

**New England Association of  
Schools and Colleges**



**Commission on Public Secondary Schools**

**Report of the Visiting Committee for  
Uxbridge High School**

**Uxbridge, Massachusetts  
September 30 – October 3, 2007**

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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 Uxbridge High School to be a privileged document submitted by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to the principal of the school and by the principal to the state department of education. Distribution of the report within the school community is the responsibility of the school principal. The final visiting committee report must be released in its entirety within sixty 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 Uxbridge High School 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.

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## **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 Uxbridge High School, a committee of five 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 students, parents, central office professionals, and local citizens.

The self-study of Uxbridge High School extended over a period of 20 school months from September 2005 to September 2007. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, parents, and local citizens joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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, Uxbridge High School also used questionnaires developed by The Global Institute at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

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

A visiting committee of 15 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Uxbridge High School. The Committee members spent four days in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, 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, central office administrators, and principals, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Uxbridge High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 40 hours shadowing 15 students for a half day
- a total of 25 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 30 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 Uxbridge High School.

## **Overview of Findings**

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

### **Quality of the Self-Study**

The self-study was well done and completed in a timely manner by the professional staff at Uxbridge High School (UHS). Executive summaries of each standard report were completed and available to the visiting committee. The essays developed for each standard by the UHS staff addressed each of the indicators. Strengths in adherence to each standard were identified as were areas of need. Each standard report was accepted by the entire professional staff at the school. Student work was made available to the visiting committee for its review. The student work was well organized and represented work done by students at all academic levels. Student work was also available to members of the visiting committee during the shadowing process and in individual meetings with teachers. The self-study provided a basis for the on-site review by the visiting committee.

### **Teaching and Learning at Uxbridge High School**

The mission statement developed by the faculty and staff at Uxbridge High School represents the fundamental values of the school community. The process that was followed in developing the mission statement and expectations for student learning was all-inclusive and impressive. The rubrics that are in place to measure successful achievement of the academic expectations are effective, but there is a need to develop a process that will allow the school to measure how well students are meeting the expectations. The mission statement and expectations document has had wide-spread distribution, and while students and parents may not be able to articulate the mission, both groups are

certainly aware of what UHS is trying to accomplish. A periodic review of the mission and expectations will ensure that it remains current and reflective of student needs and becomes familiar material to the school population..

The curriculum is well aligned with school-wide academic expectations, and it ensures that students have an opportunity to practice and achieve those expectations. There is a noteworthy use of curriculum and instruction leaders to facilitate the coordination of the departments, oversee the delivery of the curriculum, and act as a liaison between departments and administrators. The curriculum and instruction leaders could benefit from formal time set aside for them to implement their responsibilities. The block schedule allows for emphasized depth of understanding while at the same time allowing for coverage of a wide range of material within class periods. The curriculum provides a wide variety of opportunities for students to extend their learning beyond the classroom. Instructional materials are available to faculty members, making it possible to deliver the curriculum to students more effectively. Additional availability of up-to-date technology would improve their ability to deliver the curriculum in an exciting fashion. Professional development activities support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

A variety of instructional strategies is being used in most classrooms. Many faculty members use the time available for instruction effectively. However, the effective use of the class time by teachers and/or students was not evident in all classes. The length of instructional periods makes it imperative that all teachers vary instruction within the time block to ensure that students remain focused throughout the period. Students need to be engaged and challenged throughout the period. Best practices being implemented by some teachers at UHS need to be identified and shared with all faculty members. A formal process of gathering and using student and parent feedback should be implemented as teachers plan their instructional strategies. Administrators need to continue to place more emphasis on improving instruction as they implement the supervision and evaluation process.

Uxbridge High School has developed strong school-wide rubrics to determine individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations enumerated in the mission and expectation statement. A process to measure that progress is needed. A variety of assessment techniques that meet different learning styles to determine student competencies are used in the classroom. Individual student progress is effectively reported to students and their families. Professional development time is built into the school calendar, and out-of-district professional development is supported by the administrative team. However, school-wide template for the course syllabi distributed to students and their families at the beginning of the course should be considered to improve communication with the school community. A formal process that leads to discussion of student work, and assessment of student work, as well as best practices needs to become part of the school culture to improve communication and teaching/learning within the school.

### **Support of Teaching and Learning at Uxbridge High School**

There is a strong leadership team in place at Uxbridge High School. The principal has the necessary autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school effectively. Many faculty members have taken leadership roles at the school in the past, and all teachers should be encouraged to seek such roles in the future. There is some dissatisfaction among staff members with the lack of flexibility in the current 4 x 4 schedule so a committee to study alternatives to the present schedule

has been created. This committee should move carefully as it considers changes in the schedule as most faculty members are making good use of the time allocated for classroom instruction and students benefit from the many hands-on activities that are made possible by these extended time blocks. A formal advisory program that pairs students with adults in the building to ensure that every student's education becomes personalized is needed although the respectful and supportive climate at UHS is praiseworthy. The relationship that faculty members and staff have with students, and they with them, is extraordinary.

The support services available to students at UHS are impressive as is the cooperation among the support services. There is effective communication with the school community that ensures community awareness of the services available at the school. The guidance department provides a full range of services to the student body. The health services available to students is of high quality, and the special education department serves its population well. The library provides students with a positive learning environment and assists students in their quest to achieve school-wide expectations.

There is a great deal of long range planning going on in the Uxbridge district, especially around the issue of a new high school building. Hopefully those plans will come to fruition in the very near future. The renovations that have been done in recent years have been helpful in providing needed space at the high school, but this band-aid approach can't succeed for much longer. The district plant manager and the school custodial staff work diligently to keep an aging facility afloat. The faculty and staff deliver a sound educational program in a facility that has a number of significant problems. Students function at a high level given the facility restraints under which they have to learn. The students of Uxbridge deserve better.

## **UXBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL**

### **School and Community Profile**

Uxbridge High School, located in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, lies on the southern border of Massachusetts at the Rhode Island line, in south-central Worcester County. The high school serves the town of Uxbridge, incorporated in 1727, and accepts school-choice students from surrounding towns. The population of the town was 12,462 as of June 2005. The town has experienced a seven percent growth in the past ten years, with a projected population of 12,566 for 2010 and 14,277 for 2020.

In its early history, Uxbridge changed from a farming community to an industrial powerhouse at the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Today, its history is evident in the old mills that dot the Uxbridge landscape, such as Stanley Woolen Mill and Bernat Yarns Mill, and the farms that are still evident in the western highlands of the town. The Blackstone River, once referred to as “the hardest working river in America,” flows through the community and is joined by the confluence of the Mumford and West Rivers. The Blackstone River is currently an integral part of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The Heritage Corridor has brought an increase in tourism to the town in recent years. Because of its location, approximately 50 minutes from Boston and 25 minutes from both Worcester and Providence, Uxbridge has become a convenient commuter suburb. However, the demise of the mills in Uxbridge has yet to be overcome; therefore, with the exception of some small businesses, its tax base is essentially residential.

The community is economically diverse, but racially, culturally, and ethnically homogeneous. In 2005-2006, no single, identifiable minority group represented more than three percent of the high school enrollment: 96.3% white, 2.5% Hispanic, 0.4% Asian, and 0.8% African-American. Due in part to a no-retention policy in the elementary and middle schools, there is little significant age difference between high school students within the same grade. The town’s median family income is \$67,659, with an average family income of \$77,945. The average single-family property value is \$257,433. The unemployment rate as of December 2005 was 4.3%, which was below the state average of 4.5%. The percentage of high school students in 2005-2006 classified as below the poverty level is 16%, as determined by the Free and Reduced lunch program guidelines. In 2005-2006, 0.6% of students spoke a first language other than English.

The average expenditure per pupil in 2004-2005 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was \$9,096. In 2005-2006 the state average expenditure per pupil was \$11,211. Uxbridge’s expenditure per pupil was significantly lower in 2004-2005 at \$7,734 and in 2005-2006 at \$9,395. In 2004-2005 local resources accounted for 40.3% of educational funding, state resources accounted for 54.5%, and federal resources 5.2%. In 2005-2006 the figures were respectively 41.7%, 53.9%, and 4.4%. Fifty-one percent of local property taxes were allocated to

the public schools in 2005-2006. Twenty-seven non-resident students were enrolled in UHS in 2004-2005 at a cost of \$5,558 per student. In 2005-2006 non-resident enrollment was 26 at a cost of \$5,881 per student. In 2004-2005 district-wide, 232 students enrolled in other districts at a cost of \$1,136,083. In 2005-2006 district-wide, 245 students enrolled in other districts at a cost of \$1,268,596.

The district has two middle schools, one public and one private, that feed into Uxbridge High School. Whitin Middle School (grades 5-8) enrolls 670 students. Our Lady of the Valley Regional School (grades K-8) has 96 students enrolled from the town of Uxbridge. In addition, while not located within the district, Whitinsville Christian School (grades K-12), located in a neighboring town enrolls 78 students from the town of Uxbridge. UHS had 2 foreign-exchange students in 2005-2006, representing less than 1% of the population.

Uxbridge High School is comprised of grades 9-12. As of October 1, 2005, the total high school enrollment was 520 students (282 males and 238 females). The grade configuration was as follows: 121 students in grade 9, 134 students in grade 10, 135 students in grade 11, and 130 students in grade 12. The new student registration trend has reflected an increase of 15% over the last ten years. In 2005, 13% of potential Uxbridge High School students opted for school choice at other public high schools, costing the town of Uxbridge \$1,136,316. Additionally, the entire Uxbridge school district lost 406 students in 2005-2006 to vocational and private schools. Uxbridge High School students are also offered the opportunity to participate in a dual-enrollment program in cooperation with local institutions of higher learning, such as Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Quinsigamond Community College, and Community College of Rhode Island. The total district enrollment in 2005-2006 was 2110 students.

The composition of the student body remains relatively constant. The high school dropout rate in 2004-2005 was three percent below the state average of 3.7%. The number of students suspended during 2004-2005 was 94 (17.7%) in school and 45 students (8.5%) out of school, compared to the state average of 3.5% and 6% respectively. The number of students suspended during 2005-2006 was 84 in school and 43 out of school. There were no expulsions in 2004-2005 or 2005-2006. The average daily student attendance for 2004-2005 was 94.2%. The average daily teacher attendance in 2005-2006 is 94%.

In 2005-2006, the high school had 47 teachers and 7 paraprofessionals, with an average student-teacher ratio of 11.1 to 1. Teachers carried an average load of 45 students per semester. The average class size was 15 students. Uxbridge High School adopted block scheduling in the fall of 1994. Although the 4/4 schedule (85 minute classes) offers a greater variety of courses and flexibility of scheduling to students, it does not allow for common planning time for teachers.

Courses are divided into three levels: advanced placement, honors, and college preparatory. The special education population was 12% of the student body in 2004-2005. The special education population was 8.9% of the student body in 2005-2006. Less than one percent of the student population was enrolled in English as a second language (ESL) classes.

In the Class of 2006, 32% of the students went to four-year private colleges; 39% attended four-year public colleges; 13% attended two-year colleges; 3% attended other post-secondary schools; 12% entered the work force; 1% entered the military. This represents an 85% graduation rate. The class of 2006 earned \$104,000 in scholarships from community and school resources. Uxbridge High School graduates are accepted at colleges and universities throughout the country.

School initiatives include the Mosaic Mill Program. This program is a district-wide initiative aimed at providing an academic alternative for students placed at-risk of failing/dropping out of school. A student internship program is offered through the pupil services program, sending students to local schools and businesses. A self-contained pre-vocational life skills program is available to students with significant special needs. Other initiatives include the Student-to-Student Mentor Program, Food Service Initiative to accommodate dietary and health needs, Spartan Café, Early Childhood Teaching Assistant Program, Job Shadowing Program, and Team Teaching. All of these initiatives reflect the goals of the UHS Mission and Expectations in that the students are being provided with the resources and educational experiences to meet their diverse needs. These programs aim to encourage responsible citizenship and life-long learning.

Seventy-eight percent of teachers have an undergraduate degree in their teaching area. Forty percent of the faculty has a master's degree in the subject they teach. Every UHS faculty member holds a teaching certificate. Sixty-two percent of the faculty has professional licensure.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments through a variety of means. There are breakfasts for honor roll students, a leadership brunch sponsored by the student council for team captains and class officers, an academic awards dinner for students who achieve eight consecutive semesters of honor roll status, a senior awards dinner ceremony offering acknowledgement and scholarships, a junior class academic awards assembly, a National Honor Society ceremony, two sports award ceremonies, an annual athletic awards banquet, and an Above and Beyond assembly to recognize outstanding behavior.

Students are evaluated on several levels. Standardized tests utilized by the school include MCAS, ASVAB, PSAT/SAT, and AP exams. The 2005 MCAS scores identified 57% of students achieving proficiency or better on the grade 10 English Language Arts test; 94% of the students passed. MCAS scores also indicated that 60% of students achieved proficiency or better on the grade 10 Mathematics test; 94% passed. The average SAT scores for the class of 2005 were 511 for verbal and 516 for math, while national averages were 508 and 520 respectively. In addition to the state mandate of passing the MCAS tests and completing the state curriculum requirements, the school requires a total of 144 credits for graduation including 10 credits of foreign language and 10 credits of physical education/ health.

Upon reviewing the information compiled as part of the School and Community Profile in preparation for the panel presentation to the visiting committee, the administration, faculty and staff have identified the following as the most critical challenges facing the school: accreditation status, school space needs, modern infrastructure (technology, equipment, etc.), loss of students and money due to school choice, and addressing issues related to residential property tax involved in funding the school budget.

The town of Uxbridge is currently planning and developing a new high school complex, pending town approval. It is hoped that the culmination of this project will have a number of beneficial results: the removal of NEASC probationary status, ample space for educational concerns, updated infrastructure, and the return of students and school choice monies. The administration, faculty, and staff hope that the construction of a new high school will also begin to mend the ongoing differences between the school community and various town factions.

## **Uxbridge High School Mission Statement**

Our mission at Uxbridge High School is to provide the resources and educational experiences to meet the diverse needs of all students, with the aim of encouraging responsible citizenship and life-long learning. In partnership with parents and community, Uxbridge High School fosters this development in a safe learning environment.

## **Uxbridge High School Student Learning Expectations**

Uxbridge High School students will...

1. Demonstrate a variety of learning/study strategies
2. Listen for understanding
3. Demonstrate effective oral communication
4. Read critically and for understanding
5. Write effectively
6. Demonstrate effective use of technology
7. Employ modes of artistic and creative expression
8. Demonstrate civic responsibility
9. Show respect for self, others, and their environment

**COMMISSION ON  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS**

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**Mission and Expectations for Student Learning**

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**Curriculum**

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**Instruction**

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**Assessment of Student Learning**

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## **1. TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD**

### **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**

The mission statement and expectations for student learning were developed by the school community and approved by the faculty and school committee in February of 2005. In the fall of 2004, a committee comprised of faculty members, students, administrators, parents, and business/community members developed a questionnaire designed to elicit the knowledge, skills, and social values the community deemed important. The questionnaire was distributed in November 2004 at parents night. Additionally, information was gathered from students, faculty members, and members of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation. This information formed the basis from which the first mission statement, including 15 learning expectations, was developed. The draft of the mission statement and the original 15 learning expectations were reviewed by the school-level committee and revised to reflect the current mission statement with its nine attached learning expectations. The learning expectations reflect the knowledge, skills, and the social values deemed important by the community. As a result of

this process, members of the school community are well aware of the school's mission and support the mission statement. (self-study, teachers, panel presentation, school leaders)

The mission statement for Uxbridge High School represents the school community's fundamental values and beliefs. The original committee, referenced above, developed a questionnaire designed to elicit the values that the community deemed important. In addition to distributing the questionnaire at parents night, further input was sought from families through mailed questionnaires. Faculty members and staff provided input during faculty meetings and professional development days. A survey was conducted by the Endicott Center for Research and Educational Advancement (ECERA) in October 2005 to determine familiarity with and understanding of the mission statement by all members of the school community. Since its adoption in February 2005, the mission statement has undergone minor revisions that have been the result of work done by faculty members during professional development days. In order to increase faculty and student awareness and understanding of the expectations and implementation of supporting rubrics, administrators provided professional in-service training through the Leadership for Educational and Administrative Development New England group (LEAD). In the spring of 2006, chairpersons of the self-study committees as well as curriculum and instruction leaders met to assess the questions and concerns relating to rubrics to develop a formal presentation to the full faculty. In August 2006, faculty members and staff participated in an interactive and evaluative process by which measurable expectations attached to the mission statement can be integrated into practice. The various avenues for input from the school community and the scheduled revision time utilized to date have kept the mission statement and learning expectations current with the community's core values and beliefs. (self-study, parents, school leaders, panel presentation)

Uxbridge High School has developed seven school-wide academic and two social and civic learning expectations that are measurable and reflect the mission statement. A committee of faculty members, students, and community representatives initially developed school-wide student learning expectations reflecting the mission statement. During this process, the committee incorporated the Uxbridge School District's mission along with Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks. Fifteen expectations were developed, and in subsequent review with particular attention to measurability, these were narrowed down to seven academic expectations and two social and civic learning expectations. Working in committees, faculty members developed rubrics for the seven academic expectations. This comprehensive process has produced learning expectations that are clear to the school community and can be measured. (self-study, parents, teachers, panel presentation)

The faculty of Uxbridge High School has created and approved seven school-wide rubrics for the academic learning expectations that detail the targeted level of successful achievement. A standard format for rubrics has been developed that includes the following levels of achievement: exceeds expectation; meets expectation; approaches expectation; and does not meet expectations. Faculty members were integrally involved in the development of the rubric format that was designed so that students can recognize that the "meets expectations" level denotes the level at which performance and/or proficiency is demonstrated. The school-wide rubrics are being incorporated in classroom assessments in the various subject areas. As a result of this committee work and the revision process, students have a clear indicator of the expected

level of achievement they need to meet to demonstrate proficiency. (self-study, teachers, classroom observations, students, student work, school leadership team)

Uxbridge High School has begun identifying indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving the school-wide civic and social expectations. Uxbridge High School has identified a variety of data to assess individual and school-wide achievement on the civic and social expectations. Attendance records, statistics on behavioral incidents, and numbers of students involved in extra-curricular and civic activities have been identified as data which can be used to measure achievement on the civic and social expectations. Civic and social activities available to students include the National Honor Society and student council as well as some other school-sponsored events. Criteria for selection to the National Honor Society are scholarship, community service, leadership in school activities, and character traits such as honesty and reliability. Participation in the UHS Student Council is consistently high, with over 20% of the student body counted as members. The UHS Student Council maintains an open door policy – any student qualifies for membership after attending four meetings and performing 15 hours of community service during a school year. The UHS Student Council was presented with the Award of Excellence at the state conference in 1998, 2001, and 2006. The co-curricular and extra-curricular groups organize a number of community service projects each year such as an annual holiday party for local children, baked goods for the food pantry, holiday baskets at Thanksgiving, and a senior citizen prom. These activities are enumerated in the principal's report to the school committee each month. The high school is beginning a community service learning approach. Through their course work in courses such as environmental science, horticulture and landscaping design, and construction technology, students become involved in projects that directly impact the community. Projects have taken place at local schools, at local rivers, and at the high school. During the current school year the guidance department is beginning to track these projects across all the academic disciplines. As a result of some initial indicators being identified and reported on, the school community is aware of student participation in civic and social activities. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team, panel presentation)

Uxbridge High School is using the mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning to guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school. The school and the academic departments have specifically used the mission statement and learning expectations to guide their plan for technology purchasing in the building. The purchase of mobile Smartboards in order to be able to benefit more students is one example of this decision-making. The policies and procedures that are clearly delineated in the student handbook are aligned with the mission statement and student learning expectations. The mission statement also has guided recent decisions around school security and the installation of a video surveillance and buzzer system at the main entrance. Additionally, cameras have been installed on the exterior of the building. Administrators and faculty members understand the needed connection between the mission and student learning expectations and decision-making at the building level. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team)

The administrators and faculty members are developing a formal plan for the review of the mission statement and student learning expectations. Most recently, committees have done this work. The faculty has discussed scheduling an annual faculty meeting devoted solely to this task, but no approved plan has been established. A formal plan involving all stakeholders in the

school community will allow the mission statement and the student learning expectations to remain relevant and viable for the school community. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team)

### **Commendations**

1. The process for the development of the mission statement and student learning expectations that included administrators, faculty members, parents, students, and community members
2. The questionnaire used to identify the values and beliefs of the school community that are now included in the mission statement
3. The use of independent, objective consultants to aid the process for the development of the mission statement and student learning expectations
4. The publication of the mission and student learning expectations in the student handbook, the program of studies, and on the covers of binders given to students
5. The use of the mission statement to guide decision-making at the school
6. The emphasis on community service and civic responsibility that is part of the school culture

### **Recommendations**

1. Involve representatives from the entire school community in the review process of the school mission and expectations for student learning
2. Clearly delineate the process for tracking the indicators and measuring student achievement on the civic and social student expectations
3. Finalize the formal review process for the mission statement and student learning expectations

## **2. TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD**

### **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 commitment and involvement of the professional staff to 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, 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**

Each curriculum area at Uxbridge High School has identified those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible and has standards-based unit plans for each department aligned with the mission statement. The school-wide rubrics have been adapted and modified as needed by each department to assess student achievement of the school-wide learning expectations, however, so rubrics for assessing student achievement of school-wide expectations differ widely by discipline. Because each department has identified the expectations for which it is responsible, all students have an opportunity to achieve all of the expectations. (student work, observation, self-study, teachers, evidence boxes)

Even though facility and scheduling constraints limit course offerings, the Uxbridge High School core curriculum is well aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and ensures that most students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. There are remedial classes for MCAS support, AP courses for the academically talented, and the Mosaic Program which provides an alternative learning environment for at-risk students Peer

tutoring, student-to-student mentoring, teacher directed after school extra help, and academic support for special education students also provide opportunities for students to achieve the learning expectations of the school. Students with limited English proficiency are served by a certified English language learner teacher. Although a curriculum has been developed and is ready for implementation addressing the needs of those students who require a more career-driven educational pathway, the program has not yet been fully implemented, making it difficult for this group to meet the learning expectations enumerated in the UHS mission and expectations document. The broad range of offerings provided students at UHS make it possible for most students to succeed in achieving the school's learning expectations. (students, parents, teachers, curriculum guides, school publications, evidence boxes)

The curriculum of Uxbridge High School has been aligned with statewide and/or national frameworks, prescribing major understandings, essential questions, content and skills, assessment techniques, teaching and learning experiences, resources, and connection to the mission statement and student expectations. Review committees have been formed to develop system-wide, sequential units defining benchmarks for each grade level/course. Curriculum and instruction leaders have been appointed to facilitate the coordination of the departments, to oversee the delivery of the curriculum, and to act as liaison in communicating information between departments and the administration. The written curriculum prescribes content, integrates relevant school-wide learning expectations, includes course-specific learning goals, suggests instructional strategies, and suggests assessment techniques including the use of department-specific rubrics. While members of the learning community agree that the mission and expectations reflect their beliefs, the rubrics most commonly used to measure student success are course or assignment-specific rubrics not the school-wide rubrics that were developed to assess the success of students in meeting school-wide learning expectations. (curriculum guides, teachers, shadowing of students, evidence boxes)

The curriculum provides opportunities for all students to engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking as well as providing opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. Class projects often integrate activities that simulate real-life experiences. The pre-vocational life skills program, the independent living course, field trips, and the school-to-career program also ensure a wide range of student involvement in authentic application of knowledge and skills. The academic schedule narrows the range of elective offerings possible, but extra-curricular activities, internships, and other community contacts and involvement teach skills, build ties, and provide experience in fields of interest, taking into account students' individual abilities, interests, and needs. Consequently, although faculty members have made great efforts to insure that students have substantial opportunities to participate in community experience, they are limited by schedule, space, staffing, and financial support in the number of classroom electives they can offer. This limitation reduces opportunities that would benefit the students at Uxbridge High School. (student work, classroom observations, curriculum guides, teachers, evidence boxes)

The curriculum is appropriately integrated and emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. Alignment with the standards keeps the curriculum focused on the essential themes and skills that are at the heart of each discipline. Despite lack of common planning time, interdisciplinary connections are implemented when possible. Some examples

include statistics with forensics, family and consumer science with foreign language, team teaching of introductory physics with technology, and the work of several departments with the elementary school. Community service connections are emphasized in several classes. Depth of understanding is given priority over breadth of coverage as a result of semester-based, block scheduling in most classes. Sequential subjects such as math and foreign language have extended courses that run a full year to cover the necessary subject matter with sufficient depth to build upon in subsequent courses. Other subjects have explored more creative ways to solve this problem, such as subdividing periods into topical sections. Project-based learning, essential questions, and higher order thinking skills remain the driving force of all lesson plans and unit development. Though semester-based block scheduling does impose restrictions in some cases on both breadth and depth, the faculty is committed to providing quality instruction within the constraints of this system. Students have the opportunity to make connections across disciplines in the areas where interdisciplinary units are being used, and students have an opportunity for greater understanding of material that is being presented when the material is presented in depth. (self-study, survey, teachers, school leadership committee, evidence boxes)

UHS provides a variety of opportunities for students to extend their learning beyond the classroom curriculum. Through the use of various outside sources, students are able to experience learning outside of the normal classroom. Students participate in internships, independent studies, student council, and athletic programs. Students participating in the internship program choose from a list of various local businesses and schools and complete a one semester work schedule that is closely monitored by the cooperating business. The experience allows students to reflect upon the connection of work within the classroom and the practical life experience applied through the internship program. Independent studies allow a student to focus on a subject of personal interest and explore that subject with the guidance of a teacher. The end result of the independent study is a project that the student has worked on throughout the semester. Students receive a pass/fail or numerical grade. Additional outside sources of extended learning are seen in various community projects sponsored by the student council and athletic programs and in the opportunity to enroll in local college courses. Through the use of outside experiences, students are encouraged to apply knowledge they receive in the classroom and to apply it to real world situations. (student work, students, self-study, evidence boxes)

Coordination and articulation between academic departments and sending schools is not as strong as it might be. Curriculum and instruction leaders have recently been assigned responsibilities for K-12 and 7-12 depending on the academic department, and they make efforts to ensure that there is articulation from one grade level to the next, but the time allocated to them for this purpose is limited. These leaders must struggle to meet with their departments because of scheduling conflicts. Yearly IEP meetings allow middle and high school teachers to discuss upcoming special education students, but there is very little discussion of the expectations of each department for the rest of the student body. Academic departments within the high school have not had any formal time for cross-curriculum planning. Thus the limited articulation between the middle school and the high school adds difficulty to a smooth transition for students, and the lack of interdepartmental collaboration at the high school limits the opportunities for departments to provide interdisciplinary programs to the students. (students, self-study, observations, teachers, evidence boxes)

Although instructional materials, classroom equipment, and supplies are generally sufficient to deliver curriculum, technological and infrastructure deficiencies have caused some departments to fall short of full implementation of the curriculum. In spite of recent renovations and expansions, the facility remains insufficient to implement all areas of the curriculum. There are some classrooms without windows, some with heating and air conditioning problems, and many classrooms do not meet minimum square footage requirements. Recent renovations have added some space and allowed the family and consumer science classrooms to be updated. Although some departments have seen improvements in technology, technology availability throughout UHS is inconsistent and fails to meet the needs of the students and the curriculum as a result of outdated equipment, limited tech support, and inadequate maintenance. The foreign language and technology classrooms have recently received 25 new computers. Computer labs for the rest of the school can be found in the library, but these labs are quickly becoming obsolete. Despite an additional 4,868 square feet designated for classrooms, media expansion, a teacher workroom, test room, storage, and office spaces, there is still a need for additional classrooms, common planning areas, computer labs, workrooms and testing areas. Space limitations throughout the building force the library to close frequently to provide an area for testing or meetings. The shortcomings in the facility and lack of sufficient up-to-date technology limit the opportunities for all students to achieve their potential. (teachers, parents, self-study, tour of the building)

The professional staff is actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance using course-specific learning goals. Traditionally, professional development and departmental meeting time is allocated for MCAS analysis and development of MCAS action plans. Curriculum revision committees meet in the summer and are supported by the budget. System-wide program reviews have been completed on a ten-year cycle in the past, but the process and timing for review and revision of textbooks has fluctuated with changes in administrators with differences of philosophy, focus, and priorities. Curriculum development work considers new information from professional development activities and standardized test results as well as information from teacher-generated assessment data analyzed by each department. Curriculum is adapted to support the needs of the students and improve their performance and understanding. (teachers, observation, self-study)

Uxbridge High School commits sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of the core curriculum. The district curriculum, instruction, and assessment coordinator provides leadership to the high school administrative staff as well as to the curriculum and instruction leaders to oversee the regular review, revision, and implementation of curriculum. The staff has been involved in the creation and revision of standards-based units and the development of departmental and school-wide rubrics. Financial support is available for summer curriculum development, attendance at conferences, course tuition reimbursement, and class coverage for teachers attending curriculum development meetings. Professional development has included guest lecturers on topics identified as areas of need. The core curriculum guides reflect modern methodologies and focus and are current and support student learning. (curriculum guides, observation, teachers, self-study)

Professional development activities at Uxbridge High School support the development and implementation of the curriculum. Five full and four half days of professional development time is built into the academic calendar. Teachers and administrators regularly attend national and regional conferences. The majority of the staff has received professional development in the areas of differentiated instruction, creation and use of rubrics, designing effective open-response questions, strategic writing, awareness of special education laws and their implications in the classroom, crisis prevention, and safe restraint procedures. Curriculum and instruction leaders are responsible for submitting an agenda to the district curriculum director for professional development activities. The district provides a generous tuition reimbursement program aimed at assisting all teachers in achieving professional licensure through advanced degrees and continuing education. There is also some financial support available for summer curriculum writing. Overall, professional development enhances the curriculum with new ideas and modern methodologies that translate into effective instruction and delivery of curriculum in the classroom. (teachers, classroom observations, self-study, student work)

### **Commendations**

1. The commitment of the staff to promoting academic excellence and maintaining high expectations despite the limitations of the facility and the schedule
2. The standards-based unit plans that are aligned with the mission and expectations as well as with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
3. The curriculum that allows for links between academic learning and real life experience
4. The emphasis placed on depth of understanding
5. The wide variety of co-curricular activities and community involvement
6. The pre-vocational life skills program for the 18-22 year old school population
7. The opportunities and support for professional development
8. The internship program and independent studies that extend learning beyond the classroom
9. The community-based service learning program being developed

### **Recommendations**

1. Initiate a process to ensure that the rubrics used to assess student achievement of school-wide expectations are the same school-wide
2. Implement a plan to update facilities and provide adequate space to improve curriculum delivery
3. Develop, fund, and implement a plan to improve technology for incorporation in curriculum delivery in all disciplines
4. Formalize a plan for the curriculum instruction leaders to coordinate within disciplines and with the sending schools
5. Devise and implement a plan for scheduling and sharing technology resources throughout the school to facilitate equity in curriculum delivery
6. Fully implement a program for students who require a more career-driven educational pathway

### **3. TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD**

#### **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 curriculum, and the assessment of student performance. Instructional practice 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 collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies and practices shall be consistent with the school's stated mission and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
  - personalize instruction;
  - make connections across disciplines;
  - engage students as active learners;
  - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
  - provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the application of 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 practice.
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 purpose of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

## Conclusions

Many, but not all, teachers use instructional strategies which support the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Instructional practices at UHS are unevenly tailored to the mission and expectations. Many teachers go to great lengths to provide a quality education to their students even with limited technological resources and budget constraints. Teachers in the foreign language department in particular use funds available to make up deficiencies in technological resources and materials. Teachers in the science department employ numerous field trips to extend the scope of their instruction beyond the classroom. The mission and expectations are displayed in most classrooms where students can easily see them. Some teachers use differentiated instruction to ensure that they are meeting individual student needs. However, the history department in particular is struggling to provide a variety of educational experiences to their students consistent with the mission statement and student learning expectations of UHS. The school is doing an admirable job of encouraging students to be responsible citizens. The climate in both classrooms and throughout the building is overwhelmingly positive, with students displaying a strong sense of responsibility for each other and for treating everyone with respect, and teachers have a strong rapport with all students. However, the expectations for student learning inconsistently influence instruction at UHS. The school has developed a matrix to clarify which departments have primary responsibility for which expectations. Some standards are covered by all departments while some are covered by only one. There are no expectations that are exclusively the domain of the mathematics or science departments. All departments assume responsibility for the expectation that students will demonstrate a variety of learning/study strategies, and it is this expectation that drives much of the instruction at UHS. However, because teachers vary in their commitment to employing diverse modes of instruction, this expectation is not being met consistently. Teachers who vary their instruction rather than using all lecture or worksheets are most consistent with the school's mission and expectations, and most faculty members make the effort to design and deliver such instruction but until all teachers make this an integral part of their lesson planning, instruction will not be fully consistent with the mission and expectations. (classroom observations, students and teachers, student work)

Instructional strategies which personalize instruction; make connections across disciplines; engage students as active and self-directed learners; involve students in higher-order thinking; provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills; and promote student self-assessment and self-reflection are inconsistently utilized. Personalizing instruction in some classes is exemplary, and these teachers interact both formally and informally with students about course content. Opportunities exist for students to work at their own pace and conduct one-on-one conversations with teachers. Other teachers personalize instruction by applying course content to the students' own lives. However, personalizing instruction is not consistent throughout the school. Interdisciplinary lessons are planned informally and on teachers' own time. Such practices are not formally incorporated into school-wide policies on instruction. The internship program is a good example of students taking responsibility for their own education. Students in most classes stay on task and take an active role in their own learning. In some instances, however, instructional strategies fail to engage students as active and self-directed

learners, and in some classes, students are cooperative and well-behaved, but not actively engaged. The school has developed standards-based units (SBUs) based on essential questions for each unit that specifically aim for higher order thinking. However, the application of this type of instruction is not uniform. Students are able to apply their knowledge and skills in the large number of practical arts courses available, where lessons are almost entirely hands-on and student-centered. In some traditional academic areas, teachers also bring in real-world examples of their subject matter. Self-assessment and self-reflection do occur in a many classes on a consistent basis, but there is a gap between student and teacher perceptions of how widely student self-assessment is employed. There is inconsistency in how time during the block is used. Some teachers give students significant amounts of time to talk casually to peers or complete homework. This inconsistency in the application of a variety of important instructional strategies lessens and negatively impacts the quality of learning for some students. (classroom observations, students, teachers, examination of student work)

Uxbridge High School teachers solicit limited feedback from students, parents, and colleagues. The formal supervisory evaluation process generally provides constructive feedback from administrators. Some teachers solicit feedback from students at the end of lessons. However, there is no formal process by which students can offer feedback to their teachers. The current use of the schedule does not support time for collaboration and/or the sharing of feedback within the school day. Interactions with parents are student-focused and provide little opportunity for feedback on instructional practices. Teacher efforts to improve instruction focus primarily on their own perceptions, and could be enhanced by implementing a formal process by which feedback is solicited from students, colleagues, and parents. (teachers, classroom observations, students)

Teachers are expert in their content areas and knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional practices, but as a group, they are seldom reflective about their own practices. Forty percent of teachers hold master's degrees in the subject matter they teach. Sixty-two percent have professional licensure. Some teachers use current best practices in their instruction. Self-reflection about instructional practices is part of the evaluation process for teachers with professional status, though there is no formal process for self-reflection for teachers in the evaluation or exploration phases. The expertise and currency of the teachers' training are assets to the school, though more regular reflection alone or collegially on instructional practices would afford all teachers a greater opportunity to maximize their own potential. (evidence box, classroom observations, teachers)

Discussion of instructional strategies is not a significant part of the professional culture of the school. Certain departments have made it a priority to discuss instruction both formally at department meetings and informally on their own time. Members of the mathematics department, for example, spend time during their department meetings sharing best practices and lesson ideas. Foreign language teachers meet frequently, both formally and informally, to share instructional strategies that meet students' needs. The science and technology departments effectively team-teach classes. This year, a reorganization of the teaching staff has allowed collaboration between a new teacher and her predecessor, making a seamless transition. However, collaboration and discussion of instructional strategies is not inherent in the culture of the school and is more the exception than the rule. There is little evidence that discussion of

instructional strategies is taking place within all departments and between different departments. The lack of common planning time in the current schedule is a major obstacle in finding time for teachers to share instructional strategies. Students miss some important interdisciplinary connections, and class-time is not optimized, as a result of the lack of a school culture that promotes formal discussion of instructional practices. (classroom observations, teachers, student work)

Technology plays a significant, supportive role in some classes at UHS but is not fully integrated into regular instruction. All functioning computers for student use are being utilized during some class periods, but labs are not used during all blocks. Significant improvements have recently been made to some of the technology classrooms. In addition to computers, other subject specific equipment is available, such as the foreign language lab and overhead/LCD projectors. Students and teachers use a variety of software programs to support teaching and learning. UHS has had two Smartboards since the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. There were installation problems when the Smartboards were first made available to the faculty and although the Smartboards are now properly connected and training has been offered, they are still not being fully utilized. Technology that is dependable and accessible to all teachers and students would provide student with more opportunities to meet both school and class expectations. (students, teachers, classroom observation)

While teachers in some areas have successfully utilized professional development opportunities to improve instructional practices, not all teachers are availing themselves of these opportunities. Ample funding is available for professional development. Some teachers have attended workshops and conferences out-of-district and have implemented the strategies learned. Recent topics in professional development included rubric construction and writing across the curriculum. Members of the mathematics department were able to attend a two-year, federally-funded study on Japanese methods of instruction, with the aim of improving American students' math achievement. This involved peer observation as well as visits to other schools. Another workshop focused on the Carnegie Learning Model, in which students learn in a traditional classroom setting three days a week and at computers the other two. Most of this professional development has been teacher-initiated and out-of-district. Professional development is teacher-directed and well supported. Teachers who take advantage of professional development opportunities in the area of instruction have more tools at their disposal to deliver the curriculum to students in a meaningful and creative way. (administrators, teachers, self-study)

The recent revisions to the evaluation process stress the importance of improved instruction in meeting students' academic needs. The current formal evaluation process was revised in the 2006-2007 school year to allow for teachers with professional status to be observed once in every two years. Teachers without professional status are observed three times a year. In both cases, these observations are formal and scheduled. The process begins with a pre-observation conference during which the teacher and evaluator discuss lesson goals and objectives, and the teacher may ask the evaluator to focus the observation on a specific area of concern. After the observation, the teacher and evaluator discuss the findings of the observation in a post-conference. Teachers report that administrators typically frame their recommendations as constructive criticism. There are rubrics used that focus on instruction, however, they are in need of review and revision. Additionally, these rubrics do not address the specific instructional

strategies mentioned in this NEASC standard. The evaluation process provides an opportunity for teachers and administrators to work together to improve instruction. If the process were more focused on improving instruction, the outcomes could be better used to meet student needs. (teachers, sub-committee, self-study)

### **Commendations**

1. The teachers who are clearly expert in their subject matter and regularly update their knowledge
2. The teachers who make discussion of instruction a regular practice
3. The state-of-the-art language lab utilized by all foreign language classes
4. The positive classroom climate in which students display a strong sense of responsibility and respect for one another
5. The school administration that promotes and encourages professional development
6. Those teachers who have taken the initiative to attend workshops and conferences and implement the principles learned there

### **Recommendations**

1. Provide professional development to ensure that all teachers are varying instructional techniques within the block, personalizing instruction, promoting higher order thinking skills, and incorporating technology into their instruction
2. Provide opportunities for collaboration to improve interdisciplinary connections in instruction
3. Incorporate student self-assessment and reflection regularly into all classes
4. Dialogue with students on a regular basis about their response to and comprehension of course content
5. Design the formal evaluation process to emphasize quality of instruction and include a formal reflection component in every phase of the evaluation cycle
6. Design and implement formal professional development on the integration of technology into instruction
7. Create and utilize a standard, school-wide student and parent feedback form focusing on instruction
8. Communicate to all staff members the Instructional Technology Standards as identified in the Educational Technology Plan

#### **4. TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD**

##### **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 their 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 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 purpose 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 in achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community.

## Conclusions

Uxbridge High School has developed school-wide rubrics to determine individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations as outlined in the mission statement, but there is no systematic process to assess school-wide progress. The rubrics used to assess student progress vary from class to class even within a department. While this allows teachers to assess individual student progress based on course and department rubrics, it does not provide a consistent assessment throughout the school. Not all course-wide rubrics have a strong link to the school-wide mission statement. Thus the administrators and faculty members are limited in knowing the degree to which students at UHS have achieved school-wide progress based on the mission statement. (teachers, self-study, student work)

Uxbridge High School uses a variety of data to assess the success of the school and the students in achieving its civic and social expectations. Records for attendance, tardiness, disciplinary actions, and suspensions are maintained using administrative software. For students having difficulty in meeting social and civic responsibilities, a process known as the student review committee may convene to evaluate a student's progress. This committee brings together the student, parents, teachers, guidance staff, administrators, and other relevant participants to identify issues impeding a student's progress and to develop a written plan to address the student's needs. Uxbridge High School continues to involve students in community service through their classes using a community service-learning model. Many opportunities are provided for students to participate in community service projects, and there is media participation in recognizing students. There are no identified standards for student performance in community service learning and no formal measurement method. Thus the school does not have complete data to assess the success of the school or the students in achieving its civic and social expectations and cannot fully document for the school community the outcomes it believes it is achieving. (teachers, administrators, self-study)

Teachers clarify to students to varying degrees the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals. Teachers begin the academic year by providing course syllabi, but the information contained in the syllabi varies from teacher to teacher. Some include the UHS mission statement, some include course objectives and standards, most include grading policies, and some present an outline of the topics to be covered. A poster called "Framing the Learning" is displayed in classrooms to remind teachers to communicate standards, course-specific learning goals, and assessments for assignments. Standards and goals are being communicated through the use of rubrics for writing and project-based assessments. Some departments utilize rubrics for self-assessment by students. Daily agendas are posted in classrooms indicating the activity for the day, but not all teachers indicate the learning objectives or relevant school-wide academic expectations for that activity. Rubrics for assessing the quality of homework, notebooks, and class participation are provided by foreign language and science teachers, but this is not a universal practice at the school. Thus, in most but not all cases, students are aware of how classroom assignments relate to the academic expectations and subsequent learning goals. (teachers, students, student work)

Teachers base classroom assessment of student learning on rubrics, some of which are school-wide and others course-specific. Teachers regularly clarify course-specific goals for

students, and all teachers have created some form of rubric to assess student learning. While rubrics are available in every subject area and students clearly understand that their grades are based on rubrics, there is inconsistency both within and between departments concerning the style of the rubric and the method used for deriving a grade from it. Some items on course-specific rubrics used for grading are not clearly linked to the school-wide rubrics. Although there may be differences among teachers in the same subject areas as to how a grade is derived from that rubric, the rubric for writing effectively is used in all core subject areas. Department responsibility for specific academic expectations is clearly defined although distribution of primary responsibility for those expectations is not equitable. The faculty of UHS is clearly developing rubrics, but the rubrics are not being applied in the same manner throughout the building or for all methods of assessment. As a result, while some of the student assessments may measure course-specific goals, rubrics for some assessments are not linked to school-wide academic expectations. (students, teachers, student work)

Teachers at UHS employ a variety of assessment techniques that meet different learning styles to determine student competence in a given subject area. Examples of assessment tools include pen and pencil tests (matching, short answer, and open-ended questions), quizzes, homework assignments, Power Point presentations, mobiles, posters, lab reports, writing stories and essays, solving real life mathematics problems, research papers, and individual and group presentations. Students are given opportunities to demonstrate their learning through creative and unique ways. Examples include creating cartoons in a foreign language, performing and videotaping skits, and designing and building mousetrap cars. Authentic assessments are also utilized through writing resumes, balancing checkbooks, and preparing birth/wedding announcements in a foreign language. Some special education students prepared portfolios as a form of alternate assessment for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Students participating in internships are assessed through their real world work experiences based on identified competencies developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Thus, students have varied opportunities to demonstrate their skills and progress and students with different learning styles are assured that their work will be fairly judged. (student work, classroom observations, teachers, self-study, students)

Teachers meet to discuss student work and assessments on an informal basis using their preparation times, lunch time, and time before and after school. Monthly department meetings allow for interdepartmental collaboration, and curriculum and instruction leaders (C&Is) meet monthly with administrators. District-wide collaboration occurs yearly, during which time a curriculum content area is evaluated and revised. Additional course offerings, including an MCAS prep course, and the implementation of rubrics have been introduced as a result of assessing student needs. Despite these efforts, there is a lack of common planning time among faculty members that limits the discussion of student work and assessment practices. The faculty has not developed or adopted a formal protocol for examination or discussion of student work. Although some faculty members use assessment to initiate changes in the curriculum, for example, utilizing MCAS scores and AP test scores to propose a change in the sequence of history courses as well as math courses, this practice is not consistent across all the disciplines. In addition, there is no formal process to assess the effectiveness of recent instructional and curricular changes. Thus, curriculum development and revision based on student performance

data is not a regular and universal practice that will assist in improvement of either curriculum or the delivery of the curriculum to students. (self-study, teachers, panel presentation)

UHS's professional development program provides opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. The school calendar includes five full days of professional development and four half days of curriculum development that are devoted to training for the entire staff. During the half days, teachers have conducted analyses of student performance on MCAS tests to determine specific needs in curriculum and instruction. Teachers are encouraged to pursue professional development training out-of-district, and the administration is very supportive of professional growth. Special education teachers have the opportunity to attend professional development trainings out-of-district, and each year, special educators are sent to the Massachusetts Alternate Assessment workshops. Special educators have also been provided with short-term training on creating and maintaining education plans (IEPs), alternative assessment, Woodcock-Johnson testing, and the implementation of the Case-e special education program. In addition, teachers are encouraged to pursue graduate courses for which there is a tuition reimbursement program. The teaching staff has been involved in ongoing professional training in standards-based instruction and assessment. Over the past several years, specific, on-going training has been devoted to standards-based unit planning, differentiated instruction, strategic writing for MCAS, and rubric writing. Professional development specifically related to the NEASC self-study has also been ongoing. The focus of these particular trainings has been to implement effective classroom assessment strategies as well as to utilize student data to determine instructional units and methods. Thus, teachers are provided various opportunities to develop student assessment strategies through professional development programs both in and out of district that help them to deliver the curriculum more effectively to their students. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team)

The professional staff at UHS effectively communicates individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families. Students and parents are made aware of school-wide academic expectations through the UHS student handbook. At the beginning of each semester, teachers distribute course syllabi that include grading policies and class expectations and procedures. These syllabi are sent home, and parents and students are expected to sign and return them indicating their understanding of the expectations. Student success in achieving these expectations is communicated to students and parents through progress reports issued mid-way through each marking period and report cards issued at the conclusion of each marking period. Some special education students also take home daily logs regarding academic achievement and behavior patterns that are signed by parents and returned to the teacher. Parent/teacher conferences take place twice a year, usually after the first and third term report cards are issued. Individual MCAS and PSAT scores are also sent home. Other methods of communication about student progress include phone calls, voicemail, e-mail, and a special education parent newsletter. Many parents speak positively about the open communication between the school and the parents. They express satisfaction with communication that comes from teachers and counselors. UHS communicates student progress in achieving some school-wide expectations to the school community in a variety of ways. The principal's report to the school committee is broadcast on local cable television, honor roll lists are published in the local newspaper, school MCAS results and other district information are

posted on the school's website, and the local cable access airs stories regarding courses and programs through which school-wide expectations are achieved. UHS is committed to continuing to interweave community service opportunities throughout the curriculum. These community service activities are shared with the community through newspaper articles and the use of local cable access, highlighting activities in which the students are involved. Student and school performance data that is reported to the public include success and participation in student-driven activities such as National Honor Society and student council. However, at this time there is no method for measuring the school's progress in achieving the academic expectations outlined in the mission statement so UHS is unable to communicate success in that area. As parents and members of the larger school community are made aware of the achievements of students in meeting school-wide expectations, support for UHS will be enhanced. (teachers, parents, self-study)

### **Commendations**

1. The commitment of Uxbridge High School to community service learning and the involvement of students in community service
2. The commitment to establishing and utilizing rubrics throughout the school in order to both clarify academic expectations and assess student learning
3. The variety of assessment techniques used by teachers to meet different learning styles
4. The commitment of the district to professional development
5. The formal and informal communication of student progress to families through phone calls, e-mail, and letters
6. The communication of student progress to the community through the principal's report, newspapers, school website, and local cable access

### **Recommendations**

1. Complete the process of developing and implementing a plan to assess school-wide progress toward the academic expectations based on the use of the school-wide rubrics
2. Implement a plan for measuring student achievement using school-wide rubrics
3. Maintain records of student participation in specific community learning projects
4. Develop a school-wide template for course syllabi
5. Provide opportunities for faculty members to collaborate on using classroom assessments to revise and develop curriculum and improve instruction
6. Develop a formal method for teachers to examine student work as colleagues and use the information gathered to improve assessment strategies, curriculum, and instruction
7. Develop a formal method to assess the effectiveness of recent curricular changes

**COMMISSION ON  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**SUPPORT STANDARDS**

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**LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

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**SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

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**COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

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## **5. SUPPORT STANDARD**

### **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 support 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 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**

The principal of Uxbridge High School has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving its mission and expectations for student learning. The school committee and superintendent support the principal's interests and believe that he has full responsibility for the school. There is good communication among administrators and school committee members. The principal delivers a status report to the school committee once a month. The school committee, the superintendent, and the principal all work together on decision-making and policy development. The recent change in the school's graduation requirement is an example of the cooperation and communication among administrators and the school committee. At UHS, a leadership team has been established consisting of the principal, assistant principal, student management coordinator, special education chairperson, director of athletics, lead guidance counselor, lead health services coordinator/nurse, and curriculum and instruction leaders. The administrative team at UHS is charged with the responsibility of implementing and organizing programs that will support the school's mission and expectations for learning and provide the most effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In the last ten years, UHS has had five principals leading the school, offering their visions and expectations for the school. Teachers believe the frequent changes in leadership have made the delivery of the mission and expectations inconsistent and unpredictable. Also, while faculty members and staff members feel supported and appreciated by their principal, they are unable to articulate his vision and goals for the school. Consistency in the position of principal and the clarification and articulation of the principal's vision will ensure a better understanding of the mission and student expectations. (self-study, teacher, school committee)

The principal must take every opportunity to be consistent and clear in sharing his vision regarding the connection between quality instruction and student achievement. The principal of Uxbridge High School has built a strong reputation for creating a safe, orderly, and disciplined environment with an existing staff that is dedicated and nurturing. An "open door" policy offers equal access to all faculty members and staff members to the principal. The principal's vision includes the opening of a new high school that will keep Uxbridge students in Uxbridge and attract students from surrounding communities. This vision includes a community school that will provide services for all age groups. In the interim, Uxbridge High School will continue to provide unique opportunities for students inside and outside of the classroom and realize the importance of providing individual and unique opportunities for students. Because the principal has been in the position for two years, his vision may not yet be clear to the entire staff. However, what is clear to the staff is his and the district's commitment to obtain the best possible resources for the staff in the area of textbooks, supplies, technology, and professional development opportunities. A clear understanding of the principal's vision at this time is essential in order to enlist the entire staff in the school improvement initiatives that have been started and embraced by some members of the faculty. With clear articulation of the principal's

vision, continued improvements in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment will take place. (teachers, administrators, self-study)

Some teachers take an active role in the leadership of Uxbridge High School. Faculty members serve as curriculum and instruction leaders as well as ad-hoc committee members when the needs arise. Two faculty members have served on the Uxbridge High School Council since its inception. Faculty members have met with their colleagues in the elementary and middle school grades to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Teachers take pride in taking students out of the building, on local, state, and international trips, to broaden students' worldviews. They also adopt advisor positions that enhance the learning opportunities for all students. Additionally, teachers volunteer their time with the student mentor program because they believe in the program. There is no formal faculty advisory committee to promote communication between administrators and teachers. Teachers have informal opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. Some teachers are not provided with or do not choose to participate in formal leadership opportunities. Thus, this valuable resource is not utilized effectively to improve student learning. (self-study, teachers, leadership/organization committee)

Although the organization of the school promotes the mission and expectations for student learning, the effectiveness of this model is inconsistent and limited by the accessibility of the curriculum and instruction leaders in some content areas. Teachers at Uxbridge High School are grouped by content area, and students are divided into grades 9 through 12. There are currently 463 students attending UHS. The size of the leadership team provides quality support for teachers and students. A nurturing faculty and strong administrative team with a commitment to put the needs of the student first have created educational programs that are unique and meet the needs of diverse learners. The educational opportunities offered through programs like the Mosaic Mill, the school to career internship, independent study, and courses such as independent living, UHS Leadership, the electives offered in the physical education department, and the construction technology courses encourage responsible citizenship and life-long learning that align with the mission at Uxbridge High School. The promotion of student learning in the core content areas is inconsistent from department to department. While effective use of instructional time in the block, creativity, and a commitment to standards-based instruction are found in many classrooms, these characteristics are not as readily apparent in all classrooms at Uxbridge High School. Support and supervision of the instructional program is inconsistent across departments. This situation adversely impacts the quality of instruction and student learning in certain content areas. (teachers, administrators, curriculum instruction leaders, classroom observations)

Student grouping patterns frequently reflect the diversity of the student body and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for learning. At UHS, all students have equal access to all courses, provided that the prerequisite has been met. It is the school's policy that all students have the opportunity to choose the level of difficulty they will attempt in their coursework, subject to teacher recommendation. While this policy encourages open enrollment, the academic expectations of some courses sometimes reduces the heterogeneity of opportunity for some learning styles and abilities within those courses. There are three levels of coursework, college preparatory, honors, and advanced placement. Some content areas are challenging their students more and promoting higher order thinking than others. Some students do not know what

level of coursework they are taking and cannot identify significant differences in college preparatory and honors classes. The faculty has not explored current educational research regarding the levels of coursework available, how to challenge students at the different levels, and the distinctions between college preparatory and honors levels. Administrators and faculty members have created a scheduling committee to review the 4X4 block, to evaluate its effectiveness and appropriateness, and to research alternative schedules that may enhance student learning. Students have the flexibility within the schedule to take a variety of courses at different levels; however, they may not be academically challenged appropriately at each course level. Additionally, some teachers are not reflecting upon current educational research and best practices, and are therefore limiting their ability to improve instructional practices and student learning. (classroom observations, self-study, teachers, students, administrators)

The 4 x 4 rotating block schedule at Uxbridge High School supports the school's mission and expectations for student learning in some areas. The block schedule provides for project-based learning, internships, laboratory experiments, student-centered instruction, and the opportunity for students to engage in in-depth study of the curriculum. This model simulates a college-based two-semester format and minimally meets the requirements of time on learning as detailed in the Massachusetts Educational Reform Act of 1993. A longer school day would provide additional time-on-task for students and would be beneficial to students. Many students and staff members expressed approval of the block time format. There is effective use of time in the block in many classrooms at Uxbridge High School, but more work needs to be done to support teachers in their instructional practices. The faculty has agreed that it is important to their continuous school improvement to revisit and analyze the current block schedule format. A scheduling committee has been created and has had several formal meetings in the spring of 2007. The current schedule limits some elective offerings and is negatively impacting some programs. (classroom observations, teachers, administrators)

Students, parents, and members of the school staff are informally contributing to the decision-making process, promoting an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. UHS students have a direct voice in the decision-making process through their representation at school committee and school council meetings. The elected student council members serve as a direct link to both the school administration and the school committee and are given an agenda item to offer input and address concerns. There is a lack of diversity among students who represent their peers, however, and participate in the decision-making process. Families are accorded participation in the decision-making process through venues such as the school committee, the school council, the building committee, and other sub-committees. Families also play important roles in organizations such as athletic booster clubs and Uxbridge High School Parents For a Safe Graduation. Community appreciation for the mission and activities of UHS is not as broad as it could be. UHS faculty and staff members exercise an informal role in the decision-making processes. Faculty and staff members represent the school community on a voluntary basis at school committee and school council meetings. A faculty member serves on the budget and fiscal management committee for the school. Faculty meetings, department meetings, and principal meetings with C&I's afford some opportunities for input on matters that concern the UHS faculty and staff. Shared leadership at UHS has led to an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. More opportunities for formal

communication among stakeholders are necessary, however, to ensure the success of new policies and initiatives. (self-study, students, student shadowing, parents)

Teachers at Uxbridge High School have a student load that enables them to give individual attention to all learners and provides the opportunity to know their students personally. Teachers are assigned classes ranging in size from five students to 26 students. Of the approximately 116 sections currently scheduled, nineteen sections have more than twenty students. Teachers have input on class size limits. There are instances where students are studying art or foreign language independently and are assigned to a teacher during the teacher's prep or while the teacher teaches another section. Even though these situations exist, there are educationally sound class sizes at Uxbridge High School. Although UHS has experienced a loss of a significant numbers of students to schools in surrounding communities through school choice, student performance on the MCAS test has not changed significantly. The drop-out rate at Uxbridge High School remains below the state average, and the daily attendance rate remains above the state average. The small class sizes have fostered more individual attention and enabled consistent student performance. (self-study, MCAS comparisons from DOE, teachers, administrators)

There is no formal program whereby each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes the student's educational experiences. Teachers at UHS are supportive, caring individuals sincerely interested in the lives of students and play active roles in their success. Most students have at least one adult who knows him/her well. Students report that the most important people in the building are their teachers. Because of the quality of instruction and the positive interactions with faculty and staff members, students claim they can forget the inadequacies of the building. The atmosphere of UHS promotes a sense of belonging and ownership within students; however, without a formal program, there is no guarantee that all students will be given personal attention or have a significant relationship with an adult in the building, and therefore there is no assurance of the successful achievement of the school-wide expectations for student learning. (self-study, students, panel presentations)

Although there is a professional culture at Uxbridge High School, opportunities for departments to collaborate across disciplines do not regularly take place. Monthly department meetings are held with curriculum and instruction leaders. These meetings have resulted in new course offerings in physical education/health, science, and the family and consumer science departments. The CDE/futures program is an example of department collaboration designed to address a specific student population at UHS. Monthly department meetings alone are not sufficient for examining student work, sharing best instructional practices, planning interdisciplinary activities or aligning curriculum between departments. Lost opportunities for faculty members to gain expertise in instruction and assessment from their colleagues have a negative impact on student learning and teacher professional development. Additionally, there are few opportunities offered students to benefit from the connections made during interdisciplinary study. (teachers, self-study, classroom observations)

All faculty and staff members at Uxbridge High School are genuinely concerned with the well-being and learning of students. Office personnel, cafeteria workers, paraprofessionals,

custodians, and the school nurse display a dedication to their roles in support of the students. Administrative assistants in the front office and guidance department maintain schedules, track attendance, answer questions, and contact families. Also, administrative assistants participate and support the annual holiday party, which is a highlight at UHS. Cafeteria workers not only supply a nutritious breakfast and lunch but also serve on the food service coordinators' "Healthy Foods/Wellness" sub-committee, which deals directly with health, food, and nutrition. The custodial staff maintains a clean and well-kept learning environment, assists with the setup and breakdown of social functions, and also supervises some cooperative education students. Additionally, the head of custodial services has helped to develop safety procedures, specifically regarding lockdown and emergency/evacuation. The guidance department and school-to-career services offer many opportunities for informal peer mediation, counseling, and career workshops. They organize testing, career exploration, college/university searches and application processes, yearly scheduling and any changes, enrollment of new students, and supervision of the cooperative education program. Students respect and appreciate the support offered by non-teaching staff members who are genuinely concerned with the well-being and learning of all students. (self-study, teachers, students, leadership committee)

The successes of Uxbridge High School students are regularly celebrated, acknowledged, and displayed. Juniors and seniors are recognized at the end of the school year during academic achievement/awards banquets. Staff members and students obtain donations from the community to recognize students who have received award tickets for actions above and beyond the regular expectations of UHS students. Photographs of Uxbridge students who have achieved honor roll status are displayed in the corridor near the main office. Banners, display cases, artwork, and painted murals memorialize student work, and care is given to publicize these accomplishments through press releases and cable news broadcasts. The result of these efforts is a student body and staff that have tremendous pride in their school and in their personal, team, and group accomplishments. Celebrations of success foster continued academic, civic, and social growth and responsibility while building confidence in students. The recognition of student achievements also fosters positive morale among faculty and staff members. (self-study materials, students, parents)

The climate of the school is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. The use of a faculty representative on school council opens channels of communication among students, faculty members, and administrators. The Leadership Class is provided with opportunities to meet with UHS administrators to discuss ways to improve the school. The student-to-student mentoring program, in which upper classmen assist freshmen with the transition from middle school to high school, continues to provide student leadership opportunities. Teachers share the students' enthusiasm and pride for UHS. Additionally, the adoption of a revised school mission statement and school-wide rubrics has helped to support a learning climate that promotes high expectations for student learning. As a result, students and faculty members share a strong sense of pride in their school and their community. (self-study, teachers, students)

The Uxbridge School Committee supports the Uxbridge High School Mission and Expectations for student learning. It supports the recommendations of the superintendent of schools and the principal as they relate to Uxbridge High School, as in the recent changes in

graduation requirements as well as the initiative to review the current block schedule model at UHS. This positive working relationship helps to promote the acquisition and best use of resources to support teaching and learning at Uxbridge High School. (school committee, teachers, administrators)

### **Commendations**

1. The school board supports the principal's decision-making authority and believes he is an effective communicator and leader
2. The district's commitment to provide the best resources available in textbooks and supplies
3. The teachers who volunteer their time to assist students in extra-curricular activities
4. The creation of a block scheduling committee
5. The class sizes that foster individualized instruction and enable teachers to offer support to students
6. The sense of pride among students in their building and their strong connection with their teachers and administrators
7. The non-teaching staff members who go beyond job descriptions to create a positive social and academic environment
8. The recognition of student success that occurs regularly and in a variety of ways and promotes a positive learning environment as well as pride in the school
9. The efforts made by school administrators, faculty and staff members, students, and community members to foster a positive learning environment in which all are proud to call UHS home

### **Recommendations**

1. Reinforce the vision and goals of the principal with all faculty members and staff
2. Create, implement, and promote a formal communication system that empowers all teachers, students, and parents to be decision and policy-maker, and to participate in school community activities
3. Devise and implement a plan for better access to curriculum and instruction leaders for all faculty members in all departments
4. Provide professional development opportunities addressing instruction in the block, development and use of rubrics, and the sharing of best practices
5. Prioritize time and resources to give the scheduling committee the opportunity to assess views of all staff members regarding the block schedule as it researches different models
6. Create a formalized program that pairs students with significant adults in the building
7. Establish a system of teacher collaboration within and across departments, that allows educators to share student work, create interdisciplinary units, and share teacher expertise
8. Consider adopting a longer school day to provide additional time-on-task for students

## **6. SUPPORT STANDARD**

### **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.

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**

Uxbridge High School's (UHS) student support services are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Uxbridge High School's support services include a guidance program, counseling services, comprehensive health services, a range of library media services, and a special education program. The school provides a variety of resources to enable students to access the academic program, improve learning, and prepare for the future. Each service area contributes to the development of the mission statement in its own way and, as a total service package, meets the needs of the whole child. These support services ensure that there is a recognition of students' needs consistent with the school's mission and expectations for learning and that all students are appropriately served. (self-study, students, librarian, nurse)

Uxbridge High School allocates resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. The school's 4x4 block schedule affords the students ample opportunity to take courses in many areas

in great depth. The course offerings are rich and varied. Courses are taught at the advanced placement, honors, and college prep levels. Special education programs are in place for students with special needs. Guidance counselors meet with all students to discuss course selection to ensure that students find the most appropriate and challenging program. Guidance counselors also assist students in college selection and applications and documentation. Through the special education program, students with IEPs receive academic support either in the classroom, with or without an aide, or in the academic support center (ASC). Some of the regular education classes are co-taught with a special educator and the content teacher. Additionally, there are seven paraprofessionals who work in the special education department, providing direct service to students. The role of the paraprofessionals is sometimes unclear, however, and the lines of communication with the regular education staff are not as open as they should be. The Mosaic Mill Program is an alternative high school program that supports at-risk students in an off-campus setting and provides academic and prevocational skills. The other alternative education program is the prevocational life skills for students with lower cognitive skills. Advanced placement and college courses are offered to more academically gifted students. The peer mentoring program helps incoming freshmen transition into high school. The Art Gives Hope project engages at-risk students to be a positive influence in the community. The school nurse provides medical care for the students and also teaches in the health program. UHS's library program is adequate, as is the library budget, however, the facility has limitations. The library is open for teachers to bring their classes for print and electronic research although the computers are old and at times inoperative. The print collection is small, but students are directed to supplement the holdings by using the public library. New books are ordered based on the curriculum that is observed by library staff members from the research done in the library. Databases are available on several specific and general subjects through the Massachusetts State Library databases. School support programs and services are allocated at sufficient and varying levels to allow all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning. (self-study, librarian, paraprofessionals)

Guidance counselors, school adjustment counselors, the special education team chair, and the school nurse communicate frequently and work cooperatively with faculty members to address a variety of student concerns ranging from course placement to personal situations that may affect a student's ability to function in the classroom. Counselors meet regularly with school administrators, classroom teachers, and special education professionals to review specific student cases. These meetings address attendance, discipline, and academic issues to assign responsibility for any needed interventions. The student assistance team composed of these members meets on a regular basis to address concerns about the general student population as well as those with IEPs and 504 plans. When appropriate, school personnel work closely with community resource personnel to provide services for students attending UHS. The relationship between the Uxbridge counselors, school nurse, administrators, and special education is positive and works to deal quickly and effectively to assist students with needs. (self-study, nurse, guidance department, special education team chair)

In an effort to continually improve student learning, most student support services are regularly evaluated and revised. The district's administrative team meets for three days each summer to review the district's strategic plan and identify areas of concern and success. Periodic surveys are sent to the families of students receiving special education services seeking feedback

on the services provided. Special education programs are audited on a regular basis by the state. Under the goal of family and community, within the strategic plan, the health office communicates to the public the school's focus on wellness. The guidance department is constantly revising its college admissions work to reflect the changing demands of the colleges. Its success is reflected in student college acceptances. The library program is constantly reviewing its needs to reflect the changes in curriculum and the updating of library materials. The regular evaluation and revision of student support services at UHS are designed to improve student learning now and into the future. (self-study, principal, guidance)

There is 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. Report cards, quarterly reports, back to school night, parent-teacher conferences, school council meetings, handbooks, e-mail, cable TV, and the school website are all methods of keeping everyone informed. There are additional publications regarding interscholastic rules and regulations, as well as sports schedules, available in print and on the local cable TV and school website. The UHS library publishes a monthly newsletter featuring new acquisitions, database descriptions, and usage statistics. There is also a webpage to allow remote use of the databases. Quarterly reports from the special education staff keep students, parents/guardians, and school personnel abreast of student performance. Staff members are always available to answer any questions regarding student support services. Information about extracurricular activities is also available in the print and non-print formats. The UHS communication system reaches all areas of the community in an effective manner, ensuring that the school community is aware of support services available to their students. (parents, librarian, self-study)

Uxbridge High School stores student records in various locations throughout the school and district. The paper records are all kept in locked file cabinets, some of which are fire-proof and some are not. The electronic records are all secure on a server with a user name and password. Backups are kept in remote locations for security. The majority of the records is secure with the exception those in a few non-fireproof cabinets. The electronic records include general information on students, discipline, attendance, schedules, medical alerts, financial information, and some special education information. The paper-based guidance records are kept in locked filing cabinets. The cabinets are located in the career center and are locked and continually monitored by staff members. Health records are maintained in the nurse's office. Special education records are locked in filing cabinets in the superintendent's office. Most parents feel these records are secure. The school community can feel comfortable that the records of their students are safe and secure. (self-study, parents, nurse )

Uxbridge High School provides sufficient certified licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services. Three full-time certified guidance counselors, two certified school adjustment counselors, and two full-time secretaries serve all students, meeting the student/counselor ratio recommend by the American School Counselors Association. A full-time, registered nurse provides comprehensive health services to the student body. Five full-time special education teachers, a job coach, and several part-time positions including: a psychologist, an ELL teacher, an adaptive physical education instructor, a vision specialist, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a school adjustment

counselor/ licensed mental health counselor, a speech and language pathologist, and a social worker/ licensed substance abuse counselor support the various needs of the students. The library is staffed during the school day, before school and after school by a full-time certified library media specialist with an ALA accredited masters degree in library science and instructional technology. The librarian has some assistance available through the use of student aides in the library at different times during the day. Students have licensed certified personnel and support staff members available to them to provide appropriate support services as they strive to meet the expectations for student learning. (self-study, students, nurse)

The school does provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services that include individual and group meetings; personal, career, and college counseling; course selection; community mental health agencies and social services; and delivery of special education services. A full-time lead teacher does all the guidance administrative documentation. This frees up three guidance counselors who each serve one-third of the student population. Counselors meet individually with each student at least twice a year for academic and course selection needs, in groups as the need occurs, and are available for personal, career, and college counseling. The two adjustment counselors work with the area mental health and social service agencies in providing services to students and families. Seniors are exposed to a number of colleges as a result of a field trip at the beginning of senior year to the College Fair in Boston. There is a college planning night and a parent financial aid night. Additionally, guidance counselors work with special educators to provide appropriate support for students with special needs. There is a school psychologist who comes in once a week to do testing. The school has a complete compliment of guidance services that meets the needs of all the students. (guidance counselors, students, teachers, special needs staff)

The school's health services provide preventive health services and direct intervention services; appropriate referrals; mandated screenings; emergency responses; and ongoing student health assessments. The school nurse administers physician-prescribed and over the counter medications with parent approval. The nurse checks for complete immunization records, and performs height/weight, scoliosis, vision, and hearing assessments. Upon request, first aid and health assessments are provided for students and staff members. The nurse is a member of both the emergency and crisis teams. The school's health services include making medical referrals to medical services in the community. Classroom instruction in the health classes about sexually transmitted diseases is provided by the health services. The nurse also participates as a member of the special education and student assistance teams. The school's health services are effective and complete and serve the entire school community. (nurse, self-study, special education counselor)

The library/information services program and materials are not fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program although materials, books, and databases are purchased to complement the curriculum. Input from the faculty is sometimes sought for these purchases. Faculty members and students are instructed in the use of the electronic materials in school. The library webpage is accessible to the school community. The library has its own computer lab. Information literacy and literacy skills are addressed in student research. The TRAILS program is being tried for the first time this year as a joint project with the English department and the library to monitor student reading. There is no formal program in place for

library research instruction or proper use of electronic resources. Formalizing this would improve student learning. The school library meets the curriculum needs of the school, but with more formal outreach to the staff and more instruction in the use of library resources, student learning could be enhanced. (teachers, parents, self-study, librarian)

Library/information services personnel are knowledgeable about much of the curriculum and support its implementation when called upon to do so. Curriculum release days provide the opportunity for formal and informal meetings between the librarian and the teachers to discuss materials to support the curriculum and its research components. This enables the librarian to be actively involved in implementing the research projects with the teachers. The librarian is responsive to teachers and students when they are doing library research, teaching students how to use databases and teaching bibliographic skills needed. The staff feels supported by the librarian, and the library is used as a resource by teachers and students to meet Uxbridge High School's academic expectations. (librarian, teachers, self-study)

There is a range of materials, technologies and other library/ information services that are responsive to the student population and are available to the students and faculty members, and are utilized to improve teaching and learning. The traditional print collection, while small, is updated annually, especially in the areas of reference and young adult fiction. There is a varied magazine collection. The UHS library provides access both in school and remotely to the databases provided through membership in the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System including encyclopedias, newspapers, journals, and subject databases. The library subscribes to NoodleTools, a bibliographic citation tool. Students take advantage of interlibrary loans through the public library. The Sagebrush circulation/catalog system is electronic and can be used in school but not remotely. There are 24 computers with Internet access and a general school use computer lab within the library space that has 22 more computers with Internet access and word processing/PowerPoint capabilities. The range of print materials and databases purchased for the library could be wider, but is adequate for keeping up with student needs for research and pleasure reading. (librarian, teachers, self-study)

Students, faculty members, and support staff members have regular and frequent access to the library facilities and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, after, and during the school day. The library is open before classes begin in the morning and well after the school day officially ends. The library is run on a flexible schedule and can accommodate two classes and have a class in the computer lab at the same time. Occasionally the library is closed for general use for testing. There is access to the library facility for all staff members and students, and students have an opportunity to enhance their learning by using the library appropriately. (teachers, self-study, parents)

The library/information services program fosters independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty members to use various school and community information and resources and technologies. Because students are encouraged to utilize the public library facilities and programs and remotely access the databases, students learn to become independent researchers. Between the services offered in school and in the community, students learn to be independent and life-long learners. (self-study, students, teachers)

There is a U.H.S. Internet Acceptable Use Policy made known to all students. There is a policy and procedure in place for public complaints about library materials. There are no specific policies for selection and removal of library materials. The self-study lists policies, but none are specific to the library. The school does not have all the necessary policies for use, purchase, and removal of library materials, thus opening the library to criticism from the school community and the community at-large. (librarian, self-study, school resources committee)

The referral, evaluation, and educational plan development and implementation process at Uxbridge High School follows applicable state and federal legislation. A student's IEP determines access to special services. IEPs have been written to address specific remediation, alternative delivery methods, classroom accommodations, modifications, transition plans, and necessary support services. Inclusion is a state mandate and a federal priority for special education. The goal is to mainstream students into the regular education classes. Programs employ five full-time special education teachers and nine paraprofessionals. They are teamed with regular education teachers to teach classes with included students. Two available programs are an academic support center and a pre-vocational life skills program. Students are regularly monitored, and annual meetings are held to review and update all IEPs. Students have equal opportunities to achieve the school's expectations for student learning through a number of special programs and inclusion in regular education classes with the support of special education teachers. (self-study, teachers, special education department chair, guidance staff)

### **Commendations**

1. The organizational structure of the guidance department to better serve the students
2. The availability of a full-time in-house adjustment counselors to deal with social/emotional issues
3. The special education/regular education co-teaching
4. The availability of the library and the library staff to faculty members and students before, during, and after the school day
5. The involvement of the school nurse on committees for preventive care, health issues, and special education issues
6. The peer mentoring program
7. The extent to which student support services meet the needs of the whole child and support the mission of the school

### **Recommendations**

1. Increase formal curriculum collaboration between the librarian and teachers
2. Develop a master schedule for the computer labs to maximize full utilization of the computer labs
3. Formally include the librarian in curriculum development Improve communication between the librarian and the staff regarding collection development
4. Complete purchasing the fireproof cabinets for security of student files
5. Develop selection and removal policies for the library
6. Improve communication between the paraprofessionals and regular education teachers
7. Update the computers in the library computer lab

## **7. SUPPORT STANDARD**

### **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 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**

Uxbridge High School engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and encourages their participation in school programs and support groups. Faculty and staff members engage parents through the use of e-mail, phone calls, progress reports, public access television, and a school website. Parents are encouraged to participate as members of the school council, Uxbridge High School Booster Club, and U.H.S. Parents for Safe Graduation.

Monthly principal's reports are distributed to the school committee. As a result, the school successfully informs and creates a dialogue with parents and families. (self-study, panel presentation, teachers, parents, school leadership committees)

Uxbridge High School frequently fosters productive business and community partnerships that support student learning. The implementation of internship program, business partnerships, and in-school presentations by professionals of their area of expertise adds to the learning experiences of the students. Private donations and the Uxbridge Education Foundation allow for resources outside of the school budget to enhance student learning. The school encourages student organizations to participate in outreach programs and activities. These partnerships and activities allow for more extensive field activities, real world applications, community involvement, and mentoring opportunities. (self-study, teachers, panel presentation, school committee)

The current school site and plant do not adequately support all aspects of the educational program and support services for student learning. Uxbridge High School has made significant improvements over the past five years to increase storage, make more efficient use of space, and resolve ventilation issues within the facility. However, continuing heating and cooling problems and reoccurring roof leaks have not been overcome. Auditorium seating, the use of classrooms without windows and proper ventilation, and limited storage space for educational equipment continue to pose problems for the faculty and staff as they strive to serve the needs of the young people of Uxbridge. Though improvements have been made to the facility, there are still major deficiencies that impede and hinder student learning. (self-study, facility tour, teachers)

The physical plant and facilities meet applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. As a result of a review of local and state inspections of air quality, fire safety, building certification, and the state coordinated program review, it is evident that Uxbridge High School has satisfied the requirements of these agencies. Continued efforts to conform to evolving health and safety regulations in regard to chemical storage need to be addressed in a timely manner. Faculty and staff members are working to ensure a safe learning environment for students and a safe working environment for themselves. (self-study, facility tour, plant manager, community resources for learning self-study committee)

Where funds have been allocated, staff and faculty members are working collectively to ensure that equipment is adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate. However, in areas where funds are not available, equipment and facilities are deteriorating. With the implementation of the computer program "School Dude," Uxbridge High School has achieved greater efficiency for present and future planning. The school district is in the process of transferring maintenance data from the master plan to the new "School Dude" software. This software makes it possible to send maintenance requests to the plant manager, and it provides a written record of the submission date and request status. However, as a result of inadequate resources, computers are not always properly maintained or replaced in a timely manner and therefore are not being used effectively. Addressing maintenance concerns with greater efficiency has provided quicker responses to problems and has had a positive impact on student learning. However, student learning would be enhanced to a greater degree if deferred

items were adequately funded and in working order and properly maintained. (self-study, facility tour, teachers)

There is a planned program of building and site management to ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant. Funds are adequate for routine maintenance and repair but major projects, such as auditorium and gymnasium renovations and heating and cooling systems have been deferred. These deferments make the delivery of curriculum and instruction difficult. The plant manager creates the schedules for the custodial and maintenance staff members who repair and maintain the site. The plant manager is responsible for training and managing staff, purchasing supplies and equipment, and creating the budget. Custodial staff members perform daily checks of pumps, fire alarms systems, and boilers. Air quality reports are performed on a regular basis or as requested. The district-wide building and site management plan has been adequately funded with increases provided each year to address cost changes for supplies and materials. The attention given to building maintenance and cleanliness positively impacts the learning environment for students and staff members. (self-study, facility tour, department leaders)

There is extensive planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements at Uxbridge High School. The Uxbridge School District is using the iPass (Pupil Administrative Software System) to track yearly school enrollment and staffing allocations. Strategic planning for improvement of educational programs and practices is an ongoing process in the Uxbridge Public Schools. Parents and community members are invited to provide input through a variety of school and community organizations. There is a three-year district technology plan that is reviewed and updated annually. In January 2006, 35.91 acres were purchased by the town with the intent of constructing a new high school campus on the site. An architect is developing final plans for a new high school. The district has conducted on-site meetings with Massachusetts School Building Authority. Uxbridge has submitted a statement of interest for assistance in building a new high school with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. At present, Uxbridge school district is awaiting a response as to the percentage of funding the state will provide for the new high school. By making use of available data to plan for the future, Uxbridge High School is making accurate future needs projections to the community. (self-study, central office, panel presentation, school committee)

The community and the district's governing body strive to ensure adequate and dependable resources to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, equipment, materials, and supplies for student learning, but they are not always successful. Major renovations to the current facility have been deferred. The dependability of annual budget revenues is adequate as evidenced by the historical annual budget trend. The budget history over the past four years suggests that Uxbridge has adequately funded the operating budget of the schools, but an override for a building project was not successful. The current actual school operating budget exceeds the foundation budget set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Education by five percent. Although the community has been supportive of the annual operating budget, there is a projected overall town budget deficit for the 2008-2009 year that may impact adequate funding of the schools. The community has been dependable in providing an adequate maintenance and plant operating budget for Uxbridge High School with the exception of major

renovations and repairs to the existing facility. As a consequence of deferring maintenance and deferred major renovations, the community has provided a minimally adequate high school learning environment for the students of Uxbridge. The remaining portion of the operating budget is adequate to support the school programs, personnel, technological support, materials and supplies. (self-study, central office, facility tour, school committee)

Faculty members and building administrators are involved in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. Uxbridge High School's annual budgetary process begins at the department level and is consistent with the goals and objectives stated in the school improvement plan and the strategic plan. The curriculum and instruction leaders (C&I Leaders) for each department meet with and request input from all department members. C&I leaders prepare their requests and submit them to the principal. The principal then meets with the district administrative team to discuss the overall budget, and, if necessary, a department's budget is returned to the C&I leader for revision. Once revised, the budget is again reviewed by the administrative team and is forwarded to the superintendent and business manager for their review and approval. The superintendent and business manager then present the budget to the school committee for its review and approval. If further revisions are required, the budget is returned to the building principal for additional change which may or may not be discussed with the appropriate C&I Leader. Once again, the revised budget is forwarded to the school committee, and when it is satisfied, the budget is presented to the selectmen and finance committee for recommendation at a town meeting where the community votes on the final version of the budget. Including faculty members and administrators in preparing the budget empowers them to acquire resources that directly enhance student learning. (self-study, teachers, community resources for learning self-study committee, facility tour, central office)

### **Commendations**

1. The commitment to increasing parent support and involvement in the education process
2. The district website and the district's use of public access television to effectively communicate with the entire school community
3. The parent-driven groups that are active in promoting and funding various areas of student activities
4. The effective partnerships with the business community that provide learning opportunities and financial support for programs that benefit the school and students
5. The learning opportunities given to students that encourage community service and outreach
6. The budget process that encourages involvement from faculty members

### **Recommendations**

1. Implement school building and renovation plans to provide the space necessary for complete realization of the educational program
2. Continue to address and implement the evolving regulations of 310 CMR 30.00, fire prevention regulation 527 CMR 10.00, and Massachusetts building code 780 CMR
3. Replace and/or upgrade the HVAC systems
4. Create additional storage areas and reorganize contents of existing storage

## 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 Uxbridge High School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

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

A school's 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 Uxbridge High School submit routine Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports documenting the current status of all evaluation report recommendations, with particular detail provided for any recommendation which may have been rejected or those items on which no action has been taken. In addition, responses must be detailed on all recommendations highlighted by the Commission in its notification letters to the school. School officials are expected to have completed or be in the final stages of completion of all valid visiting committee recommendations by the time the Five-Year Progress Report is submitted. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards are not being met in a satisfactory manner or if additional information is needed on matters relating to evaluation report recommendations or substantive changes in the school.

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts 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 56. 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.

In closing, the members of the Uxbridge High School Visiting Team wish to express their appreciation to the school staff, students, and community for the hospitality that was extended to the team during its visit to the school. The team found members of the school community to be receptive to the process and open in their comments on the strengths and needs of the school.

APPENDIX A

**ROSTER OF TEAM MEMBERS**

<b>Evaluator</b>	<b>School</b>
Robert Fitzgerald	New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Bedford, MA
Loxi Jo Calmes	Lunenburg Public Schools Lunenburg, MA
Amy Cortright	Norwell High School Norwell, MA
Kara Dupre	Pittsfield High School Pittsfield, MA
Katherine Flaherty	Middleborough High School Middleborough, MA
Forest Henderson	Bellingham High School Bellingham, MA
Norman Immerman	Drury High School North Adams, MA
Stephanie Kelly	Rocky Hill High School Rocky Hill, CT
Eleisha LeMay	East Windsor High School East Windsor, CT
Laurie Malloy	Middleborough High School Middleborough, MA
Terry McCarthy	Somers High School Somers, CT
Judy Ogilvie	Arlington High School Arlington, MA
Sharon Parsons	Hopkins Academy Hadley, MA
Judy Rebhum	Guilford High School Guilford, CT
Gordon Smith	Ludlow High School Ludlow, MA

APPENDIX B

**New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
Commission on Public Secondary Schools  
Substantive Change Policy**

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

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