with freshman year, students at all levels have access to college visits with school the hoping to motivate students early in their high school career to pursue a post-secondary education. Students in the junior and senior year are afforded the opportunity to attend numerous college visits during the summer months. Each year, a college planning night and financial aid night are held for students and parents, and each family is assigned a college planning guide. Also, a college guide counselor is on staff full time to work with counselors in helping to motivate students from an early age. Numerous activities are planned throughout the year including lunch meetings, SAT prep courses, and college advising sessions. The counselor meets with students to help with college selection, completing college applications, and submitting information for financial aid. (counselors, self-study,

students)

Student course selection assistance for each student at E-Cubed Academy is primarily guided by the counselor. Each student fills out an academic learning plan (ALP) each year in advisory. Each advisor reviews these plans with students yearly in relation to graduation requirements. These plans and student testing data are reviewed by the counselor during course selection the following year. Student choice has recently expanded to include more elective choices as well as advanced placement courses, and dual-enrollment courses with universities. The counselors meet with students between November and December to discuss course selection for the following year. The counselors also meet with students for referral to summer ramp-up, summer school, and/or credit recovery programs. Further, the counselor also meets with students when alternative options for finishing the high school experience are requested by the student or parent. (counselors, self-study, students, parents)

Collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers at E-Cubed Academy goes above and beyond the required level of programming. A wellness team meets regularly to discuss solutions and provide service for students referred with social/emotional issues. A case-management approach is utilized with progress monitoring. Local agencies such as the Providence Center, Rhode Island Family Services, Bradley Hospital, John Hope Settlement House, CES Services and Gateway Mental Health, as well as other local agencies, are utilized. Referrals to these agencies may be made at the request of the parent, teacher, or administrator, and can be student- initiated. The number of E-Cubed Academy students involved with social service agencies is extensive, and the reasons are varied. E-Cubed Academy believes contact with these agencies is critical in supporting students to reach their maximum personal and academic potential.   Regular contact is maintained with the following agencies: The Key Program, Communities for People, Tides Family Services, Rhode Island Juvenile and contact made to numerous other social service agencies based on student/family needs, is maintained when necessary. (counselors, social worker, self-study, documents, nurse)

The guidance department is a full partner in supporting special education students. The full-time counselor is a member of the wellness team and meets as necessary with the special education evaluation team. As a member of the wellness team, the school counselor reviews teacher/team concerns with other members of wellness team, gathers necessary testing data and previous school records, and may observe students in class and assist the wellness team with strategies and suggestions for behavior supports and/or academic supports. If interventions suggested are not effective, the counselor takes the wellness team case folder and prepares it for presentation to the evaluation team. When necessary, the school counselor is part of the IEP team, and/ or IEP conference with teacher, parent, and student. The school guidance counselor provides emergency and regular school counseling services to all students regardless of special needs. The school psychologist counselor provides IEP mandated counseling for students with special needs. As a result of the full range of services made available by E-Cubed guidance services, families and students are provided the support needed for success at and beyond E-Cubed Academy. (counselors, self-study, parents, teachers)

E-Cubed Academy health services provide preventive health services and direct intervention services, appropriate referrals, mandated services emergency response mechanisms,

and ongoing student health assessments. The E-Cubed Health Services Program is staffed with a half-time certified school nurse-teacher (CSNT). Currently the CSNT works 2.5 days at E-Cubed (Monday, Tuesday, and half-day Friday) and 2.5 days at another school. The lack of a full-time CSNT directly impacts student wellness. Regardless of part-time status the school nurse-teacher is responsible for the daily distribution of medicine and for all medical problems at both schools. The CSNT provides health services on a part-time basis to students and staff members within the school building, promoting wellness and thereby decreasing time outside of the classroom and lowering absentee rates. Under the direction of the superintendent and the nurse administrator, the CSNT works directly with the building principal providing the following services: assessing injured and ill students and staff members, and providing appropriate treatment, follow-up, and referral; administering and documenting daily medication for students; serving as a health resource for students and families; serving as a member of the crisis-intervention team; accompanying unattended students to local emergency rooms for treatment; and participating in the process of inventorying, budgeting, and ordering health supplies. Additional CSNT responsibilities include appropriate referrals to community and social service agencies, mandated services such as reviewing, assessing, and maintaining health records and ongoing health exams, such as dental, eye, and hearing screenings, as well as assessments of students with specific chronic health issues. There is a protocol for emergencies for injured and ill students on days the CSNT is at her alternate assigned school. When the CSNT is not in the building, the protocol is for students to go to the office and the principal's secretary. Minor injuries are handled by the principal's secretary, and more serious injuries are referred to the guidance counselor. Neither the secretary nor the guidance counselor is certified to deal with medical issues, however. When other support services personnel respond to medical emergencies in the absence of the school nurse, inevitably other student needs are not being met. Although the E-Cubed Academy community is well supported by its established school health programs and services, the delivery of those programs and services are compromised by the part-time status of the CSNT. (nurse, self-study, counselors, students)

The LMS programs and materials are not fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. Students are introduced to research methods, electronic databases and general library use on an on-going basis, and as needs arise, but there is no "viable and guaranteed" information technology skills experiences provided, in spite of the mission intent. While the collection is representative of the various subjects studied by students (breadth), both individually and collectively, it lacks enough depth to adequately serve students and staff research needs. Inter-library loans help address this shortfall and updated computers with current software would be a better way to access e-resources. Computers in the media center are inadequate to support the school's emphasis on electronic resources, and technology instruction. However, 41.5 % students says they use the library often during classes; 64.6 % says the library has the materials they need; 56 % staff members says that they have consulted the school librarian when developing or revising a curriculum; and 65.2% of the staff members says that the formal curriculum in their subject area includes library information services components. This level of integration, while active, fails to maximize the effectiveness of the library media collection and utilize the library media specialist's (LMS) expertise. Because the library and information services program is not fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program, the library is not used to its fullest potential and is not seminal in providing resources for E-Cubed Academy teachers or students. (self-study, teachers, students, Endicott Survey,

library media specialist)

The LMS is knowledgeable about the National Standards for Information Literacy and incorporates them in information literacy instruction on an as-needed basis through the EBSCO Database Lesson. The LMS is familiar with most content curriculum and is supportive of teacher lessons; she stays abreast of curricular revisions through regular communication with the classroom teachers. She participates in various professional development opportunities on curriculum implementation and collaboration. However, the LMS is not involved in the evaluation and revision of curriculum which is now done at the district level. In addition, the LMS provides teachers with bibliographies to support quarterly projects, as well as senior projects. She is also familiar with Diploma Plus model and helps with its implementation; 89.7 % of the E-Cubed Academy staff says that the school library specialist can to assist them in their curriculum and instruction needs. However, the LMS does not drive lessons as an instructional partner. While the LMS's professional knowledge enables her to support teachers' instructional needs and students' research inquiries, her lack of involvement in curriculum evaluation and lesson development minimizes her potential to impact student academic achievement. (self-study, teachers, students, Endicott survey)

The E-Cubed Academy Library collection offers a wide range of materials and library information services that are responsive to the academic, social and emotional needs of students and teachers. However, the corresponding technology available to teachers and students is not consistently conducive to the improvement of teaching and learning at E-Cubed Academy. The library collection consists of print (4,011 copies), AV, and electronic subscriptions. In an effort to meet student and teacher needs as well as curricular requirements, materials are selected using the district-wide collection development policy and soliciting recommendations by students and teachers. Extra focus is placed on contemporary fiction with topics most relevant to the population of students served. New books are showcased and displayed for maximum appeal. In addition, an area has been created for books for the college bound student. There is a growing audio-visual collection, which may be checked out by students as well as teachers. The AV and print collection is accessible online through Destiny Catalog which includes collection management, automated circulation and cataloging functions. Inter-library loan with district high schools and the Rhode Island Public Library system provides additional access to resources for students and teachers. Electronic resources are purchased at the district level and include Destiny WebPath Express, Ebsco Databases, and World Book Online. The e-resources may be accessed from any computer with Internet access (home or school) and augment the depth and breadth of the nonfiction and reference collection. E-resources also provide flexible and varied access points. The six student computer workstations in the media center are insufficient to support the benefit of e-resources available for whole class visits. In addition, computers in the school as well as the library media center are slow, outdated, and inadequate to access multimedia resources online, thus somewhat negating the benefit of e-resources. Although 53.8 % staff members says that they use the library to help prepare classes and 65.5 % says that the print, non-print, and technological resources are adequate in the library, the inadequate number and condition of computers in the media center are negatively impacting student access to resources available within E-Cubed Academy. (self-study, observations, teachers, students, Endicott Survey, LMS)

The library media center (LMC) hours are 8:15 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. There is no before school access and only limited after school access. Only 43.9% percent of students says the library is available to them before, during, and/ or after school. Access is further limited when the LMS is providing class instruction as media center size limits multipurpose or concurrent use by various groups and individuals. Also, the media center staff is limited to one full-time LMS when LMS is offering instruction in content classrooms, there is no one to supervise the media center. The LMS often eats lunch at her desk to accommodate access for students and staff members. Students, faculty and staff members use the facility independently, in small groups, and as entire classes whenever the media center schedule allows. Students may use the library throughout the day with passes from their teachers. Also, teachers may reserve the media center for class research. The web-based library catalog and home page with access to all electronic resources are available to students from any computer with internet access. Since there is no regular access to the library and its resources, access is not guaranteed as need arises, limiting opportunities for students and staff members to practice and master skills that are school-wide expectations. (self-study, teachers, students, Endicott Survey, LMS)

E-Cubed Academy LMS offers a combination of direct instruction and guidance to help students become "effective users of ideas and information". Students are shown the various methods, tools, and resources for collecting, interpreting, analyzing, and synthesizing information by the LMS and classroom teachers throughout their years in school. Students are encouraged and challenged to become independent in their inquiry processes, as well as to use various information and formats. To help achieve this, students are provided access to all district school library collections through interlibrary loans. The media center also provides a limited DVD collection and graphing calculators for students to check-out. The LMS makes a concerted effort to extend student and teacher access to various school, district, and community information sources and technologies fostering student opportunities to engage in independent inquiries. (self-study, LMS, teachers, students)

Collaboratively, district library media specialists have developed a district-wide selection policy that outlines specific procedures for collection development, including selecting and removing materials and responding to any materials challenged by members of the community. The LMS uses this tool to guide the integrity, relevance and currency of media center collection and materials. All students must have 'acceptable use policies' signed by parents in order to use the Internet. The existence of these documents provides structure and purpose for the development of the library collection and the use of the school's technology resources. (self-study, LMS and teachers)

The school provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. Currently, there is one self-contained classroom of fifteen students at E-Cubed Academy. All other students with disabilities are served through an inclusion-model. Special education teachers are assigned a caseload of students at the beginning of the school year with the goal for that case manager to follow the student for four years. Inclusion teachers are trained in one content area and serve students within their trained content area(s), i.e. one inclusion teacher is assigned to math, one to English and social studies, and one to science. Teacher assistants are assigned to classrooms to help support inclusion students and students not yet identified and where a certified inclusion

teacher is not available. Related services including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, and adaptive physical education are served by certified, part-time service providers. A transition coordinator provides special education staff members and students with valuable information and training related to available, age appropriate transition planning services. All special education students complete a transition-planning inventory. Additional services regarding transitional needs are provided through the Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Project Work Program. Students with 504 plans are served by regular classroom teachers in collaboration with the guidance department. Regular education teachers provide accommodations and classroom supports as outlined in the 504 plan. E-Cubed has a three-tiered intervention program to support regular education students who demonstrate academic, social/emotional, and/or behavioral difficulties. In Tier One, regular education teachers support students experiencing classroom difficulties through teacher tutorials before and after school, in-class instructional accommodations, and frequent parent contact. Students who are not responsive to Tier I supports, are included in Tier II interventions through a referral to the wellness team. Members of this team review the referral and provide feedback to the referring teachers for more intensive interventions. After a determined amount of time, the case is reviewed again for a progress check. If deemed necessary, a referral is made for Tier III interventions including, but not limited to, a referral to the multi-disciplinary team for educational evaluation and testing. Through the provision of special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws, special education services work to ensure the elimination of barriers to learning, and students are provided necessary supports for academic, social, and emotional needs. (self-study, teachers, staff)

Commendations

1. The numerous programs, services and resources available to students at E-Cubed Academy

2. The alignment of the guidance and counseling programs with the school's mission and expectations

3. The collaborative spirit between student support personnel with each other, teachers, school leadership, and community agencies

4. The effective and ongoing communication between student support services at E-Cubed Academy and parent/guardians

5. The full range of comprehensive guidance services programs

6. The wide range of services available to special education and at-risk students

7. The confidential and secure manner in which student records are kept in accordance with federal and state laws

8. The wide range of material available through the LMC

9. The encouragement of independent inquiry skills by the LMS

10. The district-wide selection policy that outlines procedures for collection development including the selection and removal of materials

11. The development and ensuing support of the inclusion model used throughout the school

Recommendations

1. Ensure the consistent delivery and adequate coverage of needs and of health services and programs by certified personnel

2. Develop and implement a formal curriculum of assured student experience in information literacy skills

3. Develop and implement a formal protocol to evaluate the delivery of all support services

4. Increase guidance counselor staffing to provide the effective implementation of guidance services

5. Ensure the student and faculty's access to the LMS's expertise

6. Involve the LMS in curricular evaluation and revision at the district and departmental levels

7. Provide the LMC technologies and services necessary to meet the student and faculty needs

8. Develop a school technology plan to address software and hardware needs

9. Develop and implement a plan to ensure students, faculty, and support staff members have regular adequate access to library/informational services before, during and after the school day as an integral part of their educational experience.

SUPPORT STANDARD

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.

Conclusions

E-Cubed Academy engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and encourages their participation in school programs and parent support groups. Before the start of each school year, families of incoming ninth graders are invited to attend the ninth-grade transition program, an orientation to the high school. The event is well attended. Once the school year begins, administrators and faculty members invite parents/guardians to the annual open house night in the fall. Most teachers also send personalized letters to students' homes to welcome them to their classes. E-Cubed Academy uses progress reports and report cards that provide feedback and current grades. Using the ConnectEd phone system, the principal notifies parents/guardians when report cards and progress reports are distributed. Parent-teacher conferences are held four times a year. The school's website informs parents of students' daily assignments, projects, and grades. Teachers are also in regular contact with parents about student progress via e-mail, phone calls, and letters. Golden Scholar Honors Nights are held four times a year so that families have the opportunity to share in their children's academic achievements. Cultural Nights are held twice a year to celebrate the diversity among the student body. The school also holds a spring carnival for students and their families, and the school provides refreshments and child care for these events, which are well attended. In the spring, parents are invited to attend the E-Cubed Academy Senior Project Presentations. The school has an increasingly active PTO that supports the various school activities. Parents, teachers, and administrators work collaboratively to promote a positive and successful school culture. The E-Cubed Academy staff has a strong belief in each student's personal and academic potential, cited by parents as the best feature of the school. Using various forums and organizations, the administration and parent community promote and encourage involvement as a means of connecting parents and families to the educational process as well as other critical aspects of student life, such as athletics, performances, community relations, and school activities. Because of these efforts, parents and families are partners in the education of students. (parents, teachers, students, self-study)

E-Cubed Academy fosters productive business, community, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. The school enjoys a strong partnership with the Diploma Plus Corporation, which provides opportunities for improving student learning through program funding and professional development. Together, E-Cubed Academy and Diploma Plus build college- and career-readiness opportunities. Through the senior project, students participate in internships throughout the community. Partners in this endeavor include the Wanskuck Boys and Girls Club, New Urban Arts, the Providence District Attorney's office, Gilbane, the American Cancer Society, Veazie Street School, Sackett School, Frey Florist, the Assembly of God Church, and John Hope Settlement House. Students also complete internships with the art teacher and librarian in the school, as well as a music teacher in a district middle school. By the fall of their senior year, all students are responsible for scheduling their internships. Special education students have also participated in job shadowing and internships at local businesses as part of the school's transition activities provided by Project Work. The ACE mentoring program provides students with an introduction to design, engineering, and construction disciplines. E-Cubed Academy teachers have partnerships that specifically support

academic and post-secondary goals. A biology professor from Brown University visits classrooms and tutors students in science. The Roger Williams School of Law facilitates an urban debate team. Other higher education partnerships include the University of Rhode Island, the Community College of Rhode Island, and other Rhode Island colleges. Students also participate in the College Crusade, which tracks students' academic performance beginning in the fifth grade and continuing through high school. E-Cubed Academy expands students' opportunities through a broad base of community, business, and higher education partnerships. (teachers, students, self-study, guidance counselors, panel presentation)

The school site and plant support and enhance most aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. The rooms are all at ground level with seven rooms located in the center of the school and nineteen classrooms along the outer walls. Each room adequately accommodates all students, although a small number of teachers travels, using portable carts. The three science classroom/labs are located in the center section of the building. Extremely limited chemical storage space, non-functioning water and gas lines, and the ventilation hood, located in the storage closet, pose significant challenges to the teacher's efforts to implement the newly revised district science curriculum. The art classroom has a kiln for firing clay but the inadequate ventilation system prevents the kiln from ever being used. E-Cubed Academy's music program meets in the cafetorium, and equipment is housed in another location so that much time is wasted transporting that equipment between the two locations, time that is meant for teaching and learning. The delivery of the music curriculum is compromised by its lack of a formal setting. E-Cubed Academy's gym adequately supports the school's program, but the school does not have any outdoor athletic facilities, and the gym was specifically built as a physical education classroom rather than as a competitive gym. On opposite sides of the building are the cafetorium and administrative suite that includes the reception area, the administrative offices, the college and career liaison, guidance offices, a conference room, and a nurse's office. The cafetorium has a storage room housing all textbooks, office supplies, and keyboards for music classes. E-Cubed Academy is also outfitted with a satellite kitchen where both breakfasts and lunches are served. According to the Endicott Survey, 90.5% of parents feel that the school building provides appropriate conditions for learning. While the school site, plant, and equipment are adequate in most regards, the educational program is compromised in the areas of science, music, and art. (facility tour, teachers, maintenance manager, self-study)

The physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. Local and state inspectors regularly inspect E-Cubed Academy. Administrators and custodial staff members inspect the building daily to insure the safety of the all students and faculty members. Aramark provides facility services, custodial, grounds, and maintenance of all schools in the Providence School District. The administrative team and Aramark managers complete three building walkthroughs each year to identify areas of concern. The school maintains a sufficient stock of supplies to address routine maintenance issues, and Aramark managers are available at any time for emergency reasons. There are four regularly appointed custodial staff members and one cafeteria manager based in the building. Additionally, there is a number of supportive Aramark personnel that work daily in the cafeteria and on general maintenance needs. As the building is all on one floor, it is handicapped accessible. In concert with state and federal fire, health, and safety regulations, the high school has developed a crisis management plan that allows for evacuation to Veazie Street

School, or, weather permitting, Veazie Street Park. During fire drills, students move to the upper parking lot near the church, Branch Avenue, and the side street at the back of the building. The crisis management plan provides direction for fire, bomb, lock down, and intruder situations. The emergency plan is practiced eight times September to November, and seven times December to May. Each room contains fire alarms, sprinklers, and door locks. There are emergency eye wash stations located in all science labs and the nurse's bathroom and a defibrillator located in the front office. The school is heated and cooled with zoned temperature units that are controlled separately for each classroom. This system is maintained by an out-of-building Aramark contractor, who sets temperature and the start and end dates for heating and cooling. In-house maintenance staff members must call the Aramark maintenance manager to address temperature issues in classrooms as needed. The district maintenance includes work orders to address district repairs, and this system has been followed in these instances. E-Cubed Academy meets all applicable federal and state laws and is in compliance with all local fire, safety, and health regulations thus creating a safe, clean environment conducive to student learning. (maintenance manager, office personnel, self-study, facilities tour)

E-Cubed Academy adequately maintains and catalogues equipment, and regularly replaces equipment as the district and school budgets permit. The school has a maintenance request form for teachers to fill out when there is a classroom or work area that requires attention or repair (i.e., lighting, doors, desks, etc.), and regular inspection at the end of the school year. The work orders are sent to the Aramark maintenance manager and then delegated to proper staff members. There are three types of work orders: emergency, corrective, and directive. Work orders are handled on a prioritized basis. Most faculty members report satisfaction with the fulfillment of work orders, but some faculty members report that orders are not always fulfilled in a timely manner. All hiring, training, and management of maintenance personnel is handled through Aramark's district headquarters. In the school, both the heads of maintenance and food services handle site specific orders of usable goods and must contact the Aramark maintenance manager for ordering and maintenance of furniture, fixtures, and equipment. A separate form is completed for technology repairs and is given to either the library/media specialist or main office staff to be forwarded to the district's technology department. They assign the request to a technology technician who then completes the work order. These work orders are frequently for the computers in the building. Many of the computers are out of warranty, and because of this and budget constraints, they cannot be repaired or replaced. All computers, printers, and equipment are inventoried each summer, and equipment is assessed and when possible, replaced. The school librarian, as technology point person, has catalogued the school's supply of calculators, signing out the graphing calculators to the math teachers. She has inventoried the digital cameras, LCD projectors, CD players, cassette recorders, headphones and microphones with headsets. There are also four laptop carts that are overseen first by classroom teachers and second by the librarian. There are three photocopiers in the school; one is in the administration suite and two in the teachers' room. Photocopiers are maintained and repaired by outside contractors. The high school secretary is in charge of contacting those contractors, as well as the contractors for the high-speed cable and phone service in the building. Faculty members report that photocopiers are old and are in frequent disrepair. E-Cubed Academy has cable service provided by Verizon. Each classroom has a television that is cable-ready, and most of the classrooms have a DVD/video player. There are also a few televisions with DVD/video players on mobile stands for those classrooms without televisions. The school has an inventory of

overhead projectors that are permanently assigned to each teacher. The school secretary orders, inventories, and stores the replacement bulbs for the overhead projectors. Cataloging of school equipment is adequate and done yearly by a member of the administrative staff. A stock clerk makes weekly visits to the school and fulfills teachers' requests for disposable goods. Although the budget has placed constraints on E-Cubed Academy's ability to update its technology equipment and resources, the school adequately and properly maintains, catalogs, and replaces equipment, furniture, and instructional resources when appropriate. (maintenance manager, LMS, teachers, main office staff, facilities tour, Endicott Survey)

There is a planned and adequately funded program of building and site management that ensures the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant. The building and grounds are supervised by a private company, Aramark. The maintenance manager has created the schedule for the custodial staff. Four custodians are assigned to E-Cubed Academy, one being the head custodian. Each custodian has an assigned list of duties and responsibilities that must be completed each day. E-Cubed staff, students, and parents report a high level of satisfaction with the cleanliness of the school and grounds. Maintenance workers are assigned to the school as necessary when work orders are submitted. They also maintain the grounds throughout the year (i.e., snow removal, landscaping, leaf removal). The small debris and spot-cleaning of the grounds is well maintained daily by the custodial staff. The maintenance and cleanliness of the building is excellent. At the entrance of the building there is a well-organized main office. The carpeting is in good condition as are the walls. One wall in the lobby has a fresh coat of red paint, which enhances the attractiveness of the entrance to the school. The floors of the corridors are clean and polished. The lockers that line the corridor are clean. Corridors and classrooms are generally well lit. The floors in the classroom are clean. The trash is disposed of on a daily basis. The cafetorium is well maintained. The floors are swept and the tables washed down after each of the three lunch periods. Also included in building maintenance is the energy conservation manager who routinely checks for efficient energy use in classrooms, heating systems, and lighting. According to the Endicott Survey, 100% of the staff feels that the school is clean and well maintained, but only 58.6% of the staffs feel that needed repairs are completed in a timely manner. At times, work orders for classroom equipment and furniture maintenance take up to a month to fill. According to the Endicott Survey, 86.7% of the parents feels that the school building is clean and well maintained while 82.3% percent feels the building is attractive and in good repair. Additionally, 83.3% feels that the facilities are safe and clean. Through adequate district funding and planning, the Aramark and E-Cubed custodial staff are able to guarantee the maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the E-Cubed site. (manager meeting, administrators, teachers, Endicott survey, parents, students, facilities tour, work orders)

Planning is ongoing to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements. The Providence Public School's strategic plan was developed in the spring of 2007 and submitted in September 2008. The plan includes district-wide and school-specific improvement strategies. In conjunction with the reform model, the plan was revised in April 2008. The plan is utilized by E-Cubed to address future needs in a variety of areas, including programming, infrastructure, strengthening partnerships, and improving internal communication. The strategic plan addresses specific needs involving staffing, enrollment, and technology needs. The school is currently working on action steps and making moderate progress in fulfilling these steps. For example, the strategic plan supports an

increase in elective and ESL personnel; staffing levels for the 2010-2011 school year reflect this staffing increase. The action steps will continue to be "works in progress" through the duration of the strategic plan. The district's corrective action plan is intended to be a "living" document that will undergo continuous review and revisions as improvement efforts unfold during the upcoming academic years. These revisions will be informed by a wide variety of important educational stakeholders including administrators, teachers, students, and parents throughout the life of the plan. As a living document, the program and fiscal commitments made through this plan reflect the Providence School District's best ability to project forward over the coming months and years. The school improvement goals are to increase student achievement, build capacity through an infrastructure of support, and strengthen parent and community engagement. The district has developed and the school implements a communication and outreach plan to engage parents and the community. This communication and outreach plan will ensure that the district corrective action plan and school-level corrective action and restructuring plans are well publicized, transparent, and regularly monitored for accountability. The district's capital plan outlines various projects within the district. At this time, E-Cubed is not scheduled for any capital improvements. The technology plan is reviewed and revised yearly by the director of technology with input from the technology technicians and administration. Most maintenance issues are resolved in a timely manner, but there is a concern about the age, outdated software and frequent breakdown of the computers. Many classrooms have computers that are inoperable because of their age and have not been repaired for an extended period of time. The school uses student course selection data and current and future student enrollment data to plan for courses and staffing for the following school year. This process is completed using a scheduling team of teacher leaders, guidance counselors, and administrators. E-Cubed Academy has shown significant on-going planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs, resulting in the district's ability to meet the school's current and projected needs. (self-study, administrators, teachers, parents, documents)

The community and the district's governing body ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies for student learning. However, they are not adequate in the area of technological support. All initial budgetary decisions are made under the guidelines of the Providence School District and Providence School Committee. Both entities are driven to develop a budget that both supports the academic programs within schools and responsibly uses the increasingly limited funds derived from the community and state. Each year, district administrators and staff members develop a proposed budget that addresses learner needs and community and career feedback. On site, E-Cubed Academy assesses budget priorities annually. The school is afforded both local funds and grant funds, notably from Title I and Diploma Plus, with which to make decisions about all school needs. E-Cubed Academy uses data from the "REG system" including student grades, behavior records, and standardized assessments to make budgetary decisions. The Providence One Plan (POP) uses identified school structural and learning needs to organize school events, committees, policy, practice, and professional development. From here, a budget is created to pay for the components listed on the POP plan. This on-site budget is then sent to the district administration for approval and funding. E-Cubed Academy technology is neither supported nor well-maintained, however. Many of the computers are inoperable, in a state of disrepair, and have outdated software, and these conditions have not been adequately addressed, citing budget constraints as the reason. A

continued generally adequate and dependable source of revenue supports most elements of the educational experience delivered to the students of E-Cubed Academy, but to fulfill the mission the district must focus on providing timely technology and support. (budget, budget guidelines, administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, POP)

Faculty and building administrators have a voice in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. Teachers submit their budget requests to their departmental teacher leaders, who then prioritize the requests for each department and submit a budget to the principal. The principal meets with the executive director of high schools to discuss each item in the budget. All non-curriculum requests for funds must go through administration and the school improvement team (SIT). E-Cubed Academy's principal and administrative assistants are regularly updated on their budget allowance by district personnel. The principal makes staffing decisions and allocates resources to the school community and to district administration. The principal and staff have an active voice in the budgetary process. (self-study, administrators, main office staff)

Commendations

1. The extremely clean and well maintained building and grounds

2. The E-Cubed Academy opportunities for parents and families to be partners in their student's education

3. The strong partnership between E-Cubed Academy and the Diploma Plus Corporation

4. The wide-ranging internship opportunities available throughout the community as a component of the senior project

5. The broad base of partnerships E-Cubed shares with business, community, and higher education
6. The planned and adequately funded program of building and site management

7. The development and implementation of the Providence Public School's strategic plan

8. The active involvement administration and staff have in the budgetary process

Recommendations

1. Provide adequate space for the proper storage, cataloguing, and safety compliance of all science chemicals

2. Ensure the ventilation hood in the science classroom is working properly

3. Repair and update the non/low functioning water and gas lines in the science classrooms

4. Provide a proper external source ventilation source to enable kiln usage in the art classroom

5. Ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain technological equipment and support

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 E-Cubed Academy. 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 initial/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 E-Cubed Academy 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 page 76. 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.

Visiting Committee List

E-Cubed Academy
Providence, RI

May 2-5, 2010

Evaluator	School	City	State
Jamie Allesandrine	Haddam-Killingworth High School	Higganum	CT
Jon DeMarco	Revere High School	Revere	MA
Paula Dillon	East Greenwich Public Schools	East Greenwich	RI
Joseph Dobbins	Ansonia High School	Ansonia	CT
Hope Fernandes	Rockland High School	Rockland	MA
Colleen Gendreau	BMC Durfee High School	Fall River	MA
Carri-Ann Goncalves	Rocky Hill High Schooll	Rocky Hill	CT
Shannon Hammond	University Park Campus School	Worcester	MA
Lysa Margiotta	Oxford High School	Oxford	CT
**Robert McCarthy	South Kingstown High School	South Kingstown	RI
Nella Szilagyi	Wethersfield High School	Wethersfield	CT
Kerry Tondorf	Snowden International School	Boston	MA
*Christine Woodman	Montville High School	Oakdale	CT
Christopher Zyrlis	Montville High School	Oakdale	CT

*chair
**assistant chair

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & 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 on the school's ability to meet the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities

- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities

- significantly decreased funding

- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing

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

- cuts in the number of support staff

- decreases in student services

- cuts in the educational media staffing

- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated

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

- identification by the state as an underperforming school

- takeover by the state

- inordinate user fees