

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

***REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE***

**MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL  
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS**

March 17–20, 2002

Arthur Nicholson, Chair

Stanley Thompson, Assistant Chair

Peter Leuke, Principal

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS .....	III
INTRODUCTION .....	1
OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS .....	5
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE .....	6
MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS ..	12
MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL GOALS FOR STUDENT LEARNING.....	13
TEACHING AND LEARNING	
Mission and Expectations for Student Learning.....	15
Curriculum.....	19
Instruction.....	23
Assessment of Student Learning.....	27
SUPPORT STANDARDS	
Leadership and Organization.....	32
School Resources for Learning.....	37
Community Resources for Learning .....	43
FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES.....	47
APPENDICES:	
A. Roster of Visiting Committee Team Members.....	49
B. Commission Policy on Substantive Change .....	50

## **STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS**

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

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

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

## INTRODUCTION

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of five 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), and the Commission on Public Elementary Schools (CPES).

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

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

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Commission's visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Commission in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it 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 Malden High School, a committee of nine members with the principal serving in an *ex officio* capacity supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Malden High School extended over a period of eleven school months from April 2001 to the visit in March of 2002.

The visiting committee was pleased to note that students and parents 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, Malden High School also used questionnaires developed by the Office for Research and Education at the University of Maine 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 fifteen evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Malden High School in light of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Committee members spent four days in Malden, Massachusetts, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, and met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public school teachers, guidance, special education, and library/media personnel, school as well as central office administrators, and the public, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Malden High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 45 hours shadowing fifteen students for a half day
- a total of 60 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 Malden 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.

Malden High School's self-assessment as part of the accreditation process has identified both its accomplishments and needs. The visiting committee has endorsed many, but not all, of the commendations and recommendations contained in the self-assessment document. The report is an accurate and honest portrayal of where the high school is in meeting the ever-changing needs of its students. Utilizing this report as well as continuing to use *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution* as a blueprint for continuous improvement, opportunity for student success will be enhanced. Improvement, however, can occur only if all members of the school community have worked collaboratively toward a common vision of increasing student achievement for all students.

Although not reviewed on a regular basis, the school's mission and expectations, which are in alignment with that of the district, set high academic expectations that reflect district, state, and national standards. Each curricular area must identify the academic expectations for which it is responsible and then determine the acceptable level of performance that students must achieve. There is a high degree of faculty, student, and parent awareness of the mission and expectations for student learning.

All stakeholders in the school community must take ownership of the mission and expectations document along with attendant rubrics, for it must become the guiding force for curricular and instructional decision-making. Varied, additional methods of assessment, both formative and summative, must be employed to measure Malden High's progress in implementing its mission and expectations. Results must be used to determine how well the curriculum is being delivered and what instructional practices and strategies are necessary to improve learning for all students.

The curriculum is quite comprehensive. Students are offered numerous courses and programs encompassing all interests and ability levels. Curriculum development opportunities must be provided for teachers, however, to ensure academic rigor for all students. The English, social studies, and foreign language departments are commended for revising curriculum guides to include the academic expectations for which they are responsible.

A well-planned, focused, and research-based professional development plan that centers on increasing student achievement for everyone is critical in effective implementation of a mission and expectations for student learning. Professional development opportunities must enable teachers to evaluate and revise the curriculum as well as their own instructional strategies and to assess student growth over time.

Compliance with elements of the standard on leadership and organization varies, as a result of teachers who feel left out of the decision-making process and the school committee's micro-management and interference in the educational process. Thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about student learning is not part of the professional culture of the school. On the other

hand, Malden High School provides a safe learning environment where students display respectful behavior. Teachers are very supportive of their students and many student co-curricular activities.

Student support services are comprehensive and effective and generally meet the needs of students. A wide-array of programs for students is offered during the school day and beyond, providing opportunities for students to meet the school's expectations for student learning, particularly those in the social and civic areas.

The services and collection of the library/media center need to be more extensive and supportive of the schools' curriculum. The media specialist and the faculty must work more closely in curriculum development to ensure the integration of the library/media center resources into coursework and student assignments. Teachers also must promote more in-depth use of this facility through their assignments.

Malden High School has fostered productive business, community, and higher education partnerships for many years. These partnerships are not only numerous but exemplary. However, the lack of adequate and dependable sources of revenue for teaching and learning is troublesome, leading to insufficient maintenance of equipment and the facility as one of the consequences.

Essential in offering a first-rate educational program is an understanding among all administrative and teaching personnel of the relationships of what the mission says all students know and should be able to do, how the system can get them there, and what is acceptable evidence that they are there. This understanding will come about as a result of professional dialogue and a high quality professional development program.

Malden High School has much to offer its students. Continuous enhancement and improvement of student achievement must be the school's main focal point.

## SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

### Malden High School

Since 1857, Malden High School has provided the children of Malden an education dedicated to academic excellence, personal growth, and civic responsibility. Many of the students educated at Malden High School have attained prominence in a variety of fields, including politics, law, medicine, business, literature, entertainment, and athletics. In recent years, it has become necessary to adapt to the needs of an increasingly transient and diverse school population. To this end, the current administration is in the midst of implementing substantive changes that include renovation of the buildings as well as the restructuring and reorganization of the day-to-day operations of the school.

Malden High School is located in Malden Square, the city's main business district. The school is within easy walking distance of the offices of the Massachusetts Department of Education and Malden Government Center, that houses the offices of city government as well as those of the Malden School Department. Malden High School's physical plant consists of three buildings, the oldest of which was constructed in 1939. Construction of the two newer buildings was completed in 1979 and 1981, respectively. The proposed renovation of the entire complex is part of a general system-wide upgrade of educational facilities within the last four years. At Malden High School, a foreign language computer-audio laboratory and a parent information center have recently been added to the facilities. The former library loft has been transformed into a computer center, containing more than twenty personal computers available to both students and staff. The Malden Teachers' Federal Credit Union has been moved into more spacious offices. The offices of the district's special needs, nursing director and health coordinator have been moved to the high school and, to accommodate an ever-increasing need for childcare, a day care center has been established at the school.

While the changes to the physical appearance of Malden High School have been striking, the change in the school's population has been even more dramatic. As the city of Malden has become the home to a substantial immigrant population, the student body at Malden High School has become reflective of this diversity. At present, the native languages spoken by Malden High School students number more than 40. Of these, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Vietnamese, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Spanish are the most common. In addition, the instability caused by the transient nature of the school population has become an increasing concern.

In order to address the challenges presented by increased diversity and transiency and to adapt to the needs of all students, the school has adopted the recommendations of *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution*, a report of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. In accordance with these recommendations, Malden High School has been divided into four separate houses, each with its own staff, students, and educational theme. The aim of this restructuring is to improve instruction and assessment while taking into consideration the needs of individual students by providing more personalized attention so that fewer students "slip through the cracks" and thus optimize the accessibility of student services.

## **The City of Malden**

The City of Malden is a densely populated urban municipality of approximately five square miles located in southern Middlesex County five miles north of downtown Boston. Malden is dissected by routes 1, 60, and 99 and within easy reach of routes 93, 95, and 128. In addition, Malden is serviced by the MBTA that provides numerous bus routes and two stations on the Orange Line as well as a commuter rail stop. This convenient location places Malden literally within minutes of all the business, transportation, medical, entertainment, educational, and cultural services available in the Greater Boston area.

Malden's population has grown 4.6% over the past 10 years. Malden's latest reported population is 56,430. Of this number 71% is Caucasian, 14% is Asian, 9% is African American, and 6% is Hispanics. Many of Malden's population are immigrants. During the past 10 years, Malden has changed from a stable, traditional community to one of many highly mobile, multi-ethnic neighborhoods. Once a place where families resided for generations, many neighborhoods are now in constant flux. While the diversity and the mobility that spawns it can add strength, depth, and richness to a community, it can create havoc with the school community and destabilize the educational process. To compound matters, most immigrants are of childbearing age, and large families are not uncommon. This helps to explain the disparity between the percentage of Malden's minority population (29%) and that of Malden High School (49%).

There are more than 1,800 businesses located in Malden. Major employers include government, education, financial institutions, service-oriented companies, wholesale-retail providers, and manufacturers. Malden is also home to a number of small service operations located throughout the city's neighborhoods. In addition, Malden has embarked on a joint business venture of hugely significant proportions with Everett and Medford. Land from the three communities along the Malden River (a tributary of the Mystic, once Malden's waterway connection to the Industrial Revolution and now recently rediscovered as a resource for recreation, commerce, and even biological research) and its environs will be jointly developed to create Telecom City, a project that holds great financial and educational promise for the city.

The city's labor force consists of approximately 30,000 workers. Many are professionals or skilled laborers. The average annual income is \$32,146, with 7.5% of the city's population living below the poverty level. (This contrasts significantly with Malden High School's population that has over 20% below the poverty level and the Malden school system with 32% of students receiving subsidized lunches and therefore eligible for financial assistance). The Commonwealth's Division of Employment Training identifies Malden's unemployment rate as 4.3% as of November 1, 2001.

## **The Schools of Malden**

Malden expended an average of \$6,680 per student for the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years. The state's average expenditure for the same time frame was \$6,527. On average, 61% of Malden's expenditures came from local resources and 39% came from the state. According to the city comptroller, no figure is available for the percentage of local property tax allocated to schools for any year. Non-resident students are charged the per pupil expenditure in Malden. In the school year 1999-2000, there was one such student charged \$6,960, and in 1998-1999 there was one

charged \$6,399. There are currently (2001-2002) three tuition students, all in the special education program.

In the City of Malden, there are two parochial elementary schools with a combined enrollment of 847 students. In addition, the community hosts and participates in the Mystic Valley Advantage Charter School, which currently has only elementary grades with 763 students. Of the 1,610 students reported in these non-public elementary schools, 1,006 are Malden residents. Malden Catholic High School, a college preparatory school administered by the Xaverian Brothers, has 710 students; 208 of whom are Malden residents. Malden residents also attend the Northeast Regional Vocational High School, a consortium school of which Malden is a member.

The 1999-2000 school year was a period of transition for the Malden Public School system. In addition to the three K-7 schools that opened with 3,878 students, Malden Middle School was housed at Malden High School with 425 eighth grade students. Currently, all of Malden's public K-8 students are housed in five brand-new "magnet" schools, each with a different focus theme. These are the main feeder schools for Malden High School although the two parochial schools also contribute some students.

The demographics of the Malden Public School System are mirrored in the demographics of Malden High School. Both are immigrant-laden, racially, culturally and ethnically diverse populations that are made unstable by the many students both entering and leaving throughout the school year.

As of October 1, 2000, Malden High School's student population was 1,504. As of October 1, 2001, it is currently 1,598, with 728 males and 776 females. There were 439 students in Grade 9, 354 students in Grade 10, 357 students in Grade 11, and 354 students in Grade 12. African Americans comprise 16% of students, Asians 24%, Caucasians 51%, and Hispanics 9%.

Malden High School has a substantial number of immigrant students. Many make Malden High their first school in the United States due to the large number of immigrants here who attract other family members to the area. There were over 70 countries of origin represented in Malden High during the 1999-2000 school year. Over the past 5 years, students from over 100 countries have passed through the corridors of Malden High School. As of October 2, 2000, 516 students (34%) spoke a first language that was not English. This number has reportedly risen to well over 40%, according to the new English as a second language (ESL) statistics. In addition, 227 students (14% of all Malden high school students during the 2001-2002 school year) cannot perform ordinary classwork in English.

The Class of 2001 graduated 325 seniors, with 195 having been at MHS for four or more years, 55 for three years, 57 for two years and 18 for one year or less. Implicit in these facts is that 40% of the 2001 graduating class transferred in from somewhere else. In addition, in the 1999-2000 school year over 550 students entered or left MHS. This figure has steadily risen since the 1996-1997 figure of 438 students (246 entries and 192 transfers or withdrawals). In the month of January 2000 alone, 40 new students entered MHS.

Administrators report that there were two student expulsions in the 1998-1999 school year and one early in the 1999-2000 school year. Out of school suspensions numbered 311 in 1998-1999 and

335 in the 1999-2000. Approximately 7% of students were retained in grade during each of these years. The percentage of seniors who graduated improved from 92% in 1999 to 97.5% in 2000. MHS' annual dropout rate for the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years was 5.6%, which is higher than the state average of 3.4%. The daily student attendance rate average for the same two years is 91.6%, which is lower than the state average of 93.9%.

There is one computer for every 6.6 students, which is close to the state average of 6.3. Aside from the aforementioned library loft center and the language lab, banks of classroom computers are confined to the math and business departments.

The average daily teachers' attendance rate for the years 1999-2000 is 96%. Average class size (not inclusive of the TBE or ESL classes, which average 11 students per class) is approximately 21.1 students. There are 996 hours of instructional time per year or 5.53 hours per day. Seventy-four percent of MHS' faculty has an undergraduate degree in their teaching area, 10% has an undergraduate minor in the area, 14% has a master's degree with a concentration in that area, and 2% have none of the above.

At present, graduation from Malden High School requires a minimum of 22 credits, at least four of which must be earned during the senior year. Students are required to pass four units of English, three units of math, one of which must be algebra, three units of science, one of which must be biology, three units of social science, including United States History, two units of physical education, and any combination of two courses from business technology, technology education, or fine arts. As is the case in all Massachusetts' public high schools, the MCAS requirements must also be met.

Of the 325 graduating seniors in the Class of 2001, 53% attended four-year colleges, 27% attended two-year colleges, 3% entered the military, and the remaining 17% entered the work force.

Numerous awards and scholarships are available at Malden High School, most of them awarded to graduating seniors who fit certain academic, athletic, or other criteria. The Class of 2001 received over 200 awards and scholarships from alumni and alumnae, civic groups and organizations, and other numerous, varied contributors. These awards ranged from full scholarships to books and citations. Also, for all students in the 2000-2001 school year, "Student of the Month" was awarded for eight program areas.

Student life at the end of daily classes is rich and varied for MHS students. Many students work out of necessity, but many still participate in varied curricular and co-curricular activities, such as Drama Society, Greenroom, Cheerleading, Band, Chorus, Reading Seminar, Media Studies, Journalism, Key Club, National Honor Society, Literary Society, Fine Arts Club, Outdoors Club, Math Team, and Latino, Asian, Vietnamese and Haitian Clubs. Also, over 200 students from all classes participate in the annual Crafts Fair and Junior Varieties which are major fundraisers. Each class has officers who, along with their class advisor, coordinate fundraisers and activities. Over 700 students participate in the MHS' athletic program, which has 35 teams in fall, winter, and spring sports.

In addition to the traditional course offerings available for MHS students, many other educational opportunities are close-by for them and the community at large. MHS juniors or

seniors with a GPA of 3.00 or higher are eligible to participate in a dual-enrollment program at public supported colleges or universities whereby the student receives both high school and college credit. Other educational opportunities in Malden for residents and students are Fisher, Western New England, and Cambridge Colleges, all with satellite programs in Malden. Salem State has a satellite campus in neighboring Melrose. In addition, New England Hair Academy, H&R Block Business School, The Academy of Learning, Learning Institute of Beauty Sciences, Xintr Computer Training School, Melrose Beauty Academy, and Malden High Evening School, all located in Malden, offer courses to the community.

The College Board summary SAT report of Malden college bound seniors of 2001 provided the following information. Two hundred and thirty three (233) students, about 71%, took the SAT once or more during their senior year. Although the average scores, 440 verbal and 475 math, were below the national average of 506 verbal and 514 math and the state means of 511 verbal and 515 math, the scores demonstrate a marked improvement compared to the 1995 mean scores of 417 verbal and 432 math. As to the PSAT/NMSQT summary report of college bound juniors for 2001-2002, 135 juniors took the test. The mean scores were 45.3 verbal and 47.8 math. For the past three years, the mean scores have been within the same range with only minor fluctuations.

As regards to the 2001 Advanced Placement Exam Program, twenty seniors participated in the program. Tests were taken in Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Computer Science A, French, Spanish, English Language and Composition, English Literature, and Physics. Ten students from the class of 2002 took the United States History examination.

Two hundred and ninety sophomores were tested during the spring 2001 MCAS administration. The Massachusetts Department of Education reported the following information: in ELA (English), 9% scored in the advanced category, 33% proficient, 36% needs improvement, and 22% failing. In mathematics, 15% scored advanced, 24% proficient, 32% needs improvement and 30% failing.

Since 1998, MHS students have participated in the School-to-Career Internship Program and Job Shadow Day. Forty-seven Malden businesses have participated as partners with MHS. In the 2001-2002 school year, MHS has joined a teacher intern partnership with Tufts University, which the rest of the school system has enjoyed since 1998.

The school council at Malden High School, with the approval of the Malden School Committee, devised a school improvement plan for the 2000-2001 academic year. As a result of the recommendations suggested in this plan, an adjustment was made in the master calendar to allow staff to participate in self-study committees. The plan also called for a review of graduation requirements for all classes beginning with the Class of 2005, the coordination of professional development goals with those of the district, a review of staffing needs for the purpose of equalizing the student loads of teachers, and a review of the procedures and policies concerning the placement of students. The council additionally recommended an investigation into the feasibility of a summer enrichment program as well as the development of a facilities improvement program.

Malden High School is in the midst of a restructuring plan that reflects best practices in urban public secondary schools. This plan includes reorganizing the school into a house system, implementing an advisory program, developing 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade academies, and extending the K-8 magnet focus themes into a K-12 comprehensive career pathway program. Federal funds provided

by a U.S. Department of Education Small Learning Communities Grant assisted the school in designing and implementing the current New Educational Design for Learning at Malden (NEDLAM) Plan that is guided by the recommendations set forth in the *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution*. This report from the National Association of Secondary School Principals was written as a guideline for making high schools more effective.

There are many significant issues and challenges facing MHS that are results of the demography of both the city and the school. A difficult-to-replace veteran faculty nearing retirement, many low socioeconomic and single parent families, many Department of Social Services and Department of Youth Services-involved students (including many students from foster homes), a large, highly mobile immigrant population with many school-aged and non-English speaking children, and a sizeable special education population with many outside placements are all factors that impact on the budget and stability of MHS.

Transience, or the coming or going of students in large numbers, greatly undermines the stability at MHS. The stability of a school environment is a critical element in both the holding power of a school on "at-risk" students and the overall educational experience for all students. Dealing with our transience and its resulting instability is a major challenge facing MHS.

"Competition" for financial resources is another major issue confronting MHS, which is only exacerbated by our demography. SPED and ESL/TBE students comprise approximately 25% of MHS' student population and account for over 40% of the budget. Since these programs are mandated, a major challenge facing us is how to accommodate our regular education budget with dwindling financial resources.

**MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL  
MISSION STATEMENT and LEARNING EXPECTATIONS**

WE, the Malden High School Community, promote academic excellence, personal growth, and civic responsibility in a safe, respectful environment.

WE value and celebrate the creative strength and unique potential of our diverse school population.

WE promote learning as a cooperative process that encourages the active involvement of the students, the school staff, the home, and the community.

WE provide opportunities for all students to develop the skills necessary to become active lifelong learners and productive world citizens.

## **MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL GOALS FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

### **Academic Expectations**

#### **Malden High School students will:**

- listen, read, and process information effectively
- communicate effectively as writers and speakers
- demonstrate intellectual curiosity through asking questions and sharing opinions
- achieve competency in problem-solving and reasoning
- demonstrate an understanding of the democratic process and its function in school, local, national, and international issues
- utilize available resources and technology to gather, apply, and communicate information effectively
- demonstrate personal responsibility for learning independently and collaboratively
- explore, develop, and express their own creativity
- apply academic knowledge and skills outside the classroom

### **Civic and Social Expectations**

#### **Malden High School students will:**

- understand the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy
- demonstrate an understanding of the richness of the American culture, and the values and achievements of other cultures
- demonstrate respect for all people and cultures
- demonstrate respect for the school community by adhering to its rules and regulations
- maintain responsibility for personal behavior
- solve personal and social problems in an appropriate manner
- create a social climate for open and meaningful discussion

**COMMISSION ON  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING  
STANDARDS**

---

**MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS  
FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

---

**CURRICULUM**

---

**INSTRUCTION**

---

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

---

---

## **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 school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning and the purpose of the school and be consistent with the district's mission statement.
2. The school shall have established expectations for student learning that:
  - reflect the school's mission statement;
  - identify high expectations for all students in academic, civic, and social areas;
  - specifically state what all students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from the school taking into account the skills, competencies, concepts, and understandings identified by district, state, and national standards and by professional organizations.
3. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the faculty, the school board, and any other schoolwide governing organization.
4. The school shall utilize a variety of data to regularly review the mission statement and expectations for student learning to assure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state standards.
5. There shall be a separate document developed by the faculty that defines the school's academic expectations for student learning in specific, measurable ways, describes specific levels of performance, and indicates which level is the indicator of successful accomplishment.
6. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Malden High School's mission statement articulates the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about the purpose of the school and student learning. The philosophical underpinnings are based on the desire for meaningful student engagement, personal growth, civic responsibility, and academic excellence. In several ways, it aligns with the district's overall vision for creating an environment where decency and respect guide student and teacher decisions and learning activities. Included in the school's mission are high academic, civic, and social expectations for all students, stating what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate. The 16 expectations for learning reflect the school's mission statement and embrace

competencies, skills, concepts, and essential learnings identified by district, state, and national standards. (self-study, panel presentation, teachers, school leadership team)

The school's mission and expectations for student learning document was the culmination of focused efforts and numerous drafts. Brainstorming sessions in various departments throughout the building as well as the careful facilitation of the Malden Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Committee resulted in the collaborative and comprehensive document. In addition to the superintendent and school committee endorsing the school's efforts, parents and other community representatives were given the opportunity to share their input and thoughts regarding the school's mission. Students were also given the opportunity in their classes and advisories to comment on the draft of the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. After the draft was approved, a student survey was administered which indicated that only 29% of the students believed that the student expectations for learning in the document were rigorous. (self-study, students, teachers)

Because the mission statement and expectations for learning have been recently finalized, a formal review and revision process is not in place. The last time that a review of the school's mission statement occurred was in 1992 during the school's last decennial accreditation visit. Currently, the faculty and students have begun a process to discuss the mission statement and its expectations in classes and advisory periods. Although the school is to be commended for its efforts to create a living and relevant document, it is not yet clear how the school will proceed with its review process and what date and what procedures will be used to determine the effectiveness of the mission statement and student mastery of the expectations for learning. The school alludes to the employment of questionnaires, forums, and standardized testing data to assess its future progress but does not discuss how data are currently used to complement its priorities for learning. This information is crucial in informing the school of its next steps in fulfilling its mission. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team)

The school has thoughtfully developed expectations for student learning that it believes all students should know and be able to demonstrate in high school and beyond. What is not present, however, are definitions for each academic expectation that are clearly linked to curricular areas. The school has developed and submitted a general rubric to assess student achievement for these expectations but does not articulate which curricular areas are responsible for each academic expectation. This general and first generation rubric remains detached from the work of specific curricular areas that should ultimately identify the acceptable levels of performance that each student should achieve in order to fulfill the school's mission and academic expectations. As a result of this disconnection and omission, the faculty cannot intelligently gauge and encourage student adherence to each academic expectation in all coursework, nor can it effectively support the mission for promoting student academic excellence and personal growth. (self-study, teachers, school leadership)

Although the mission statement and expectations for student learning describe the essence of what the school desires for its students, it is not evident how this document currently guides the school's procedures, policies, and decisions. Procedures have already been implemented through the principal's vision and have contributed to the personalization of learning through such structures as "houses." Additionally, policies and decisions that have included collaborative groups such as the

Malden High School Improvement Council, Schedule Committee, and Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Committee have contributed to the development of an equitable and safe learning environment. These decision-making groups were in place prior to the new mission statement and expectations for learning. The school has done an admirable job in posting the mission statement and expectations throughout the building and in classrooms. Students are aware of its existence and its potential to transform their learning. Consistent opportunities to reinforce each academic expectation, however, have not been outlined in students' daily learning experiences. Through advisories and class discussions, the school provides a modicum of relevant activities that assist students in recognizing their part in transforming the overall school community. The school concurrently alludes to this through its adherence and implementation of the recommendations in *Breaking Ranks: Changing An American Institution*. Nevertheless, careful attention must be given to framing daily experiences for students and teachers to contribute to the reform that has begun as a result of the principal's vision but must continue more forcefully and collaboratively via the school's mission. (self-study, teachers, students, the leadership team)

### **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The inclusion of parents, students, and community representatives in the development of the mission statement
2. Faculty, student, and community awareness of the mission statement and its prominent display
3. The efforts of the principal to communicate the mission statement and expectations for student learning to the parents of incoming 8<sup>th</sup> graders
4. The initial activities used to encourage personal interpretation of the mission statement and expectations for student learning in the daily lives of students
5. The general alignment of the mission statement and expectations for student learning to the superintendent's vision and the recently developed district mission highlighting decency and respect
6. The faculty's diligence in framing the mission statement and expectations while managing several restructuring initiatives

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7. Ensure that each curricular area identifies each academic expectation for which it is responsible and determines the acceptable level of performance that students must achieve
8. Establish an annual review and revision process for the mission statement and expectations for student learning
9. Identify and gather a variety of data to assist in the review and revision process for the mission statement and expectations for student learning
10. Ensure that each curricular area provides clear and rigorous learning to promote academic excellence through the school's expectations for learning
11. Institute a strategy to involve students, parents, and community members in the review and revision process of the mission statement and expectations for learning

12. Use the review and revision process of the mission statement and expectations for learning to inform the school's professional development offerings
13. Design the school day in a manner that supports the mission statement and expectations for student learning and affords students the opportunity to practice and master each expectation
14. Continue to refine the rubrics to measure each of the academic expectations for student learning
15. Clearly define each academic expectation for student learning

---

## CURRICULUM

---

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other educational experiences as described in the program of studies, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links what the school believes and expects students to learn to its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon staff commitment to and involvement in a dynamic process of review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on the school's expectations for student learning.

16. From the document that defines the school's academic expectations, each curriculum area shall identify those expectations for student learning for which it is responsible and shall have clearly articulated learning standards in support of such expectations.

Written curriculum documents shall be aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and shall guide content, instruction, and assessment.

The curriculum plan shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of the school's academic expectations for student learning.

The content of the curriculum shall be intellectually rigorous and provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.

The curriculum shall be appropriately integrated and shall emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.

The school shall provide opportunities to extend student learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.

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 to ensure the expectations for student learning are being addressed.

Instructional materials, technology, equipment and supplies, and staffing shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.

There shall be ongoing review and evaluation of the curriculum that takes into account the assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations for student learning.

The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the review and evaluation of curriculum.

The professional staff shall be actively involved in the development and revision of the curriculum.

Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

## CONCLUSIONS

Malden High School's mission statement defines measurable academic expectations for students that focus on teaching and learning. Three of the school's department curriculum guides-foreign language, social sciences, and English-state specific academic expectations that are derived from the mission statement and for which those departments are responsible. Most curriculum guides do not have descriptions of specific learning experiences and opportunities designed to give students practice with the mission's expectations. In only one department's curriculum guide is there a set of rubrics to measure student achievement of those expectations. When all departments have identified the academic expectations for which they are responsible, the level of proficiency indicating successful student achievement of these expectations must be stated in all department curriculum guides. When this has been accomplished, each department should develop and implement clearly articulated, measurable learning standards and course objectives that support the mission's expectations for student learning. Curriculum documents should be used to guide instruction, design assessment, and establish benchmarks for student achievement. Without fully developed, implemented curriculum guides that define academic expectations in specific measurable ways, there is no basis for effective instructional decision-making, or for short- and long-term planning for the improvement of student performance. Continual and meaningful connections among the mission, expectations, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are essential for providing quality education for all students. (self-study, curriculum guides, teachers, administrators)

Although many students are provided opportunities for authentic application of skills and knowledge, including, for example, writing for audiences beyond the classroom, internships, and making presentations to the public, there are significant disparities in the rigor, challenge, and level of expectations among advanced placement, honors, college preparatory, and standard courses. The complexity of homework and class assignments depends on the level of a particular course and on the teacher. In addition, while there are expectations for student performance such as listening, reading, and processing information effectively that are similar for all students, when it comes to requirements for higher level thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, there are significantly more of these requirements in honors classes than in college preparatory and standard classes. (self-study, classroom observations, students.)

There is little evidence of the integration of high school curricula. Where integration does occur, it depends on the teacher and the topic. In addition, while there are some examples of successful integration, there are no formal opportunities for interdisciplinary projects or other similar undertakings. Although one intention of the recent school restructuring was to provide time for teachers in different departments to collaborate for the purpose of enriching teaching and student learning, most of this time is taken up in the consideration of administrative and student behavior issues. In some departments, curricular content is organized around essential questions that promote depth of student understanding; in most departments, the content is organized according to a list of topics to be covered, thus leading to breadth rather than depth of coverage. Finally, there are few, if any, departmental assessments that provide information as to whether students concluding one course in a curricular sequence have acquired the skills and knowledge necessary for them to perform well in the next course in that sequence. Although the recent reorganization of departments

under K-12 curriculum directors and the establishment of a district curriculum leadership team are intended to address this issue, coordination and articulation among all academic areas at the high school and between the high school and its sending K-8 elementary schools is inadequate. Improved curricular coordination between the high school and its five sending schools needs to be strengthened for the following reasons: a) a system of assessments determining whether students have met core standards would enable students to be placed in courses and levels of courses according to their skills; b) students would be able to make more informed course choices; c) the overall transition from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the high school would be improved, thereby improving students' chances for success. More systemic coordination would improve academic performance and would result in more effective teaching and higher levels of achievement for Malden High School students. (self-study, classroom observations, conversations with teachers and administrators)

Malden High School provides formal opportunities to extend student learning beyond normal course offerings and the school campus through an extensive menu of sports teams, academic field trips, and extracurricular activities that are available to all students. Students may also participate in school-to-career and child-care internships, while the Youth Technological Entrepreneurship Program (YTE) provides students with opportunities for community service. Finally, students may enroll in college courses at Bunker Hill Community College. (self-study, teachers, students.)

Instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies are not sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum in most disciplines. Many learning areas report shortages of teacher resource materials and textbooks for students. In many cases, students are using outdated textbooks. The self-study cites lack of "...instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies... as the biggest obstacle to implementing the curriculum." With the exception of some electives, class sizes are generally small. However, adequate time for science labs is not incorporated into the schedule. (self-study, teachers, classroom observations)

No ongoing plan for a systematic review and evaluation of the curriculum based on assessments and standards has been implemented. While some curricula have been revised recently, there is no evidence that the school uses data to inform its decisions about these revisions. The fine arts curriculum has not been revised for more than a decade. The district's recent reorganization of department heads to K-12 directors who now are part of the curriculum leadership team was done with the intention of coordinating faculty efforts to ensure that curriculum is reviewed and upgraded systematically. However, release time dedicated specifically to the review, evaluation, and articulation of curriculum has not been made available to teachers. Moreover, the funds to support these efforts, while increased in recent years, are inadequate. Currently, many teachers are not involved in the development and revision of curricula, and there is no formal process to ensure that all teachers are involved in curriculum development and revision. Finally, curriculum guides have not been distributed to some teachers. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators, school leadership team)

The school has provided activities for teachers as part of the professional development program. In addition, the administration encourages teachers to take advantage of professional development activities outside of school. However, there is no comprehensive, focused professional

development plan to support curriculum development and implementation. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators, building administrators)

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The English, social studies, and foreign language departments for revising curriculum guides to include the mission's academic expectations for which they are responsible
2. The foreign language department for developing a set of rubrics to measure student achievement of its adopted expectations
3. The efforts made by individual teachers and groups of teachers to collaborate for the purpose of enriching teaching and learning through the integration of curriculum
4. The opportunities available for students to extend their learning beyond normal course offerings
5. The opportunities for students to engage in authentic application of skills and knowledge
6. The dedication, enthusiasm, and perseverance of teachers in the face of serious shortages of instructional materials and equipment

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

17. Ensure that every curriculum guide states the mission's academic expectations for which it is responsible  
Ensure that every curriculum guide contains descriptions of specific learning experiences and course objectives designed to give students practice with the mission's academic expectations  
Ensure that every curriculum guide contains rubrics to measure the extent to which students achieve the mission's academic expectations  
Establish acceptable levels of attainment of the mission statement's expectations  
Develop and implement a plan to revise all curricula so that they provide more rigorous and more challenging activities and assignments that engage all students in higher order thinking and problem solving using a common curriculum template
18. Ensure that all curricular areas implement a plan for the systematic review and evaluation of the curriculum based on standards for and assessments of student learning
19. Develop and implement a plan to use departmental assessments that provides data regarding student achievement of essential academic expectations
20. Ensure curricular articulation and coordination between the high school and the sending K-8 grammar schools
21. Ensure the effective transition of students from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade
22. Provide adequate time for science labs
23. Provide instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies that are sufficient for the implementation of the curriculum
24. Develop and implement a revised fine arts curriculum in a timely manner given its outdated status
25. Provide a structure, adequate funds, and release time specifically for the review, evaluation, and revision of curriculum in which teachers are substantively involved
26. Ensure that curriculum guides are appropriately distributed to teachers
27. Implement a professional development plan that offers ongoing, comprehensive professional development activities that support the development, revision, and implementation of curricula

---

## INSTRUCTION

---

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning and is the link between curriculum, learning expectations, and 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. Consequently, teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional practices and participate in professional dialogue with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

28. Instructional strategies and practices shall be consistent with the school's stated mission and expectations for student learning.

Instructional strategies shall include practices that personalize instruction, make connections across disciplines, engage students as active self-directed learners, involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding, and provide opportunities to demonstrate the application of knowledge or learning.

Teachers shall provide formal and informal opportunities for students to assess their own learning.

Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources such as other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.

Teachers shall be knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches and reflective about their own practice.

Discussion of instructional strategies, practices, and student work shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.

Adequate time and financial resources shall be committed to ensuring the continuous improvement of instruction.

Technology shall be utilized to support instruction and to improve student learning.

The school's professional development programs shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional practices and be guided by identified instructional needs.

Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

Instructional practices and strategies relying predominately on lecture and worksheets are inconsistent with the school's stated mission. A weak link exists among the mission and expectations for student learning, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. There is little evidence of the use of personalized instruction or interdisciplinary or self-directed learning. In many cases, evidence indicates that students in honors and college preparatory classes are involved in higher-order thinking skills and activities to promote depth of understanding and have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or learning. In remedial and general level classes, however, there is a heavy reliance on lecture and recitation. (classroom observation, self-study, teachers, students)

Teachers show positive rapport in their personal and professional interactions with students. Instructional approaches are driven more by coverage of the curriculum than by targeting them to the unique character of students. Contact with parents is on an "as necessary" basis and usually centers around student management rather than student learning. Cross-discipline connections are coincidental rather than actively planned. Some teachers within departments make an effort to team-teach topics. A strong emphasis remains on teacher-directed learning, and teachers do not routinely ask students to reflect on their work through the use of portfolios. As a result, students are seldom engaged as self-directed learners. Some teachers act as coaches who facilitate student learning by asking students to do independent research and work in cooperative groups. Teachers know their subjects well enough to confidently focus student learning on key themes, concepts, and essential questions. (classroom observations, students, teachers)

Few formal and informal opportunities are offered to students to assess their own learning. Teachers do not routinely and regularly call upon students to self-reflect or critique their work or that of their peers. Cooperative learning, peer writing, and portfolio assessment approaches are quite limited in use. A teacher-student survey indicates a wide gap in the perception of both teachers and students that self-evaluation is on-going. A majority of the faculty indicates that ample time is given for individual self-assessment while a majority of students does not see opportunities to assess their own learning. (student shadowing, self-study, classroom visitations)

Feedback about the effectiveness or quality of teaching from a variety of sources such as other teachers, students, and supervisors is rarely used as a means of improving instructional practices. An eleven member "Critical Friends" group was begun but is not meeting currently. Because of the current self-study, release time has not been used for the purpose of allowing teachers to work in support groups or critique each other's classes in instructional practice. Additionally, for the most part, parents do not have the opportunity to provide feedback to faculty members on their instructional technique. (faculty members, student, parents, self-study, student shadowing)

More teachers need to explore current research on effective instructional approaches. Moreover, in order to implement this research as pedagogy in the classrooms, teachers need to be more reflective of their own practices and student work within the professional culture of the school. Administrative leadership needs to foster professional dialogue about effective instruction and share with teachers current literature, including research related to "best practices." Availability of professional literature is limited. On the other hand, teachers are knowledgeable and well-informed within their subject fields. (teachers, administration, self-study)

Discussion of professional strategies, practices, and student work is not a significant part of the professional culture of the school. There is some reflective dialogue, some examining of student work, but little teacher collaboration as the basis of instructional improvement. Teachers across different subject areas do not generally have the opportunity to examine student writing or other assessments to determine if the students are meeting the learning expectations that have been established. There is no additional time during the school day or during other times for which teachers are compensated to support them in their efforts to improve instruction. Individual teachers show evidence of some self-reflection in their own work, but teacher portfolios are not maintained or required. (building administration, teachers, self-study)

Adequate time and financial resources are not committed to ensuring the continuous improvement of instruction. Minimal funding is available to provide summer training, stipends, release time, and consultant support. Administrative leadership needs to foster professional dialogue about effective instruction and pursue the financial resources adequate to maintain a program of staff development. In particular, teachers need classroom follow-up to professional development in order to ensure that best practices are being effectively implemented. (self-study, teachers, administration)

Technology is inadequate, too. Most classrooms do not have a computer available for teacher use, and there is no evidence that teachers have been adequately trained in the use and application of technology as an instructional strategy in their particular field. Students are encouraged to use the technology available to them, but much of the available technology is either outdated or inaccessible to most students during their daily schedule. To increase the effective integration of technology into the curriculum and to enhance teaching, teachers need to be adequately trained. (self-study, classroom observation, teachers)

Although the school provides professional development opportunities for staff members, there is a need for a planned and focused school-wide professional development program to help teachers improve their instructional practices so that more students become academically successful. Instruction in many areas has not changed from very formal and traditional strategies. As a result, students have had limited opportunities to learn from varied instructional approaches based on different learning styles. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team)

The teacher supervision and evaluation process is not based upon research into effective approaches for improving and affecting change in teaching practices to enhance student achievement. The process is perfunctory. Also, data is not gathered which demonstrates instructional improvement resulting from this process. In effect, the supervision/evaluation process is inadequate. (administration, central office staff, self-study)

Some teachers with professional status go unevaluated within the timelines prescribed by the district and state because of insufficient administrative personnel. Four district-wide subject area coordinator positions have been created to provide K-12 continuity of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and to help principals formally evaluate teachers. Although this is a step in the right direction, district-wide subject area coordinators need to be established for learning areas that do not have them so that all teachers are properly evaluated. (self-study, teachers, leadership team)

## COMMENDATIONS

29. The addition of four district-wide K-12 subject area coordinators
30. The teachers' positive rapport with their students
31. The collaborative efforts of some teachers to reflect upon their instructional practices
32. The acquisition of instructional materials by some staff members from alternative sources

## RECOMMENDATIONS

33. Ensure that all teachers use varied instructional methods and strategies
34. Ensure that instructional strategies include practices that personalize instruction, make connections across disciplines, engage students as self-directed learners, and involve all students in higher-order thinking to promote depth of understanding
  - Ensure that teachers make clear to students that assessment is part of the learning process, not simply the end of the activity/unit evaluation
  - Ensure that teachers routinely have students critique their work and that of their peers
  - Develop and implement a research-based supervision/evaluation program to support teacher improvement
  - Reconvene the "Critical Friends" support group as a collaborative vehicle
  - Solicit feedback from parents and students as an important source of data for improving instruction
  - Teachers need to seek out current research on effective instructional approaches and be reflective about their own practices
  - Provide professional materials for the purpose of enhancing instruction, including research related to "best practices"
  - Provide time for reflective dialogue, collaboration, and mutual examination of student work
  - Commit dependable financial resources to ensure the continuous improvement of instruction
  - Provide time for teachers to meet regularly with one another in collaborative work groups
  - Expand the use of technology in the classroom to support instruction and improve student learning
  - Provide adequate and appropriate professional development training in the use and application of technology as an instruction strategy
  - Expand the availability of technology, particularly computers, to students
  - Develop and implement a professional development plan to improve instructional practice
  - Provide classroom follow-up to ensure that knowledge of best practices acquired through professional development is implemented
  - Ensure that the teachers are evaluated within the time lines prescribed by the state and district
  - Establish district-wide subject area coordinators for the learning areas that do not have them

---

## 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 instruction to better respond to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates the growth and competence of students to parents, school officials, and the public. The results of student learning must be continually discussed and used to develop short-term and long-term strategies for improving curriculum and instruction.

35. Teachers shall base their classroom assessment procedures on clearly stated expectations for student learning.
36. Specific learning criteria based on specific expectations for student learning shall be the basis for grading and reporting.
37. Teachers shall use a variety and range of classroom assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
38. Teachers shall use the results of classroom assessment of student learning to evaluate and revise the curriculum.
39. Teachers shall use the results of classroom assessment of student learning to improve their instructional practices.
40. Teachers shall meet to discuss and share student work and the results of classroom assessment for the purpose of revising the curriculum and instructional strategies.
41. Teachers shall communicate to students and their families how student work and progress are being assessed.
42. The school's professional development programs shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop a broad range of assessment strategies for classroom use.
43. The administration and faculty shall use agreed upon levels of performance, indicators of successful accomplishment, and other data to assess the progress of students in achieving the school's stated academic expectations for student learning and regularly report the findings to the public.

The administration and faculty shall use assessment data to determine student success in meeting the school's stated civic and social expectations and regularly report the findings to the public.

## CONCLUSIONS

Malden High School has developed a mission statement and academic expectations that define what students should know and be able to do upon graduation. Many teachers' classroom assessments are clearly based on strands and learning standards derived from the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. However, each department should develop learning standards, course objectives, and assessments that align directly with the school's academic expectations. (self-study, curriculum guides, students)

While some teachers use specific criteria such as rubrics or assessment checklists, it is not evident that such criteria are the basis of grading and reporting across all learning areas. The faculty has developed a general, school-wide rubric to assess each of the academic expectations for student learning. In effect, that is not enough. Once a separate document has been developed by the faculty that defines the schools' academic expectations in measurable ways, a set of rubrics describing successful levels of performance then must be developed. When this has been accomplished, each curriculum area will need to identify those expectations for which it is responsible. As the English, social studies, and foreign language departments have done, as other curriculum areas need to have clearly articulated and measurable learning standards and course objectives that support the mission and expectations. The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks should be imbedded in these course objectives. The revised curriculum documents should be used to guide instruction, design assessment and establish benchmarks. (classroom observation, students, teachers)

Some teachers are using varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies. Strategies include project-based and authentic assessments such as portfolios, musical performances, student publications and multi-media productions. These varied assessments allow students to demonstrate understanding in a number of ways. However, training in a wide-array of assessment strategies is needed so that more teachers are effectively implementing them (student work, classroom observations, school board, teachers)

Many teachers employ classroom assessments to make minor curricular adjustments within the context of their own classroom; however, there is little evidence that assessments are employed to make curriculum improvements on the departmental level. It is critical that teachers use the results of classroom assessments and standardized tests to adjust departmental curriculum and instruction in order to ensure that the school achieves its mission and academic expectations for all students (self-study, teachers, classroom observation)

There is ample evidence that individual teachers use the results of classroom assessment to check for understanding and alter instruction as a result of these assessment results. However, there is little indication that departments or the faculty as a larger body employ the results of assessment to make systemic improvements in instruction. Again, in order to ensure that all students achieve the school's mission and expectations, teachers need to use the results of various types of assessments. (self-study, teachers, students)

Teachers do not meet formally to discuss and share student work and the results of classroom assessment in order to revise curriculum and instruction. Teachers recognize the importance of discussion of this nature and hope to use their early release time to collaborate on these issues.

Without this collaboration, the school will not be able to achieve the kind of systemic coordination of practice that will ensure that the school achieves its mission and academic expectations (teachers, school leadership team, self-study)

Teachers at Malden High School employ many ways to inform students and parents about how student work is assessed. These include course syllabi, rubrics, tests, homework, projects, report cards, supplementary reports, meetings, and phone calls. Some teachers distribute to students and parents a document that specifies the learning objectives and grading procedures of specific courses. In addition, students receive a student parent guide in which the marking system is explained. Communication with parents who do not speak English remains problematic in that these parents need to be brought into the school community. Central office personnel recognize the need to improve communication with this segment of the Malden population. (self-study, central office administrators, students, teachers, guidance counselors, school handbooks)

While there are professional development opportunities in the area of assessment at the district level, not many teachers have chosen to participate. Currently, there is no formal professional development plan at the school for faculty members to train them in assessment strategies. Such a plan is necessary to ensure that teachers develop effective assessment techniques. (central office administrators, self-study assessment committee, self-study)

Malden High School attends to assessment indicators such as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores, Socrates Data System's report, Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) scores, the college acceptance list, and Honor Society membership. Members of the Malden High School community agree that these are indicators of successful accomplishments, but there is little evidence that the guidance department, administration, and faculty have collaborated to agree upon more content specific levels of performance to assess the students' achievement of the school's learning expectations. Currently, Malden High School offers a course entitled, "MCAS Enrichment" which is strongly recommended for any 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade student who does not perform at a satisfactory level on the MCAS testing as an 8<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grader. The curriculum emphasizes English, language arts, and mathematics skills. To improve curriculum and instruction and to maintain critical parental trust and support, results of student learning must be discussed and communicated to the public. (central office administrators, teachers, self-study, program of studies)

Malden High School celebrates the achievement of its students and graduates in the areas of its civic and social expectations through such organizations as the National Honor Society, Key Club, and through recognition of community service performed by students. No formal assessment, however, of these kinds of activities exist and so their effectiveness remains unquantified. Consequently, there is no basis for improvement. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators, school leadership team)

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The innovative and varied assessment strategies used by some teachers, especially in social studies, mathematics, science, business education, and physical education
2. The MCAS-type strategies and assessments used by a few science and mathematics teachers in their daily instruction

3. The establishment of an early release day to promote collaboration within and across departments

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Develop a separate document that defines the school's academic expectations in measurable ways
2. Develop a set of rubrics describing specific levels of performance for all of the academic expectations
3. Provide opportunities for every department to develop clear, consistent, rigorous learning standards, course objectives, and assessment criteria based upon the mission and academic expectations for student learning, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the MCAS, and national assessments
4. Implement a system of departmental assessments to ensure that all students demonstrate the knowledge and skills listed in the school's mission and academic expectations
5. Ensure that all departments use classroom assessments and the results of standardized tests to make improvements in curriculum and instruction
6. Provide teachers common planning time to share student work and the results of classroom assessments and standardized tests in order to improve instructional strategies, curricula, and student achievement
7. Ensure that communication with parents and community members regarding academic expectations and achievements takes place in languages parents comprehend
8. Develop and implement a comprehensive, focused professional development plan to ensure that teachers design and implement a variety of assessment strategies, analyze student work to inform their instruction, and make effective use of both formative and summative assessment practices
9. Provide formal opportunities for the administration and faculty to analyze a broad range of data in order to determine whether all students are meeting the school's mission and academic expectations
10. Provide vehicles and opportunities for the guidance department, administration, and staff to monitor the achievement of students who are not meeting the school's established academic expectations for student learning
11. Provide remedial services for those students who do not meet established academic expectations
12. Implement an ongoing evaluation of academic expectations to develop short- and long-term strategies for improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment
13. Develop and implement a strategic plan for improving student performance collaboratively between faculty and administration and ensure that it uses a broad range of data to set measurable goals for student learning
14. Assess achievement of the school's stated civic and social expectations

**COMMISSION ON  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**SUPPORT STANDARDS**

---

**LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

---

**SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

---

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

---

---

## LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

---

The manner in which a school provides leadership, organizes itself, makes decisions, and treats its members profoundly affects teaching and learning. Faculty and administration must be clear and reflective about and responsible for the decisions and practices they have implemented in organizing and structuring their programs and in creating a culture that supports learning for all students.

1. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
2. Teachers shall provide leadership essential to the success of school improvement.
3. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and authority to guide the school in its mission and in meeting the school's stated expectations for student learning.
4. The organization and structure of the educational program 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, and be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning as well as current educational research.
6. The schedule shall support the school's mission and expectations for student learning and should be designed to provide the most effective implementation of curriculum and instruction.
7. School leaders shall accord meaningful roles in the decision-making process to students, parents, and members of the staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables him/her to provide sufficient attention to the needs of individual students.
9. The school shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate within and across departments.
10. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
11. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
12. The climate of the school shall be positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
13. The professional culture of the school shall be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about student learning and well-being in both formal and informal settings.

## CONCLUSIONS

In order for Malden High School to be successful in its restructuring attempt, it will be necessary for the principal, as the educational leader of the school, to bring about a shared, common vision and direction for the school. The principal is the instructional leader who must maintain the focus on student learning. By stressing continual and meaningful connections between and among the mission and expectations for student learning, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the principal needs to ensure the attainment of quality results for all students. The principal should engage faculty members, parents, and students in a participatory decision-making model utilizing the ad hoc faculty council, the school council, and the student council in order to implement a well-articulated and well-communicated vision. (self-study, teachers, parents)

Teachers are an integral part of the learning community as their leadership is essential to the success of school improvement and, as such, must lead and be active members of committees that are essential to the success of school improvement, all the while realizing that the process works as long as they are adequately represented and maintain a positive attitude. At Malden High School, a group of very vocal, negative faculty members is challenging the principal's efforts to lead effectively. Further, these same individuals negatively impact both the sense of professional collegiality within the faculty and the provision of a reflective school culture. While the superintendent provides the principal with sufficient autonomy and authority to guide the school in its mission and in meeting the school's stated expectations, the same cannot be said of a majority of school committee members. In practice, some school committee members have not nurtured an environment of trust, cooperation, and collegiality among themselves, the central administration, the school administration, the faculty, and the support staff. Micromanagement and interference with administrators have occurred. Consequently, the school committee's directing its focus on policy-making would serve the school and its personnel more effectively. In addition, its own policy manual must be updated, a task that has not been undertaken in over 25 years. (school leadership team, teachers, school board)

The school's organizational chart and job descriptions must be updated to clearly represent all school personnel whose duty it is to support the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The roles of the principal, house principals, and other staff members are not in line with the current restructuring effort. In addition, the recent restructuring of the school into four houses has decreased teacher collaboration in that much of the scheduled common planning time has been used for other purposes. (self-study, school leadership team, central office administrators)

As a result of the new house system, students are allowed to choose their house according to one of four themes: health and human services; technology and engineering; arts, communications, and humanities; and business, marketing, and telecommunications. Since this is the case, the school's attempt to balance the houses so that they are equally diverse presents an insurmountable challenge. The frequent revision of student schedules in an attempt to balance the houses only adds to an already confusing situation. The school administration is studying and assessing the educational merits and feasibility of total by heterogeneous grouping. (self-study, students, parents)

The schedule does not support the school's mission and expectations for student learning. It is not designed to provide the most effective implementation of curriculum and instruction. Many

teachers rightfully express concern about the new schedule that took effect in September 2001. Further, having three different schedules over the last four years and three different bell schedules each week has caused confusion for both staff and students. (school leadership team, self-study materials, students)

A significant number of teachers reports that they feel left out of the decision-making process, resulting in limited opportunities for collaboration, teacher leadership, and teacher empowerment. The creation of the annual school budget is a case in point. The principal must assume the responsibility of submitting a sound building-based budget reflective of the school's identified needs within a shared decision-making process. Although the principal says he is implementing processes for gathering input from teachers like the ad hoc faculty council, it is yet to be an effective vehicle for change. However, when teachers have been afforded the opportunity to participate in decision-making, many have chosen not to do so. Moreover, some teachers need to understand the difference between having input and having decisions go their way. (self-study materials, teachers, school leadership team)

Although the majority of teachers, parents, and students who took the NEASC survey indicated that class sizes do not allow for sufficient attention to be paid to individual student needs, a careful look at actual class sizes does not bear this out. Generally, there will be a range of class sizes with ten or fewer students and others that hover around thirty. (school handbooks, publications and documents, classroom observations, students)

The school must provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate within and across departments. Time must be allotted for meaningful interdepartmental conferencing and collaboration to coordinate curriculum between and among academic areas. Currently, teachers are isolated and must rely on their own initiatives to coordinate interdisciplinary instruction. Some teachers take the initiative to collaborate during common preparation periods, lunch breaks, and after school hours. The house system was designed to afford teachers the time to meet regularly on interdisciplinary curriculum collaboration and to discuss their students' needs. For reasons that include time constraints resulting from parent meetings, student discipline, and difficulty in coordinating teacher and student schedules, not all of the houses have been able to operate as intended. (self-study, teachers, school leadership team)

Several faculty members are actively involved in promoting the learning and well-being of students in addition to performing their assigned duties. As part of the recently introduced "Breaking Ranks", all teachers are required to serve as advisors to a small group of students for 30 minutes per week. (self-study, teachers, students)

Notable student achievements are regularly acknowledged on the public address system. Many departments proudly display samples of exemplary student work in the hallways and in classrooms, although some common areas and display cases remain devoid of such work. Many faculty members attend extracurricular and cocurricular student activities and the students feel that this support validates their efforts. A highly regarded student-of-the-month program that highlighted academic excellence was discontinued at the end of the 2000-01 school year. (self-study, observations, students)

Malden High School provides a safe learning environment for students and faculty alike where the climate of the school is, for the most part, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. That there are no security guards in an urban school of over 1,500 students is impressive when one observes the student behavior that includes very few students found in non-instructional areas while classes are in session. The presence of the group of negative faculty members does, however, impact the morale of some members of the staff. (observations, students, parents)

The professional culture of the school is not characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about student learning. While the school and district report that there are many professional development opportunities available to the staff, there is no evidence that teachers regularly participate in these or incorporate best practices in the classroom. The combined efforts of the staff do not meet the expectations for thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about teaching and learning. True and fair assessment of the restructuring will need to be ongoing with the meaningful input of representatives from all segments of the Malden High School community. Also, the administration, faculty, and support staff must take the time to reflect, discuss, assess, and amend collaboratively all aspects of the school's new structure and programs to ensure that they truly are in line with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators)

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The principal's sincere attempt at restructuring the school
2. The faculty members who are involved in the restructuring effort
3. The teachers who take the initiative to collaborate during common planning time, lunch and breaks, and after school hours
4. The many faculty members who attend co-curricular student activities
5. The administration, faculty, and support staff for maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment
6. The students' respectful behavior

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Ensure the attainment of quality results for all students through a shared, common vision for the school
2. Ensure that the principal engages faculty members, parents, and students in a participatory decision-making model in order to implement a well-articulated and well-communicated vision
3. Ensure that all teachers become an integral part of the learning community
4. Ensure that all strategic plans for the improvement of teaching and learning be widely disseminated, understood, and implemented
5. Institute a mechanism to insure that all teachers comply with the implementation of the learning standards
6. Ensure that the principal has the autonomy and authority to make decisions
7. Take action at the school committee level to establish an environment of trust, cooperation, and collegiality among school committee members, the central administration, the school administration, the faculty, and the support staff

8. Eliminate micromanagement and interference by some school committee members
9. Delineate clearly school committee functions and administrative functions with regard to the daily management of the school
10. Update immediately and disseminate the school committee policy manual
  - Update the school's organizational chart to clearly represent all school personnel
  - Review, clarify, and update job descriptions to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of all high school personnel, incorporating accountability measures
  - Choose between allowing students to select their house and balancing the houses so that they are equally diverse
  - Finalize the heterogeneity study and disseminate the report to all members of the Malden school community
  - Create a schedule that best meets the needs of all school programs after researching it extensively with input from all segments of the Malden School community
  - Adhere to the new schedule once it is adopted
  - Ensure that the faculty is included in meaningful decision-making such as the creation of the annual school budget
  - Provide opportunities in the schedule for teachers to collaborate within and across departments
  - Display samples of exemplary student work in the locations devoid of such work
  - Reinstate the student-of-the-month program
  - Create a forum for all teachers to participate in thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about teaching and learning
  - Identify and model the best practices currently used by some teachers
  - Ensure that the administration, faculty, and support staffs take the time to reflect, discuss, assess, and amend collaboratively all aspects of the school's new structure and programs to make them agree with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning

---

## SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

---

The school's student support services include guidance and health services, special education, personal, career, and social counseling, and access to outside referrals along with library/information services. Student learning is 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 to support the school's mission and expectations.

44. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's stated academic expectations for student learning and to participate in the educational program.  
The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve stated civic and social expectations.  
Each student shall have an adult member of the school community who serves to personalize that student's educational experience.  
The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.  
Student support and library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and involved in its implementation, evaluation, and revision.  
All school resources for learning shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.  
Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
45. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communications with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and about identified student needs.
46. The school shall provide and maintain library/information services program and materials that are fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program and are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
47. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to utilize various school and community information resources and technologies.
48. A wide range of materials, technology, and other library/information resources shall be available to students and faculty in a variety of formats and utilized to improve teaching and learning and be reflective of the school's student population.
49. Library/information services shall include, but not be limited to, sufficient certified professional personnel.
50. 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.
51. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

52. Student records shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.

## CONCLUSIONS

The adequacy of school resources impacts a school's ability to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning. At Malden High School, most students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's stated academic expectations for student learning and to participate in all aspects of the educational program. The addition of a second nurse and two guidance counselors has increased support services in both health and guidance. The student support team (SST) provides teachers with a resource to problem-solve with their peers in looking for solutions to help students with difficulties. Independent studies allow students to investigate a topic and pursue its study under the direction of a teacher outside of the daily class schedule. A well-funded and varied special education (SPED) program enables most students to participate in mainstream classes. An extensive bilingual program serves students in 6 languages, making academic courses and programs available to recent immigrant students. A newly expanded school-to-career program meets the unique needs of many "at-risk" students. The controversial new house system provides smaller learning communities to facilitate students' academic success. (guidance, special education faculty, school handbook, publications and documents, self-study)

Students at Malden High School are actively engaged in a variety of programs that support their achievement of the school's civic and social expectations. The Student Conflict Resolution Experts (SCORE) peer mediation program, Civil Rights Team, and Junior Variety Show benefit the school as well as the larger community. Music programs, athletic events, and theater performances offer free access to older persons. The school-to-career program provides students with opportunities to engage in civic activities. Students demonstrate mutual respect and adherence to the code of conduct as published in the student/parent guide. (guidance, School-to-Career director, self-study)

The newly implemented advisory program was designed to give each student an adult advocate to support every aspect of the student's educational experience, but the program has yet to prove itself. Guidance counselors offer individual counseling while school adjustment counselors offer both individual and group counseling. The academy program places students from grades 9 and 10 into smaller academic teams and provides additional help with study skills for students who need it. (teachers, students, guidance counselors)

Student support services are generally comprehensive and effective. The school-to-career program uses Expan computer software to give students optimal career information. However, the guidance department does not have a formal written curriculum to support the school mission and expectations for student learning, and the department shows a need for more effective leadership. (school leadership team, students, parents, school-to-career director)

There is no curriculum involvement by student support and library/information services personnel. These staff members should be regular contributors at department meetings to share in evaluation, revision, and implementation of the curriculum. (library media specialist, guidance, self-study)

Currently, there is no formal evaluation and revision plan in place to cover all school resources for learning although most of these resources are evaluated in various ways. The guidance department gathers informal evaluative information through feedback from parents, students and

returning graduates. The special education and bilingual departments receive regular federal and state department audits, and the special education department (SPED) does a self-evaluation of its materials. The Massachusetts Board of Health evaluates health services on an ongoing basis. The library media center was recently evaluated by Sagebrush as a first step in the automation process. Revisions based on these evaluation processes should take place in all support services. (library media specialist, guidance, self-study)

Malden High School support personnel interact and work cooperatively with community organizations to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. Special education teachers co-teach with mainstream teachers on a regular basis. The bilingual program includes three regular education teachers in its staffing. Community agencies such as the Tri-City Mental Health Center, Cambridge Hospital, Arbor Counseling, Boston University graduate interns, and bilingual outside agencies cooperatively engage in supporting the school's efforts on behalf of the social, emotional and physical needs of students. The Malden High School Family Management Program utilizes services of the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), Healthquarters, and Catholic Charities to support a daycare center at the school, as well as teen parenting classes and home outreach. Other community-sponsored services include SCORE peer mediation, Alateen at the YMCA, a Starr Center pilot wellness program that provides in-school health care for students, a school resource officer based at the school, and a directory of resources for the city of Malden. In response to referrals from teachers, administrators, parents and students, guidance counselors provide individual counseling and school adjustment counselors provide individual and group counseling. Outside of these communications there is a need for structured, frequent two-way communication between guidance and school adjustment counselors. This same need exists for good communication between these groups and administrators. (guidance, SAC, SPED, self-study)

Although there is no comprehensive communication model to inform the school community of the various types of available student support services, there is a basic overview of support services in the student/parent guide. Open House and Financial Aid Night in the fall and parent-teacher conferences in the first and second quarters give opportunities for information sharing between staff and parents. Supplemental reports at midterm, report cards quarterly, and telephone calls from staff members supply parents with academic information. A program of studies booklet provides course information in the spring. Students learn about various formal education programs dealing with social/emotional issues through daily announcements, the school newspaper, and special bulletins sent home. The special education department publishes and distributes parents' rights brochure. The principal and superintendent communicate periodically with various segments of the school community by newsletter. All written communications should be translated and sent out in the six major languages spoken by most of the students to better include all students and their parents/guardians in the educational process. (guidance, SPED, self-study)

Guidance transcripts, special education, and nurses' records are maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law. However, the guidance staff is concerned that cumulative records are not adequately secured. (guidance, SPED, self-study)

The library media center has been under-funded, under-staffed, under-supplied, and neglected for many years. As a result, the library media center collections are not fully utilized by faculty and students, do not support all areas of the curriculum, or reflect the diversity of the student body and,

consequently, are not completely integrated into the instructional program of the school. The one library certified media specialist has just recently regained the support of a technology paraprofessional which should allow greater access to the library media center. However, the addition of another library paraprofessional is necessary in order for the library to fully realize its potential. The library media specialist must also be thoroughly involved in the development of school-wide curriculum and its application. Enlarging the professional library would encourage and facilitate staff use of library resources. (library media specialist, self-study, observation)

Although a brief orientation to the library has been offered at the beginning of the year, a sequenced approach to using information services is taught only in various academic disciplines. An electronic catalog is currently being installed in the library media center, but technology resources, particularly computers and online databases, are limited. (library media specialist, teachers, self-study)

A selection policy is in place but no policy exists for the removal of information resources. Clearly written policies regarding the use of technologies and the Internet have been put in place. (library media specialist, teachers, self-study)

## **COMMENDATIONS**

53. The addition of a nurse and two guidance counselors
54. The SST for providing a peer-based teacher resource
55. The independent studies program for providing an alternative form of learning
56. The extensive bilingual program that provides needed services for the school's growing immigrant population
57. The newly expanded school-to-career program
58. The SCORE peer mediation program that serves to promote student civic and social growth as outlined in the mission
59. The Malden High School Civil Rights Team for its innovative approach to human rights
60. The Junior Variety show which involves and benefits the entire Malden High School community
61. The academy program which places students from grade 9 and 10 in smaller academic teams
62. The family management program for coordinating an onsite child care center for parenting teens
63. The Starr Center pilot wellness program

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

64. Design and implement a formal plan to regularly evaluate and revise all school resources for learning
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the advisory program
  - Gather data and analyze it to assess the effectiveness of the house system
  - Provide the guidance department with effective leadership
  - Store all cumulative records in the guidance area in a confidential and secure manner in accordance with federal and state laws and guidelines
  - Provide all school publications in the seven major languages spoken by most of the students

Include all support service personnel in the development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum

Ensure that the library media specialist is involved in the development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum

Ensure that the library media center is an integral part of the educational process

Provide sufficient funding to ensure the success of the library media program

Hire an additional library paraprofessional to enable the expansion of hours and programs of the library media center

Update and expand the library media print and non-print materials

Expand the library media program to enable students and faculty members to utilize various school and community information resources and technologies

Increase the number of culturally relevant materials in the library

Increase access to the library media center

Enlarge the professional library

Increase substantially the budgetary support for the library media center

Institute the American Association of School Librarians' guidelines for information literacy and research skills

Increase technology in the library media center

---

## 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.

65. The school shall engage students and their families as partners in the students' education as well as encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.

The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.

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

The school site, plant, and equipment shall be maintained to ensure an environment that is healthy and safe for all occupants.

There shall be a planned and adequately funded program of building and site management that ensures the maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment as well as the thorough and ongoing cleaning of the facility.

There shall be ongoing planning to address future program, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements.

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

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.

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

Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.

School board decisions, policies, and procedures and district plans shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

The school has demonstrated limited involvement of students' families as partners in their education. Two formal visitations are offered each year in the fall and in the spring. In addition, the administration offers an open house once a year, and parents may schedule meetings with administrators, teachers, or counselors. Four parents and four students have been elected to serve on the school council, which meets once a month. However, notices and newsletters are not translated into the six major languages of the student population. Parents and students are not given ample opportunity to provide feedback on the assessment of programs, policies, and practices. Consequently, students and parents do not feel that they are involved in the decision-making process of the school. (self-study, students, parents, central office administrators)

The school has clearly fostered productive business, community, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. In collaboration with the Malden Chamber of Commerce, a very active school-to-career program has been developed. Internships and jobs are designed to help students explore career opportunities. A steering sub-committee comprised of community members, administrators, and teachers meet monthly to address business involvement in the high school. Local businesses train and employ students during arranged school time as well as after school hours. Many community organizations work directly with the school or sponsor activities at the school. Catholic Charities, Kiwanis Key Club, and Malden Family Health are some of these organizations. In fact, Catholic Charities sponsors an on-site Day Care for students and graduates. Malden High School has a partnership with Tufts University for student teachers. It also has partnerships with Simmons College and Teachers 21 for professional development. The overall community partnership is exemplary. (self-study, school leadership, facility tour, panel presentation)

The school site, plant, and equipment support aspects of the educational program and support services for student learning to a limited degree. However, there are nonfunctioning classroom clocks, variable heating and cooling environments, and unsanitary carpeting. The quality and availability of instructional and non-instructional equipment are not adequate to support the learning process. Copiers, faxes, phones, and computer support are not adequate to meet staff needs. The general school site provides ample space to support student learning including indoor athletic facilities, a swimming pool, cafeteria, and kitchen facilities. (facility tour, school administrators, observations)

The school site, plant, and equipment are not maintained to ensure an environment that is healthy for all occupants. Carpets are old, unkempt, and unhealthy. Some carpets have been removed, but many still remain in classrooms. In addition, window shades are missing or torn throughout the building. As a result of a lack of accountability by custodial staff, some areas throughout the facility are unclean, and repairs are not made in a timely manner. The floors are dirty, and walls need painting. However, according to the school survey, there is an overwhelming belief by parents, staff, and students that the building is a safe place. Teachers feel comfortable staying after school working on curriculum or with students. (community resources self-study, observations, facility tour, parents and students)

The community and the district's governing body do not ensure adequate and dependable sources of revenue for student learning. An adequately funded program of building and site management that ensures the maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment is nonexistent. Custodial staffing is marginal for this size facility. Ongoing cleaning of the building is not clearly evident to staff and parents. Recently, there has been a change in custodial supervision. Administrators believe that this will allow for better training and accountability in solving what appears to have been an ongoing problem. The Director of Public Facilities now supervises custodians. (self-study materials, facilities tours, community members, central office administrators)

A plan to renovate the high school is in place pending funding. Thus, the administration is delaying capital improvements and purchase of updated technology and equipment. Nevertheless, the educational process is hampered because teachers have little access to computers, overhead projectors and other technical support. The computer network provides inadequate student access to student files and the Internet. Present equipment is undependable and of limited use to teachers. (self-study, meeting with teachers, school administrators, observations)

While the physical plant facilities must meet all applicable federal and state laws and be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations, the school does not provide written evidence of meeting these requirements except in the area of fire inspections for all buildings. Currently, only one of the two elevators is in working condition. Teachers expressed concerns about air quality, poor ventilation, and rodents. The school has an effective safety plan to deal with random violence. To ensure that teachers and students are known, all members of the school complex wear photo identification badges. Visitors are provided with a pass upon entering the building. (self-study, facilities tour, observations, teachers)

The community and the district's governing body do not ensure adequate and dependable sources of revenue for student learning, and the state budget can have major implications for funding at the high school. In spite of the uncertain variables, the school committee, with the active support of the mayor, has decided to make the high school a priority in the city budget. The availability of funds remains minimal, however. Consequently, many resources are not funded, broken equipment is not replaced, and materials and supplies are scarce. Teachers were observed working enthusiastically with minimal classroom resources. (central administrators, teachers, self-study materials, school administrators)

The faculty is not involved in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. The school budget starts with the principal, curriculum coordinators, and school council. The principal's budget is then reviewed and prioritized by the superintendent and voted on by the school committee. Exclusion of teachers in the budget process gives teachers the impression that their opinions are not valued. (self-study, teachers, school administrators)

There is not adequate funding to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment when appropriate. Many faculty members felt that overhead technology in combination with computer technology would be a useful tool in their classrooms. Although the school's mission statement contains a focus on technology in the classroom, most classrooms lack a computer or any other technical support. Many teachers have purchased equipment and materials on their own to supplement the curriculum. (teachers, self-study, observations, facility tour)

School committee decisions and procedures are somewhat supportive of the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Students are provided with an opportunity to learn in a safe environment. Professional development and school-reform initiatives are in the early stages of development and supported by the administration. Student support programs are provided to meet the needs of a diverse student population. In particular, the bilingual program works to involve the parents and families who do not speak English. However, the shortages reported in guidance, library services, and computer technology are impacting teaching and learning. The district's failure to update technology in the classroom demonstrates a lack of commitment to the high school's mission. (self-study, teachers, observations, facility tour)

## **COMMENDATIONS**

66. The exemplary school and community partnerships, particularly the school-to-career program
67. The system's initiatives to build support systems with parents and the community in order to meet the needs of a diverse population
68. The Day Care facility for students and graduates
69. The renovation plan for the high school

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

70. Develop a five-year plan for replacement and upgrading of equipment
  - Ensure that the building is appropriately cleaned on a daily basis
  - Ensure that the facility and equipment are properly maintained
  - Engage non-English speaking parents in their children's education
  - Translate all school documents for the school's diverse populations
  - Provide sufficient funds for texts, supplies, materials, and equipment to support curriculum and instruction
  - Remove all remaining carpets
  - Paint the entire building
  - Repair student bathroom fixtures
  - Repair the elevator
  - Repair or replace broken lockers and windows
  - Provide a full-time computer technician at the high school
  - Replace missing and torn window shades in classrooms
  - Devise a plan to include the participation of parents, staff, and students in the budgetary process
  - Develop and implement a detailed maintenance plan
  - Replace or repair clocks that do not work
  - Post or keep safety codes inside building

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

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

A school's continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting committee and others identified by the Commission as it monitors the school's progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle. To monitor the school's progress in the Follow-Up Program, the Commission requires that the principal of Malden 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 Appendix B. 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 visiting committee report. An outline of the Follow-Up Program is available in the Commission's *Accreditation Handbook* which was given to the school at the onset of the self-study. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by Commission staff following the on-site visit.

The team would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the individuals of Malden High School who worked so hard to prepare the school's self-study and to arrange the necessary accommodations.

Specifically, the chair would like to thank Dr. Joan Connolly, Superintendent of Schools, for her help and support for the accreditation process. Mr. Peter Leuke, Principal, who provided the leadership, Nancy Kassbian and Diane Klibansky, Co-chairs of the Steering Committee, for their constant attention to details so that all went smoothly. Lastly, I would like to thank students, staff, and parents for their willingness to participate in our thoughtful discussions and share their insights with the committee.

**ROSTER OF VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Arthur Nicholson, Chair  
Assistant Superintendent  
Methuen Public Schools  
Methuen, MA 01844

Stanley Thompson  
New England Association of  
Schools & Colleges  
Bedford, MA 01730

John Alves  
Dartmouth High School  
Dartmouth, MA 02747

Tim Breslin  
Farmington High School  
Farmington, CT 06034

Robert Coakley  
Plymouth South High School  
Plymouth, MA 023360

David Donavel  
Masconomet Regional High School  
Topsfield, MA 01983

John Doty  
Springfield Central High School  
Springfield, MA 01109

Rosalie Fowler  
Lawrence High School  
Lawrence, MA 01841

Joseph Guay  
New England Association of  
Schools & Colleges  
Bedford, MA 01730

Patricia A. Howkinson  
Boston Latin High School  
Boston, MA 02115

Sonya Kelley  
Methuen High School  
Methuen, MA 01844

Pat Lawlor  
Stratford Public Schools  
Stratford, CT 06615

Denise Benjamin  
Sandwich High School  
East Sandwich, MA 02537

Douglas McNally  
Taconic High School  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

James Pugh  
Masconomet Regional High School  
Topsfield, MA 01983

## COMMISSION POLICY ON SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

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 modification(s); e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency