Teaching & Learning Standard

Assessment

Narrative

Sample High School is beginning to formalize a process for assessing whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the 21st CLE. Since the fall of 2009, Vision Keepers, the Student Representative Body, the full faculty, and students have been developing analytic school-wide rubrics to assess student progress. All eleven rubrics have been approved by the full faculty and are available for use in the classroom. Vision Keepers is developing a protocol for teachers to incorporate the 21st CLE into assessments and rubrics. Some teachers are implementing them at this time. For example, Humanities teachers regularly assess student work with both the Reading and Writing rubrics. Science and math teachers are piloting the Problem Solving rubric, with the goal of using it twice a semester. In addition, beginning with the class of 2016, all students are required to create a digital portfolio that contains a self-assessment of their progress toward achieving at least five of the 21st CLE. They include in these portfolios evidence of achieving certain 21st CLE, using material from their classes and co-curricular activities. Students present their portfolios twice a year at their student-led conferences. The increasing use of the 21st CLE language and rubrics has become prevalent in the SHS environment. Indeed, according to the Endicott survey that was made in March 2013, 84% of students agreed with the statement, "I am familiar with my school's learning expectations," which reflects a 76% increase over the previous administration of the survey in October 2012. Eighty percent of students in the March 2013 survey agreed with the statement, "I am familiar with the school-wide rubrics which teachers use to assess my assignments and other class work." The goal is to have a formal process for assessing school-wide progress by the end of school year 2012-2013. The goal is to fully implement use of all analytical rubrics by the end of school year 2012-2013. *See the SHS Expectations Planning Chart.*

Sample High School is in the initial stages of planning to implement a formal process of communicating whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the 21st CLE to students and their families, and to the community.

Beginning with the class of 2016, all students are required to create a digital portfolio that contains a self-assessment of their progress toward achieving the 21st CLE. They include in these portfolios evidence of achieving certain 21st CLE, using material from their classes and co-curricular activities. They share these portfolios at student-led conferences, which are held twice a year with a parent. Vision Keepers will devise a formal process for communicating whole-school and individual student progress by the end of school year 2012-2013. *See the SHS Expectations Planning Chart.*

Professional staff at SHS frequently collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify inequities in student achievement. Responses to inequities vary widely and are tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Several Learning Areas have made adjustments to curriculum recently as a result of data analysis. Four years ago, math and special education teachers analyzed SAT data, identified areas of concern, and created a common, cohesive curriculum for all students needing specialized instruction in math. Teachers identified and are now using appropriate materials for algebra and real-world math curricula for these students. Math teachers continue to analyze PSAT data to inform instruction and curriculum. By examining student successes and strengths on individual questions, teachers make adjustments to instruction and assessment. In the Humanities Learning Area, several efforts are underway to implement data-driven changes to the curriculum. Humanities III teachers work with the Literacy Coach to examine PSAT data each year and have created a timeline of activities and assessments to be used to improve student achievement. New assessments on reading informational texts, vocabulary, and writing have been created for this purpose. After collecting data on student performance on the Reading and Writing standards in the winter of 2012, Humanities teachers, the principal, and the Literacy Coach collaborated to create a new 9th grade curriculum that would address the deficiencies in student performance on these standards. The curriculum is in place now. Every fall, Humanities teachers also collect and analyze NWEA scores, which reveal students' Lexile® scores. Teachers use this information to help students select "choice" books during specific units throughout the year, and to create literary circles for book discussions.

On a more individual level, information from tests taken by eighth grade students, such as the NECAP, NWEA, and a placement test developed by the SHS math teachers, is analyzed and disaggregated to recommend students for either acceleration or additional support. In the case of acceleration, some incoming

9th grade students are given the opportunity to test out of Math 1 and place directly into Math 2/3, which is usually considered a 10th grade course. In the case of scores that indicate the student will benefit from additional support during 9th grade but are not formally identified with specific learning disabilities, the student is placed in Strategies for Learning, a class co-taught by a math teacher and a humanities teacher for the support of students' basic skills and study habits. Special education case managers gather progress reports from teachers monthly or as needed in order to plan and adapt instruction or plan an intervention to address inequities. Special education teachers and the ESL Coordinator use several tools to identify areas of deficient student performance and establish targets for improvement. The WIDA English Language Learner CAN DO descriptors, and the SHS Special Education continuums for math and writing skills are used to identify a student's current functioning level and students participate in academic testing (WIAT III) every three years to measure progress. The results are used as the basis for IEP goals and student improvement. Both students and teachers use these documents. Special education teachers report their students' goals via Infinite Campus and then detail progress on the goals three times a year. If a student meets his/her goals, goals are updated or new goals are created. Moreover, SHS has multiple timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement. Endicott survey results indicate that nearly 87% of students can identify at least one individual they can ask for help with a personal problem, and over 84% of parents confirm that the school provides information about available student support services. If a student requires interventions, there are many systems in place to ensure her or his needs will be addressed in a timely manner. In addition to the daily personalized connections, students meet daily with their Roundtable advisors, school staff members meet weekly to review student needs via Response to Intervention (RTI) and student services teams. The RTI team, comprised of the principal, assistant principal, D-PAtH coordinator, Academic Coach, and Literacy Coach/Instructional Strategist, meets weekly to review the progress of students who have been identified as needing extra supports. They ensure adequate Tier 1 academic interventions and assign Tier 2 or 3 interventions, including Lunch Bunch, Guided Academic Support, Learning Lab, The Learning Center, Credit Recovery, or Peer Tutors as appropriate. The supports and interventions identified and coordinated by the RTI team provide at-risk students with the structure and individualized support they require to meet the 21st CLE.

It is a school-wide expectation for all SHS faculty to communicate to students the applicable unit specific learning goals to be assessed in all units; however, the protocol for including 21st CLE is under development and currently many teachers do include this information on the unit overviews. Unit-specific goals, standards, and 21st CLE are conveyed to students at the beginning of each unit. Many teachers provide students with unit overviews, either on paper or digitally. These contain a variety of information, but typically include an introduction to the main topics of the unit, the standards to be assessed, and the learning outcomes. Each Learning Area has articulated the progression of unit-specific goals in a written, detailed, course-by-course curriculum. The 21st CLE are posted on the school website, in the student handbook, and in the Course of Studies. The 21st CLE are being integrated into course documents as teachers are able to make connections. Vision Keepers have developed a universal icon that is associated with each of the 21st CLE. Eventually, all teachers will paste these icons on unit overviews, assessments, and rubrics to assist students in the process of making connections between their assignments and the 21st CLE. These icons will also be used by students on their digital portfolios to provide direct connections as they provide evidence of personal growth in the process of addressing each of these 21st CLE.

It is the norm for all SHS faculty to provide rubrics with every summative assessment prior to starting the work. Teachers give summative assessments frequently to determine the extent to which students understand content and can perform associated skills, and provide rubrics with every assessment to inform students of performance expectations. In the Endicott survey, 89.9% of students agreed with the statement, "My teachers regularly use rubrics to assess my work." Teachers review rubrics with students before beginning work in order to help students understand expectations. Indeed, 76.4% of students agreed with the statement, "I understand in advance what work I have to accomplish to meet my teachers' expectations." In addition, 76.9% agreed with the statement, "I understand the rubrics my teachers use." Every course has a written, detailed curriculum that includes a progression of assessments for which rubrics are provided. All Learning Areas have also developed a calendar for common assessments. These two documents demonstrate that supplying students with rubrics along with summative assessments is a school-wide practice.

At SHS, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, in each unit of study. The diversity of formative assessments is great. On any given day, one might see students conducting an experiment, deciphering the Problem of the Day, taking a quiz, or responding to a quick prompt on Edmodo. While many formative assessments can be printed out and put into a box, they often must be observed. Having students raise their thumbs, provide a different example of the same thing, or apply a concept in a novel situation are examples of non-tangible ways teachers at SHS assess student progress. Summative assessments are made less frequently, but with no less creativity. While pencil-and-paper tests are common, more innovative modes of assessment are apparent across all Learning Areas. Here are a few examples:

- Art students create online portfolios that show in-process and completed works.
- Math 4 students create their own linear programming problems such as an analysis of temperatures for specific dates tracked over the past 50 years.
- In AP Biology, students write their own spreadsheet programs to carry out a Hardy-Weinberg analyses of genetic diseases.
- Learning Lab students take formative tests prior to instruction that are followed by quizlets and practice quizzes during instruction, and finally summative tests and written reflections that must be edited using the practices learned in the unit.
- The Physics curriculum requires students to mathematically determine how to shoot a projectile through a target, and then test their mathematical theories in a lab setting.
- Math 2/3 students take a summative assessment for the Coordinate Geometry unit that involves making either an animation storyboard or a square-dance performance following the rules of transformations.
- In the Humanities III utopian project students must create and promote an original utopia and recruit participants.
- Students in Chemistry carry out the "Elemental Marketing" project in which they choose an element from the Periodic Table and develop a marketing plan for it.

SHS requires all students to meet Guidance career-oriented standards through completion of common activities at each Roundtable grade level. In

addition to smaller assessments, 11th grade Roundtable students create a Career Portfolio; 10th and 12th grade students conduct research and make a formal, public presentation. Meeting these Guidance standards -- through all four years -- is a SHS graduation requirement.

All SHS faculty collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Regularly scheduled meetings of Learning Areas, grade-level content teams, and Roundtable advisors provide faculty with many opportunities to discuss various assessments. Learning Areas meet formally once a month for 1½ hours after school; grade-level content teams and learning area teams meet every other week during a common planning block; and Roundtable advisors, like the Learning Areas, meet after school once a month. During these meetings, faculty take time to discuss and plan future assessments, reconsider well-established assessments, and make revisions as necessary based on past student performance or current student needs. Learning Areas also use this time to work on creating and revising common assessments. In addition to these formal meetings, teachers' work spaces (pods) are assigned according to teachers' schedules. All 9th grade and 10th grade core-course teachers share a pod, as do almost all 11th and 12th grade core-course teachers. The planning blocks of teachers in each pod coincide to allow for significant common time. It is during this time that much collaborative preparation and discussion about assessment happens. It is generally during this time, too, that teachers are expected to conduct the Common Assessment Protocol. The protocol asks teachers to: norm the assessment rubric by blind scoring several samples of student work from each class; collect and analyze the data on overall student achievement; and consider adjustments to the assessment. Because many demands are made on teachers for this time, teachers are not as consistent with the protocol as required; some adjustments are made to it to accommodate the specific circumstances of the teachers. In addition to these frequent and ongoing discussions, it is common for Learning Areas, or sub-groups thereof, to meet over the summer to plan for the following year. For example, the Science and Math Learning Areas met during the summer of 2012 to discuss the school-wide Problem Solving Rubric and to plan for its implementation. The previous summer, a subgroup of the Humanities Learning Area met to start the transition to use of the Common Core standards. Since then, all Humanities teachers have been engaged in making significant revisions to instruction, curriculum and assessments accordingly.

As for cross-curricular curriculum development, the Humanities Learning Area inherently requires ELA and social studies teachers to plan together to incorporate both sets of standards in one course. The four grade-level Roundtable advisor groups collaborate across curricular areas as can be seen in the rubrics for the Sophomore Exhibition and the Senior Celebration. These are school-wide, grade-level projects that assess standards from ELA and Visual and Performing Arts. Teachers annually review these projects and the assessment rubrics and revise as needed. On a daily basis, Special Education teachers collaborate with regular education teachers to modify or adapt assessments for students with learning disabilities. The Science Learning Area has met to discuss the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards Practices and Frameworks for Science Practices into their curriculum and assessments. The alignment between the Science Standards for Practice and the Mathematics Standards for Practice will enable students to engage in similar experiences in both Learning Areas.

Teachers in all Learning Areas at SHS regularly provide specific, timely and corrective feedback and provide students with opportunities to revise or improve their work. As students complete drafts and practice assignments, teachers provide verbal and written feedback to encourage them to meet the course standards through successful completion of final projects. When the final project is assessed, teachers use rubrics to provide further feedback on progress towards meeting the standards. Teachers write comments directly on written assignments or submit digital comments on work handed in online. On many assignments, in all Learning Areas, students are encouraged, and sometimes required, to either make corrections to problems or submit updated versions of written assignments. In addition, teachers at SHS give verbal feedback to students during class, whole-class discussions, individual activities, and group work. This can be observed on a daily basis in every class.

Teachers in all Learning Areas regularly use formative assessments to assess student learning as well as to inform and adapt teaching practices to improve student learning. On a daily basis, teachers employ a variety of methods to check for student understanding, including question and answer discussions, whiteboard use to answer teacher prompts, exit slips, thumb voting responses, catalyst questions, practice problems, and short application practice. On a weekly basis, teachers use quizzes, short writing assignments, laboratory reports, lab-technique activities, online assessment activities (e.g., No Red Ink, Quizlet, Edmodo, Assistments), reading guides, and active reading note checks. The results

of these assessments inform teachers of their students' progress toward building skills and understanding. The results also allow teachers to adapt short- and long-term plans to include re-teaching, revisiting skills and information, and otherwise adjusting the course curriculum to meet students' needs. According to the Endicott survey, 89.1% of teachers agreed with the statement, "Teachers improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments."

Teachers and administrators of SHS, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice including student work common assessments, standardized assessments, but has yet to review individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, data from sending schools or post –secondary institutions or survey data from current students and alumni. All Learning Areas are required to create and administer common assessments. Each course conducts two to three common assessments per course credit. It is expected that student work from the common assessments be gathered and examined by teachers according to a standardized protocol. Teachers are expected to norm the rubric with six to ten pieces of student work. After grading all student work, teachers are meant to meet again to analyze the results and discuss potential changes to the assessment or instruction of the content leading up to it based on that analysis. A report detailing the findings and conclusions is shared with the principal and Learning Area Coordinator when that work is complete. It is an expectation for all SHS teachers to participate in a Professional Learning Community. In these PLCs, teachers address issues around curriculum and instruction, bring different perspectives to problem-solving, examine student work, use protocols to discuss teaching and learning, and read professional articles. The purpose of this collaboration is to improve practice and student outcomes. Beginning with the class of 2016, all students are required to create a digital portfolio that contains a self-assessment of their progress toward achieving the 21st CLE. They include in these portfolios evidence of achieving certain 21st CLE, using material from their classes and co-curricular activities. Students present their portfolios twice a year at their student-led conferences. Having a formal process for assessing school-wide progress by the end of school year 2012-2013 is a current goal. The Math and Humanities Learning Areas use standardized test data to inform instruction and curriculum. Data from NWEA, PSAT, SAT, and the Maine Science Augmentation assessment all guide teachers to identify areas of strength and weakness for curricular adjustments, allowing teachers to differentiate for groups and individualize course work to address

students' needs. In the winter of 2012, the Humanities Learning Area examined data related to students who failed the Reading and Writing standards in Humanities I, II and III. As a result of that analysis, a major adjustment was made to the 9th grade curriculum to increase focus on, and generate more student engagement in, both reading and writing. Teachers incorporated more student choice in reading into the curriculum, and gave more detailed attention to the writing process.

According to the Endicott Survey results, 75% of students and 87% of parents surveyed agreed with the statement, "My teacher uses a variety of methods to assess ... learning." Eighty-three percent of staff agree that "teachers and administrators examine a variety and range of student work, common course assessment, common grade-level assessment, and standardized assessments to revise and improve curriculum and instructional practices." Teachers at SHS consistently seek out new and more effective ways to assess student performance with a wide range of assessment strategies. In the winter of 2013, students were invited to participate in a common, school-wide Engagement Survey. The results were aggregated and analyzed by the faculty to inform their instructional practices and to refine their Professional Growth Plans. Teachers also administered the survey to their classes, edited for their specific purposes, for even more targeted information about their practice, with the expectation that they adapt their instruction as necessary. While anecdotal information from alumni about how well SHS prepares its graduates for post-secondary life is received and widely shared, SHS does not systematically collect data in this area.

At SHS, grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and periodically revised to meet the needs of faculty, students, and community. The Faculty Grading Guide, which describes the principles of the SHS grading system and details the process for arriving at grades, is updated every summer by the principal to reflect feedback from the previous year. In 2012, there were two proposals to Vision Keepers related to updating the grading system to align with the school's beliefs about learning. One involved the unique grading system in D-PAtH, and one involved expanding the range of CO- for all students. In addition, Learning Areas are shifting from the Maine Learning Results to the Common Core Standards, which is resulting in changes to

curriculum, instruction, and assessment of skills and knowledge. As a result of this close attention to the grading system, 78.9% of parents responding to the Endicott survey said that grading practices are aligned with the school's beliefs about learning. The last time grading procedures underwent a major revision was school year 2008-2009. In the future, Vision Keepers intends to examine the grading process closely to determine if there is a need for significant revision. Vision Keepers will analyze information on how students are performing on standards and also take into consideration new technology available to teachers for reporting grades. A small group of teachers is currently piloting the Infinite Campus standards-based grading program that will enable students and parents to access information on their progress. Teachers, Guidance, RtI, and the Student Services Team will, with this real-time access, be able to address issues informally and formally with students and stakeholders. In addition, the hope is that students will take more responsibility for their performance by monitoring their grades frequently, parents will be more engaged in their children's education, and teachers will be able to identify and implement strategies for students with particular needs. These are crucial elements of the SHS core values.

Executive Summary

Sample High School (SHS) is committed to the full implementation of the 21st Century Learning Expectations (21st CLE). Over the past two years, faculty have written and approved eleven school-wide rubrics for assessing progress on the achievement of the 21st CLE. Teachers in several learning areas regularly convey the learning expectations to students through unit overviews and assessments and use the school-wide rubrics to assess student work. A formal process for reporting individual student progress on the 21st CLE began with the class of 2016 in the school year 2012-2013, and continues to be phased in.

SHS has not yet, however, established a formal process for gauging and reporting on school-wide progress on achievement of the 21st CLE. The school's leadership team, Vision Keepers, has set a goal to create a formal process by the end of school year 2012-2013, with implementation starting the following school year.

Assessment is a strength of the SHS curriculum. Teachers across all Learning Areas and grade levels make formative assessments of student learning on a daily basis, whether it be a quiz, a quick write, or a Problem of the Day. They use the results to adjust their lesson plans, either on the spot, or after consideration and discussion with teachers who teach the same course. Purposeful scheduling of classes and the "pod" structure of teacher work spaces encourage teachers to collaborate on curriculum and instruction. Summative assessments are delivered less frequently than formative assessments, but with no less variety or collaborative input. The range of types of summative assessments is extensive. Every course taught by more than one teacher is required to include two or three common assessments. Teachers of these assessments norm the grading process for that particular assignment, and then meet again after grading all of the student work to discuss the results and consider ways to improve instruction and learning outcomes. Prior to starting work on a summative assessment, students receive a rubric that describes expectations.

Teachers and staff at SHS use student performance data in many ways to revise curriculum, improve instructional practice, and personalize learning. For example, conducting the common assessment protocol requires an analysis of assessment results and a thoughtful discussion about how to improve the outcomes. Different subgroups of the SHS staff (e.g., Learning Area members, the Response-to-Intervention team, same-course teachers and guidance counselors) use grade reports, standardized test scores, and other data to identify possible areas of weakness in curriculum and to address inequities in student achievement. SHS offers many interventions and alternative programs to encourage all students to succeed. Moreover, the school counselors use data from sending schools to help place students in the most appropriate courses. The creation of Professional Learning Communities has facilitated the effort to implement a more standardized approach to analyzing student performance data and improving curriculum and instruction.

Finally, the grading system at SHS aligns with the school's core beliefs and values. Teachers and administration, however, recognize the value in reviewing the process to ensure that the alignment is clear. A plan is in place for Vision Keepers to review the grading system and revise if warranted.

Thus, despite SHS's significant progress in using the 21st CLE, teachers' commendable work in assessment and collaboration, and the professional staff's targeted efforts to use data to inform their curriculum and instruction, based on the Rating Guide for the Standard on Assessment of and for Student Learning, SHS judges its adherence to the standard as “Not Yet Meeting the Standard” based on its lack of a formal process for measuring and reporting school-wide progress on the 21st CLE.

Strengths:

- The school community has demonstrated a commitment to implementing the 21st Century Learning Expectations and reporting individual and school-wide progress.
- The school community is dedicated to assessing the needs of students and creating individualized paths to success for all students.
- Teachers communicate specific learning outcomes and goals in all learning areas at the beginning of each unit.
- Teachers use a wide variety of summative assessments and assessment-specific rubrics.
- Teachers use a wide variety of formative assessments to inform instruction.

- Learning Areas use of a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum, improving instructional practice, and personalizing learning.
- Learning Areas and administration regularly review grading practices to ensure alignment with core values and beliefs.

Needs:

- Create and implement a process for gauging and reporting on school-wide progress on achievement of the 21st Century Learning Expectations
- Continue to apply the 21st Century Learning Expectations at all levels
- Provide more time for teachers to conduct the common assessment protocol
- Revive the Professional Learning Communities to improve instructional practice and student outcomes
- Develop and implement a formal and effective process for collecting data from post-secondary institutions and alumni about the preparedness of SHS graduates
- Make more consistent use of data across Learning Areas to inform curriculum and instruction
- Continue to examine the grading system to make sure it aligns with the school's core values and beliefs about learning