



Narrative

The curriculum, although purposefully designed, was developed and implemented prior to the development of the 21st Century Learning Expectations (21st CLE) and faculty members are in the process of merging the 21st CLEs into all aspects of our school to ensure all students practice and achieve each of the school's learning expectations. Teachers are beginning to be purposeful in the use of these expectations through their use of school-wide rubrics and in the development of the digital portfolio process in the ninth grade. Each learning area has taken responsibility for reporting progress on at least one learning expectation so as to ensure that all of them are taught, assessed, and reported. In the curriculum templates, each course documents which 21st CLEs will be taught and when. There is a process for adding courses to the *Course of Studies* (proposal through the Leadership team, the school's leadership team), but this process is not yet updated to reflect our newly developed 21st Century Learning Expectations. In an effort to further link the curriculum and the 21st CLEs, the school created a process for students to reflect on their progress on 21st CLEs in a digital portfolio and report individual progress to parents through the Student Led Conference twice a year.

The evidence suggests that the spirit of the 21st CLEs are present in many areas of the school, although not in a formal way. For example, students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate the Academic Expectation for writing, "The SHS student writes in a clear and engaging manner," through writing lab reports, essays, reflections, and blog posts. The Senior Celebration and Sophomore Exhibition allow students to demonstrate their ability to "speak and present effectively." As the digital portfolio is implemented and school-wide rubrics are developed and revised, faculty members are more clearly understanding the role of the 21st CLEs in the content areas and more formally integrating them into the curriculum.

The curriculum is written in a common format that includes the units of study with essential questions, concepts, content and skills, the school's 21st CLEs, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course specific rubrics. Many of the units of study contain assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. A curriculum template was created and dispersed to

learning areas for completion during common meeting time, which includes learning area meetings and professional development time on workshop days. The common format includes a matrix that outlines standards, assessments and 21ST CLEs. It also includes detailed descriptions of essential questions, skills and content, instructional resources, suggested activities, assessments and, when applicable, common assessments. The curriculum documents will be modified as needed by learning area. Any changes to the curriculum, and the supporting documents, are driven by student need, current research, and best practices. Also, as the school more fully incorporates the 21ST CLEs, the documents will be revised to reflect their integration.

Although all curriculum documents identify 21ST CLEs by each course, teachers are developing strategies for incorporating them into each course. Each learning area has particular 21ST CLEs for which they are responsible. Currently we are working to connect the 21ST CLEs more clearly with our curriculum, including: discussion of best practices in Learning Area meetings, explicitly connecting 21ST CLEs with product descriptors and rubrics through a "tagging" process, and development of, and increased use of, school-wide rubrics. According to a review of the curriculum documents, the essential questions are clearly connected to the content and skills in the majority of courses. The essential questions are a reflection of the standards for each unit and guide assessment of those standards. It is important to note that the 21ST CLEs are retrofitted to the current standards, however, because they are overarching in nature, they fit the broader curriculum. For example, in Humanities, each course assesses the standard of reading, which is also a 21ST CLE.

The curriculum documents indicate that a variety of instructional and assessment strategies are used throughout the school. The instructional strategies are appropriate for heterogeneous groupings and learning styles, and include methods such as hands-on learning activities, student-centered options, direct instruction, and individual and cooperative learning opportunities. As the Instruction Committee report indicates, teachers regularly adjust their instructional strategies to meet the needs of the students. The majority of courses offer students ample and various opportunities to demonstrate their learning. Students show their learning through performance assessment, writing assessments such as lab reports and essays, presentations, projects, tests and quizzes, practicums, technology-generated products such as digital presentations and digital portfolios, and speaking and listening opportunities. The written curriculum provides guidance related to the essential questions, content, skills, and instructional strategies. Although the documents provide guidance with regard to the 21ST CLEs, the full integration of these expectations is still in progress.

The SHS curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills in most courses and levels; provides many authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and supports informed and ethical use of technology. Cross disciplinary learning is evident, but not pervasive. Most classes offer Honors Challenge, an opportunity for those students seeking to explore course content in greater depth or breadth. Honors Challenge includes alternative assignments, seminars, independent research or public exhibitions that go above and beyond the typical course requirements. The emphasis is on work that is more demanding and complex. The Core-Plus Mathematics curriculum uses an investigative model of learning, and review problems are structured to provide higher order thinking opportunities ("Connections" and "Extensions"). There are a variety of Advanced Placement (AP) classes that encourage inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. Many students access college courses at local campuses as well as online courses (33 students in the 2012-2013 school year). The Endicott survey indicates that 86.7% of parents believe that their son or daughter is developing problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills. The survey also reflects staff's strong agreement (81.1%) with the statement: "The curriculum in my department/content area emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge."

A formal digital citizenship curriculum will be piloted in 2013-2014. However, there are instances in which ethical use of technology is already embedded in school culture. The Endicott survey indicates that 80% of students are knowledgeable about the ethical use of technology and 87.6% of parents think that their son or daughter is learning about the ethical use of technology. As part of the MLTI program all students have a device provided by the school. There are several structures in place to support the appropriate use of these laptops including a District Technology Use Policy. Prior to students' receiving the device: they must watch a video, take a quiz, and submit a contract signed by both student and parent in order to show understanding of how to use their computer responsibly at home and at school. The newly revived Technology Committee is developing practices and procedures around ethical technology use and curriculum development. When the 1-to-1 program began four years ago, the committee developed visuals for each classroom with key phrases to support the use of technology in classes. These phrases, such as "You are now invited to open your laptops," show a concerted effort to give teachers common language, particularly with classroom management. Periodically students attend a Sucker of Bandwidth assembly, in which the illegal

downloading of music/movies is addressed. Students also participate in assemblies regarding digital citizenship and digital footprints.

The technology committee is working to ensure that a formal process is developed and implemented for 2013-2014. SHS has two school-wide technology rubrics. The *Academic Use of Technology* 21st CLEs school-wide rubric includes a rubric for using technology in content areas. The second rubric, *Ethical Use of Technology*, is a technology curriculum guide for use in advisory that addresses using technology in a socially responsible manner at each grade level. Many courses, including all Technology classes, focus on copyright and ethics as part of the curriculum. The Visual and Performing Arts Learning area uses Creative Commons licensed images in classes. Most classes use online tools such as Edmodo and GoogleDocs. Individual teachers provide instruction in using those applications ethically and responsibly. The newly created digital portfolio will provide students an opportunity to reflect on how they are progressing on the 21st CLEs of "using technology in a socially responsible manner."

The integrated models of Humanities, Science, and Math at SHS promote cross-disciplinary learning. English and Social Studies are combined in a class called Humanities, where many activities integrate English and Social Studies topics simultaneously. Humanities classes occasionally integrate scientific and mathematical components (the study of changing climates and environments, industrial and other technological practices, population change, economic standing, etc.) to ensure a wide-ranging base of knowledge in terms of contemporary and historical analysis, examination, and reflection. Ninth and tenth grade Science and Math classes sometimes make content connections, frequently about graphs and functions. Many elective classes also emphasize cross-disciplinary learning, including Robotics (technology and math), Wellness (health and physical education), and World Language (culture and writing).

Authentic learning opportunities are plentiful. The Endicott survey indicates that 78.5% of parents believe that their son or daughter has a number of opportunities to apply what he or she is learning to real-life situations. The curriculum requires all students to fulfill a community service requirement, perform two job shadows, and complete four co-curricular credits throughout their high school career. Co-curricular opportunities include a nationally recognized Speech & Debate team, the Student Judiciary Board, and The Writer, an online newspaper. Some students participate in interactive assessments (i.e. sophomore students participate in a mock trial based on their summer reading book, *Of Mice and Men*).

Students enrolled in the alternative program work with the Functional Life Skills program. Currently 50 Junior and Senior students attend Local Regional Technical Center (LRTC), a vocational program that offers many different authentic learning opportunities. A student attending SHS has many opportunities to demonstrate learning through authentic learning opportunities that demonstrates the ability to use inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills in most courses and levels. The school has adopted several strategies to ensure clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum, resulting in a growing level of alignment. The Common Assessment Protocol is one way in which the alignment of the written and taught curriculum is monitored. Each course has several identified common assessments that are given at specific times during the semester or year. Teachers identify each common assessment and the time of year it is delivered on the Common Assessment Timeline. After the common assessments are given, teachers engage in the Common Assessment Scoring and Analysis Protocol to review the data and reflect on teaching and learning. This protocol serves to support teachers in making necessary instructional changes to increase student achievement and to ensure that the written curriculum is taught. This process is monitored through reflections given to the principal and learning area coordinators.

The taught curriculum consistently mirrors the written curriculum. According to the Endicott survey, 81% staff report that the written and taught curricula are aligned. Regular Learning Area meetings provide time for teachers to problem solve and discuss issues relating to curriculum. Grade-level content teachers use common planning time for further curriculum alignment. In addition, standards are collected from each Learning Area to ensure consistency and commonality. These are reviewed by administration at the beginning of each year.

Curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist as works in progress between and among all academic areas within the school and there is some coordination with sending schools in the district. The curriculum templates aligned with course standards serve to support the curricular coordination at SHS. The Endicott Survey from Fall 2011, shows outdated representation of our curriculum status. For instance, when staff were asked "There is a common, formal, curriculum template that is used in all subject areas," 54.7% were in agreement that this was true. However, since then the majority of Learning Areas have completed the curriculum templates. In the same survey, 67.9% of teachers were in agreement that staff have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. Structures in place that support curricular coordination include the Learning Area and grade-level content meetings. Learning Area Coordinators meet as a group prior to meetings to learn information

regarding curriculum, budgets, scheduling, etc. The school leadership team also has a role in curricular coordination. The group is responsible for the oversight of school-wide rubrics, the professional development calendar, and new course proposals.

As a district, there are several structures in place that support vertical articulation of the curriculum. The Subject Area Committees (SAC) are committees comprised of teachers from each building. The purview of the committees is to develop curricula, increase communication between buildings, and to provide leadership for content areas. Currently, the committees are on hold during administrative changes. Although these committees are on hold, the work on vertical alignment is continuing, with a district-wide emphasis on the Pre-K-6 grades. The SHS curriculum templates influenced the district-wide SAC work. Concurrently, sending schools grades K-6 have been aligning their curriculum to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and creating their grade level expectations (GLE's). Other K-12 district-wide curriculum documents have been created via the K-6 Wellness Committee and professional development days at Middle School. K-6 school administrators and teachers on the ELA SAC collaborated to create a literacy plan, based on Fountas and Pinnell, which would provide consistency to students as they funnel into the middle and high schools.

Currently, the district is engaged in a Strategic Planning process. District-wide teacher leaders recently participated in the District's strategic plan and identified themes they wanted to address across the district. The primary priority to be addressed is time and resources for collaboration in development of curriculum. Although the curricular coordination in the school is strong, the district vertical articulation continues to be a work in progress, primarily due to a high degree of turnover at the district level.

Overall the staffing, instructional materials, technology, equipment, and facilities at SHS are sufficient to implement the curriculum; however there are insufficient print materials in the library/media center as well as co-curricular programs. Class sizes vary, but have risen marginally in the past five years. Despite cuts in programs within the past five years, SHS has managed to maintain a staffing-to-student ratio of 11:1. Instructional materials are sufficient across learning areas. The Endicott Survey indicates that 80.8% of students responded "My school provides me with the instructional materials I need for each of my classes." SHS has a process for determining the prioritization and rotation of updating textbooks that includes all Learning Areas. The visual and performing

arts have sufficient resources for a variety of visual arts offerings. It should be noted, Learning Area coordinators encourage teachers to spend supply and textbook money early in the year, as the budget is typically frozen which causes difficulty in some Learning Areas. There is a wide variety of technology available to students and teachers. The school opted into the state computer program, which provides computers, technology support, the network, and professional development for teachers. As more and more teachers utilize the technology, the school has invested in digital projectors. In the content areas, the technology available allows teachers to utilize specific applications as well as web-based resources. Students are also able to take a variety of online courses.

The resources of the library/media center are generally sufficient to support the curriculum. The library, which is shared between Middle School and SHS, was without a librarian for the academic year 2011-2012. As a result, there was very little ordering of materials, collaboration with teachers for the purposes of meeting information literacy standards, or planning for future ordering or needs. This year, the library looks very different, as the school has hired a new librarian. The librarian is working to analyze the collection, to develop relationships with teachers in the middle school and high school, and to increase student traffic. As a result, circulation has increased, 625 more books were checked out compared to last year at this time, and 3018 student visits are logged. Although the curriculum is served by the library, there are needs, particularly in the area of print nonfiction materials. The reference collection is outdated and therefore impacts the overall age of the collection. The digital collection, including the Gale Ebooks and databases from MARVEL, the Career Internet Database, and Issues and Controversies provide teachers with a wealth of nonfiction materials. Although 82.4% of parents report that the "library and media resources adequately support learning in my son's/daughter's classes," the budget for the library is inadequate. The budget allocates roughly \$14 per pupil, an amount that has proven inadequate. Also, the librarian does serve as a district librarian, overseeing the Ed Techs in each elementary building. Ideally, a certified librarian would serve the elementary grades separately, and coordinate the curriculum for these buildings.

SHS has a wide variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings; however the funding is not sufficient to fully implement the programs. Students that participate in extra-curriculars pay a fee to participate. In co-curriculars, students raise funds in order to attend events and purchase supplies. Teachers who advise co-curriculars generally are paid a stipend. In the Endicott Survey, 63% of staff disagree or are undecided about the statement "co-curricular

programs are adequately funded. "When asked the same questions, 55% of parents disagree or are undecided.

The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. The evidence shows that the district and the school have utilized the work of several key leaders in Curriculum and Instruction in order to develop, evaluate and revise the curriculum. *Understanding By Design* (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) and *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective instruction*, (Marzano, 2007) influenced both the development of curriculum and the work to align the curriculum to state standards. As Humanities and math align to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the framework for the re-alignment was adapted from *Simplifying Response to Intervention: Four Essential Guiding Principles* (Buffum, Mattos, and Weber, 2012). Other research used in the development of curriculum includes the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) standards, national standards for science and the arts, as well as attendance at a variety of conferences including the National Council for the Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in Maine (ATOMIM).

Currently there is no formal curriculum review cycle in the district. As the Humanities and Math Learning Areas have re-aligned curriculum to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a new process for reviewing curriculum is being developed at SHS. New Central Office Administration will likely formalize a process for curriculum review throughout the district.

A review of the evidence suggests that using student performance data is an evolving process, and an area for continued growth. The Common Assessment Protocol provides opportunities for teachers to formally examine student performance data and to make instructional changes. The Humanities 3 teachers annually review the school PSAT report in order to plan instruction for the SAT. On school-wide exhibitions, like the Senior Celebration and Sophomore Exhibition, teachers regularly debrief the process and the assessment rubric, although student performance data is not necessarily a part of the conversation.

According to the Endicott Survey data, 67.9% of faculty members report that they have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. In addition, 86.8% of faculty are "directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work." A review of the budget for curriculum indicates that a consistent amount of money is provided each year to ensure that faculty members participated in the revision process. Each year, stipends are allocated for Learning Area Coordinators. Subject Area Committee (SAC) representation is funded through stipends or sub pay for release time. Teachers engage in curriculum work during Learning Area meetings, common planning time, on workshop days, and also during allotted release time. Within the building, curriculum review and revision is constant, though a comprehensive, district-wide process, involving the SAC committees, has stalled due to administrative changes.



Executive Summary

The curriculum at Sample High School (SHS) was purposefully designed but developed and implemented prior to the adoption of the 21st Century Learning Expectations (21st CLE). As a result, the school is developing strategies to ensure that all students practice and achieve the learning expectations.

The curriculum is written in a common format that includes the units of study, essential questions, concepts and skills, instructional strategies, assessment practices, and the 21st CLE.

The curriculum at SHS emphasizes inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, and authentic learning opportunities. Currently, the school is implementing strategies to ensure that students are using technology in an informed and ethical way. This includes development of school-wide rubrics and the revitalization of the school's Technology Committee. Although the school has cross-disciplinary learning embedded in several areas, more still needs to be done to explore opportunities for integrating this practice into other areas of the school.

The school's written and taught curriculum are clearly aligned. This alignment is supported by various structures, including common planning time, Learning Area time, and time to norm and revise common assessments.

There is effective curricular coordination in the school. There are several structures embedded in the school schedule that support this, including common planning time, Learning Area and Advisory meetings, faculty meetings and workshop days, and release time for aligning curriculum to the Common Core State Standards. Vertical articulation continues to be an evolving process, due in part to a high level of turnover at the district level. The Subject Area Committees serve as the main vehicle for vertical articulation, but are currently focused specifically on K-6 alignment.

The staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities and resources of the library are sufficient. The library needs to update print nonfiction materials and continue ongoing work to develop the fiction collection. Also, extra-curricular and co-curricular programs should be fully funded in order to support the four-credit graduation requirement.

The district provides the staff with sufficient time and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. As a result, the staff are significantly involved in curriculum development. The school regularly uses research to influence ongoing curriculum development, but should use assessment results more formally in this process.

The evidence indicates that the curriculum at SHS is close to Exemplary on the NEASC rating guide. However, at this time the 21st CLEs are not fully integrated into the school. Also, the articulation with our sending school is not yet significant. For this reason, SHS judges itself to be ACCEPTABLE.

Strengths

- The curriculum is written in a common format delineating units of study, the school's 21st Century Learning Expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of course-specific rubrics
- There are many opportunities for inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, and authentic learning opportunities in and out of school.
- There is clear alignment between written and taught curriculum.
- Instructional materials are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including a formal process for keeping textbooks current
- Technology resources are more than sufficient to deliver the curriculum
- School staff are significantly involved in curriculum development

Needs:

- Continue the implementation of the 21st Century Learning Expectations, including the school-wide rubrics, in all areas of the school
- Continue to develop more formal activities to ensure the curriculum emphasizes informed and ethical use of technology
- Implement more cross-disciplinary learning opportunities
- Continue to develop the vertical articulation process at the district level
- Increase funding for extra-curriculars and co-curriculars

- Develop a formal curriculum review cycle which includes use of student performance data
- Increase funding for the library collection