

**New England Association of  
School and Colleges, Inc.**

**Commission on Public Schools**



**Commission on Public Schools**

**Report of the Visiting Team for  
Marlborough High School**

Marlborough, MA

04-03-2022 - 04-06-2022

**James LaBillois, Chair  
Mr. David DiPietro, Assistant Chair  
Dan Riley, Principal**

# School and Community Summary

---

## School and Community Summary

The city of Marlborough is located in central Massachusetts in southern Middlesex County. It is approximately 18 miles east of Worcester and 30 miles west of Boston. Several major roadways pass through Marlborough, including I-290, I-495, Route 20, Route 9, and Route 85, which makes Marlborough very accessible from all points of the state. Marlborough High School (MHS) is in the northern part of the city off Route 85, approximately one mile from the town of Hudson and two miles from the I-290/I-495 interchange. The city's police station is less than 0.25 miles from the school, and the University of Massachusetts Memorial Hospital is about one mile away.

The campus of Marlborough High School is surrounded by an area of fully-grown trees and sets back 1,900 feet from Route 85. One side of the campus borders Holt's Grove conservation land, and another side abuts Fort Meadow Reservoir. Along Poirier Drive, the main road to the school, there are sidewalks, lighting, and parking for a new softball field, tennis courts, and the new Goodnow Brothers Elementary School.

Marlborough is home to a large industry presence, including many small businesses and large global corporations like Quest Diagnostics, General Electric Health, Boston Scientific, DuPont, Raytheon, and Hologic. The city bridges collaboration for industry through its Economic Development Corporation, regional Chamber of Commerce, and regional workforce investment board MassHire. Throughout the year, the city hosts dozens of well-attended community events, including holiday parades, business expos, summer farmers' markets and concerts on the common, festivals, car shows, and holiday concerts featuring the MHS music ensembles.

There are currently seven schools in the Marlborough Public School district, which include the Early Childhood Center (ECC), Sgt. Charles J. Jaworek Elementary School, Francis J. Kane Elementary School, Raymond C. Richer Elementary School, Goodnow Brothers Elementary School, 1 LT Charles W. Whitcomb Middle School, and Marlborough High School. The Advanced Math and Science Academy, a charter school, is located in the city along with several private, independent, and parochial schools. MHS serves approximately 1050-1100 students in grades 9-12.

The high school celebrates strong diversity comprised of 59.5 percent Hispanic, 32.9 percent White, 3.4 percent African American, 3.3 percent Multi-race, Non-Hispanic, and 0.9 percent Asian. English is not the first language for 52.3 percent of students, and 21 percent are English learners. Also, 14.9 percent of students have disabilities. 57.8 percent are economically disadvantaged, and 69.1 percent are High Needs.

In May 2021, the city council approved a \$174 million budget, with approximately 40 percent allocated to the Marlborough Public Schools, approximately \$70 million. In 2020, the per pupil expenditure was \$17,793 compared to a state average of \$16,377. The Marlborough Public Schools is working on an increased FY23 budget with the Marlborough City Council.

Additional changes to dropout, graduation, and attendance rates are based on data provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for the 2020-2021 school year. The dropout rate for all grades was 3.3 percent in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this is above a rate of 2.9 percent in 2019, it remains below a rate of 3.7 percent in 2018. The graduation rate was 87.2 percent in 2021 compared to 86.2 percent in 2018, with a 4-year adjusted cohort rate of 93 percent. Compared to the state's 2018 graduation data, 71.9 percent vs. 84.6 percent of students attended college, 23.4 percent vs. 5.2 percent went on to work, and 0.4 percent vs. 1.1 percent enlisted in the military. The attendance rate for students during the 2017-2018 school year was 92.2 percent but decreased to 85.9 percent in the 2020-2021 school year.

MHS offers several summer internship opportunities through Marlborough Hospital, Raytheon, Boston Scientific, Hologic, the city's information technology department, and other industry partners. MHS forged a partnership with Patriot Ambulance for the company to train and certify up to 10 students during the 2019-2020 school year. Students become certified emergency medical technicians (EMTs), receive training in emergency medical dispatch, and participate in a 90-hour work-based learning experience. MHS offers almost 20 advanced placement courses and is one of the state's largest early college programs. Over 110 students are enrolled in approximately 140 early college seats through Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) this year. Students can

earn up to 12 college credits in Composition I, Composition II, Psychology, and Sociology courses taught by MHS teachers during the school day. The staff are approved through QCC as adjunct professors and must hold similar credentials to college faculty members in the content areas. MHS partnered with Lasell University to launch the Pathways to Teacher Diversity program, which creates a platform for minority students to become professional educators. For the 2022-2023 school year, MHS proposes three additional early college courses offered during the school day. The courses include a First-Year Experience class and two math classes. All programs are free to MHS students and families.

Student recognition programs include the National Honor Society, Tri-M Honor Society, National Art Honor Society, and National Business Honor Society. Students can participate in National Language exams in Latin and Spanish and the American Mathematics Competition. Students involved in Business Professionals of America and Vex Robotics have been competing at the state and national levels for several years. The academic achievement of over 300 students in various content areas and the recipients of prestigious community awards are highlighted at the annual Student Recognition Awards ceremony in June.

## **Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate**

### **Mission Statement**

Marlborough High School is a respectful and comprehensive 21st century learning environment.

We communicate effectively, think critically, collaborate productively, and solve problems efficiently.

We provide equal access to educational rigor and commit to success for all students.

### **Beliefs about Learning**

Every student at Marlborough High School is important. We believe that all students can learn and that all students should be provided with appropriate support and interventions to support learning.

- **Students will** try their best to reach their fullest potential by participating in all tasks assigned by our classroom teachers (both graded and non-graded). Students will be prepared and organized for class and complete assignments in collaboration with teachers. Students will ask questions and communicate with their teachers if they need clarification. Students will access their Aspen accounts to monitor their academic progress on a regular basis and communicate with their parents/guardians about progress and grades. When questions arise about grading, students will communicate appropriately with classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and/or assistant principals. If absent from class, will seek assistance from teachers in a timely manner. Students will refrain from actions that don't align with the expectations of academic integrity such as cheating and plagiarism.
- **Teachers will** approach communication with students and families in ways that are culturally proficient and appropriate. Teachers will complete the grading and/or feedback for various assignments and share these results with students in a timely manner. At MHS, grades reflect student mastery of academic content, so teachers will implement retesting practices to help all students reach academic mastery. Teachers will communicate with students and review their current progress on an ongoing basis as well as communicate missed deadlines for long-term projects/papers to both students and families. Teachers will communicate with families, guidance counselors, liaisons, and/or assistant principals in a timely manner when students are struggling academically.

### **Marlborough High School Core Values**

Respect, Kindness, Teamwork, Responsibility, and Effective Problem-Solving

- **Respect:** Respect is an appreciation or admiration of others that is shown through patience, understanding, and courtesy.
- **Kindness:** Kindness is the act of being genuine in our interactions with others, mindful of their feelings, and doing right by them.
- **Teamwork:** Teamwork is a commitment to common goals demonstrated by working effectively together with others.
- **Responsibility:** Responsibility is taking ownership over one's own actions.
- **Effective problem-solving:** Effective problem-solving is the process of working through the details of a problem in order to reach a solution that considers not only the outcome but the interests of others, resulting in mutual agreement about a solution.

**Based on these core values, the shared vision for a Marlborough High School graduate is:**

A Marlborough High graduate is kind, respectful, and prepared for the 21st century. They communicate effectively, think critically, collaborate productively, and solve problems efficiently.

A Marlborough High graduate is **kind**, **respectful** and prepared for the 21st Century. They **communicate effectively**, think critically, collaborate productively, and **solve problems efficiently**.

**Respect:** Respect is an appreciation or admiration of others that is shown through patience, understanding and courtesy.

**Kindness:** Kindness is the act of being genuine in our interactions with others; mindful of their feelings, and doing right by them.

**Teamwork:** Teamwork is a commitment to common goals demonstrated by working effectively together with others.

**Responsibility:** Responsibility is taking ownership over one's own actions.

**Effective Problem Solving:** Effective Problem Solving is the process of working through the details of a problem in order to reach a solution that considers not only the outcome but the interests of others, resulting in mutual agreement about a solution.

# LEARNING CULTURE

---

## Learning Culture

*The school provides a safe learning culture that ensures equity and fosters shared values among learners, educators, families, and members of the school community. These shared values drive student learning as well as policy, practice, and decision-making while promoting a spirit of collaboration, shared ownership, pride, leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement. The school community sets high standards for student learning, fosters a growth mindset, and facilitates continuous school improvement to realize the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.*

1. The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought.
  - 1a. The school community provides a safe environment.
2. The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.
  - 2a. The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
3. The school community takes collective responsibility for the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.
4. The school community's professional culture demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.
5. The school's culture promotes intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth.
6. The school has an inclusive definition of leadership and provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning.
7. The school culture fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility.

# STUDENT LEARNING

---

## Student Learning

*The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary to prepare learners for their future. Students are assured consistent learning outcomes through a defined curricular experience and have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a variety of creative ways. Students actively participate in authentic learning experiences while practicing the skills and habits of mind to regularly reflect upon, and take ownership of, their learning.*

1. The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success and provides feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress in achieving this vision.
2. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate.
  - 2a. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments.
3. Curriculum ensures that learners demonstrate a depth of understanding over a breadth of knowledge.
4. Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
5. Students are active learners who have opportunities to lead their own learning.
6. Learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.
7. Learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum.
8. Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.
9. Learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning.

# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

---

## Professional Practices

*The school maintains and implements a school improvement/growth plan, organizational practices, and productive community relationships to meet and support student learning needs. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional development to improve their practice and examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, programs, and services.*

1. The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
  - 1a. The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.
2. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being.
3. Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.
4. Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum.
5. School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
6. Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.

# LEARNING SUPPORT

---

## Learning Support

*The school has timely, directed, and coordinated interventions for all students. The school provides targeted supports to meet each student's individual needs, including counseling services, health services, library/information services, and other appropriate support services to assist each student in meeting the school's vision of the graduate.*

1. All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success.
  - 1a. The school has intervention strategies designed to support students.
2. All students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
3. All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
4. All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
5. Identified English Language Learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.



# LEARNING RESOURCES

---

## Learning Resources

*The school has adequate and appropriate time, funding, and facilities to support the realization of its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. The school and school community provide time, funding, and facilities for student learning and support; teacher collaboration and professional growth; and full implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs in the school. The school has appropriate plans, protocols, and infrastructure in place to ensure consistent delivery of its curriculum, programs, and services.*

1. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.
  - 1a. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.
2. The school/district provides time and financial resources to enable researched-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services.
3. The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable funding to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
4. The school/district has short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of its building and facilities.
5. The school has infrastructure and protocols in place to ensure effective responses in crisis situations.

# Introduction

---

## 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 three Commissions: the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS); the Commission on Public Schools (CPS), which is comprised of the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools (CPEMHS), and the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI); and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

As the responsible agency for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public school member institutions, CPS requires visiting teams to assess the degree to which schools align with the qualitative Standards for Accreditation. The Standards are *Learning Culture, Student Learning, Professional Practices, Learning Support, and Learning Resources*.

The accreditation program for public schools involves a five-step process: the self-reflection conducted by stakeholders at the school; the Collaborative Conference visit, conducted by a team of peer educators and NEASC representatives; the school's development and implementation of a growth/improvement plan; the Decennial Accreditation visit conducted by a team of peer educators and NEASC representatives; and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its self-reflection, the recommendations of the visiting team, and those identified by the Committee in the follow-up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school participate in the accreditation process over the ten-year cycle and that it shows continued progress in addressing identified needs.

### Preparation for the Accreditation Visit

Accreditation coordinators and a steering committee comprised of professional staff were appointed to supervise the school's Accreditation process which includes the self-reflection, the Collaborative Conference visit, the development and implementation of a growth plan, and the Decennial Accreditation Visit. At Marlborough High School, a committee, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the Accreditation process.

Public schools seeking Accreditation through the Commission on Public Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's core values, beliefs, vision of the graduate, and unique student population. In preparation for the decennial visit, schools are required to complete a Decennial Summary Report to inform the team about their progress since the time of the Collaborative Conference visit.

In addition, the professional staff was required to read and come to consensus on the summary report to ensure that all voices were heard related to the school's progress on their priority areas for growth.

### The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of eight members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Decennial Accreditation visit to Marlborough High School in Marlborough, MA. The visiting team members spent four days conducting a virtual visit to the school; reviewed the self-reflection, Collaborative Conference report, and Decennial Summary Report documents; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents; and visited classes to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools' Standards for Accreditation and the degree to which the school is making progress toward their identified priority areas for growth as indicated in the school's improvement/growth plan.

Each conclusion in the report was agreed to by visiting team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting team are included within each section of the report. The report includes commendations and recommendations that, in the visiting team's judgment, will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and implement its plan for growth and improvement. The report also includes an analysis of the conceptual understanding, commitment, competency, and capacity (4Cs), which is a framework used to evaluate the school's ability for continuous growth and improvement as a learning organization.

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Schools, which will make a decision on the Accreditation of Marlborough High School.

# Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

---

## Foundational Element 1.1a

The school community provides a safe environment. The school community deliberately builds and maintains a physically safe environment for learners and adults. Marlborough High School has policies and procedures to help ensure the safety of adults and students for interpersonal interactions and physical access to the building during the school day. Building access is limited by locked doors allowing ingress only from the main entrance. Visitors can only enter once they have been identified on a camera and allowed entry using a remote locking system operated and monitored in the main office.

Cameras are in place around the campus to assist administrators and the school resource officer in monitoring activities within and around the school building. School policies concerning safety have been determined through cooperation with the Marlborough Police Department which includes training and drilling the staff and students in ALICE procedure in the event of an emergency or intruder in the building. The school resource officer maintains an office adjacent to the main lobby and is present and visible throughout the academic day.

The school community maintains policies and processes to ensure the safety of learners and adults. A Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Committee composed of teachers and counselors implements SEL strategies and interventions to promote healthy and safe habits of mind throughout the school community. MHS supports the appropriate use of technology. Every student has a Chromebook and can use it under conditions that ensure their health and safety. Filtering websites maintains a balance between the protection of students and the open flow of information. A digital citizenship initiative educates students about remaining safe and encouraging respectful and responsible choices in social media and online. Restorative justice is used for school discipline. School administrators participate in ongoing training. Consequences for poor student behavior are administered consistently across the school.

## Rating

Meets the Standard

# Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

---

## Foundational Element 1.2a

Marlborough High School (MHS) has a written document describing its core values and the vision of the graduate but has yet to establish beliefs about learning. Although there is some understanding of the beliefs about learning, it has yet to be actionable. The staff will work on it as they enhance the framework of their core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

In the 2015-2016 school year, MHS began developing core values, beliefs about learning, and the vision of the graduate. The faculty, staff, and student body were surveyed to help determine a set of core values. During the 2018-2019 school year, the staff revisited these values and re-approved the same core values. Under the guidance of the principal, a committee analyzed these values into a statement to capture their vision of the graduate. Following the Collaborative Conference, integrating the vision of the graduate into the culture and practices of the school continued. A committee identified and defined a set of academic, social, and civic (behavioral) expectations. After surveying and speaking with staff members, the committee presented these findings to the leadership team with a caveat that the expectations felt more like a list of rules rather than an accessible, living document. After re-evaluation, new documents were drafted, identifying a vision of expectations for students and the shared responsibilities for teachers and staff. This document was reviewed and approved by the staff in May 2019. In September 2020, copies of the expectations were created and displayed in classrooms, on the school's website, and included in the student and faculty handbooks. These shared student and teacher expectations were adjusted to reflect the substantive change in the school schedule due to hybrid, remote, and in-person learning and teacher/student understandings. The document was revised again in the spring of 2021 to reflect anticipation of the return to full in-person learning. In winter 2021-2022, these student expectations were examined to become the basis for the written beliefs about learning. A draft of the newly formatted beliefs has been created and shared. A plan to elicit staff feedback, make changes, survey students, and incorporate them into school documents is in place, and the process is ongoing. The school developed its beliefs about learning. The core values and beliefs about learning support the vision of the graduate. The vision of the graduate is incorporated into the district template for curriculum maps, where teachers are prompted to include a statement about how the course supports the district's vision of the graduate. The school established a clear vision and academic and social expectations; however, it has yet to fully develop and communicate its beliefs about student learning and how these beliefs form the foundation of its learning community.

## Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

# Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

---

## Foundational Element 2.2a

The school has yet to have a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments. A district-wide curriculum is a foundation for curriculum maps for all courses, including units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. Courses in some departments, mostly core areas, have completed maps. However, some departments have minimal maps completed. Overall, staff spends time writing the curriculum for all departments across the school infrequently.

Since the Collaborative Conference, Marlborough Public Schools (MPS) created a unifying umbrella for its curriculum by developing a curriculum review process that includes a curriculum map template for all courses to complete and a style guide on how to work with it. This guide is essential for all teachers to ensure that they work on the curriculum consistently and understand what is expected. All staff uses the curriculum map template and guide. The template organizes units into essential questions, content standards, language focus areas, practice standards/dispositions, objectives, and common instructional strategies, experiences, resources, and assessments.

Recognizing that the curriculum is a living document that needs to be easily accessed, referenced, reviewed, and modified, the curriculum is housed in a Google Drive. The account is a unique stand-alone file repository for units of study. Therefore, the curriculum is not owned by a sole individual. All staff can edit the curriculum for courses they teach through their accounts and submit updates and suggestions to the district account, which content-area supervisors monitor. Somestaff revised and adjusted the written curriculum during content PLC and district early release days.

The review process ensures effective curricular coordination within and among each academic area, department, and program; vertical articulation within the school and sending schools in the district; and precise alignment between the written, taught, and learned curriculum. However, substantial progress can be made when writing the curriculum whenteachers are provided time and guidance on using the templates effectively.

## Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

# **Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices**

---

## **Foundational Element 3.1a**

Marlborough High School (MHS) has a current school improvement plan approved by the Marlborough School Committee. The school improvement plan is developed through the input of students, staff, administrators, and the school council. The plan aligns with school and district goals and informs decision-making in the school.

### **Rating**

Meets the Standard

# Foundational Elements 4.1a - Learning Support

---

## Foundational Elements 4.1a

Marlborough High School (MHS) provides a range of intervention strategies designed to support students. Various personnel support student learning and personal growth, including five adjustment counselors, two nurses, a transition specialist, a school psychologist, and paraprofessionals. A formal Student Support Team (SST) addresses the Tier I and Tier II needs of students in grades 9 through 12. These teams meet continuously with assigned guidance counselors, adjustment counselors, nurses, and psychologists. Core content teachers collaborate with different teachers outside their content area, including special education and English learners, to develop effective lessons. To ensure students meet classroom expectations, teachers are expected to refer to the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) to implement best practice strategies. Teachers participate in professional learning communities (PLC) by content area and grade-level teams.

In the ninth and tenth grades, the core academic classes of math, English language arts (ELA), science, and history have been heterogeneously grouped and taught at the Honors level for several years. Ninth and tenth-grade teams conduct a team-based student intervention meeting once per cycle, every seven school days, to identify students struggling academically and incorporate Tier I interventions. The small learning communities for ninth and tenth-grade students provide teachers time to implement a range of intervention strategies for personalizing instruction, analyzing student work, analyzing student data, and communicating with families to help students experiencing difficulty. These teams of teachers work together for student success through specialized and individual attention to students. An intervention support class taught by the team teachers addresses the needs of ninth and tenth-grade students having difficulty with the rigor of the honors curriculum.

The Bridge Program supports students with mental health needs. The program operates with a full-time clinical coordinator and academic coach collaborating with school counselors and staff. Students feel supported while progressively integrating into their full-time schedule after hospitalization or medical leave.

A night school program tailored to the needs of over-age, under-credited EL students, who are the highest percentage of dropouts, is offered. Approximately 30 students earned a high school diploma through this program since the fall of 2020. The next phase will target support to over-aged under-credited students that do not require language support services. The program is staffed by six teachers, an administrator, a nurse, a career specialist, and a guidance counselor.

## Rating

Meets the Standard



# **Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources**

---

## **Foundational Element 5.1a**

The school site and plant support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services. The school building and grounds ensure a safe, secure, and healthy environment. There is a field house with an indoor track and outdoor fields. The school has a TV studio, computer and science labs, an auditorium, a library media center, a robotics lab, 3D printing/design spaces, art/photography classrooms, a music production lab, a band room, and space for a variety of extra-curricular programs. The cafeteria and kitchen area are newly renovated to provide a more efficient process for preparing and delivering student meals. The school is clean and well-maintained. The school meets all applicable federal and state laws and is in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. Inspections are completed throughout the year. The principal regularly meets with Public Facilities to plan the school's improvements and maintenance.

### **Rating**

Meets the Standard

# Foundational Elements Ratings

---

## Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Elements	Collaborative Conference School's Rating	Collaborative Conference Visitors' Rating	Decennial School's Rating	Decennial Visitors' Rating
1.1a - Learning Culture	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
1.2a - Learning Culture	Meets the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard	Meets the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
2.2a - Student Learning	Does Not Meet the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
3.1a - Professional Practices	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
4.1a - Learning Support	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
5.1a - Learning Resources	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard

# Priority Area 1

---

## Priority Area

Develop and implement clear expectations for professional learning communities (PLCs) to improve student learning and well-being through targeted professional development and regular evaluations of the PLC outcomes (Standard 1, Principle 1.4, Standard 3, Principle 3.2)

## Action, Impact, and Growth

The school has taken various steps to develop expectations for professional learning communities (PLCs) to improve student learning and well-being. Teachers have time to meet for regular PLCs. The PLCs assigned to teachers were determined by content area and schedule availability.

The school developed action steps that include tools for PLCs and a process for collaborative teacher inquiry. At this time, the primary focus of PLCs is curriculum centered on common pacing, sequence, and assessments. Grades 9 and 10 teachers use PLC time to discuss student concerns. As a result, curriculum development continues; for instance, the core content curricula have been started.

Some teachers received professional development focused on PLCs. To address the evaluation of PLC outcomes, the principal conducted PLC rounds to see each team in action with the time for meaningful collaboration. The PLC professional development helped inform practice.

Opportunities for growth to fully implement this Priority Area include developing PLC standards and/or expectations specifically for the high school. The MPS Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Overview Draft identifies PLC Protocols for Curriculum Expectations, such as updating pacing guides, updating curriculum maps, and determining common experiences. The draft version has yet to be completed; therefore, clarifying expectations and definitions and which components are used for PLCs will lead to one unified approach.

## Recommended Next Steps

Develop a model/template/structure for PLCs that includes specific and essential components, determine how the components will be used in practice, and how each component will be evaluated for effectiveness

Provide professional development with ongoing training and support for teachers focusing on PLC expectations and ensuring the fidelity of PLC teams

Evaluate the growth and impact of PLC team outcomes regularly, provide feedback, and adjust practices as needed

## Sources of Evidence

- department leaders
- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- school summary report
- students
- teacher interview

# Priority Area 2

---

## Priority Area

Develop and implement a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices (Standard 2, Foundational Element 2.2a, Principle 2.2)

## Action, Impact, and Growth

At the time of the Collaborative Conference, the district had developed a common curriculum template. Work had begun writing the high school curriculum documents for core math, science, and humanities courses. This was a priority area for the district. Since the Collaborative Conference, Marlborough High School (MHS) has begun using the district-developed Curriculum Review Process document that includes a curriculum map template for all courses to complete and a style guide for how to work with the template. This guide is essential for all teachers to ensure that they work on the curriculum in a consistent format and understand what is expected when completing the template. The curriculum units are stored in a shared Google folder, so all teachers have access to an updated, comprehensive, and articulated curriculum that prepares students for success in high school and beyond.

Recognizing that the curriculum is a living document that needs to be easily accessed, referenced, reviewed, and modified, the district houses the curriculum in a Google folder. A Curriculum Admin account is a unique stand-alone file repository to which staff-generated curricular units are sent. Therefore, curriculum document is not owned by a sole individual and can be shared with everyone. All staff can edit the curriculum for courses they teach through their accounts and submit updates and suggestions to the Curriculum Admin account, which content-area supervisors monitor. Staff access the curriculum by going to the Marlborough Public School (MPS) Curriculum folder in Google Drive and selecting their course. The availability of the curriculum documents in a shared Google Drive is a positive step because all teachers can access the documents for planning, revision, and coordination.

The curriculum review process has been designed to ensure effective curricular coordination within and among each academic area, department, and program in the school. The curriculum map template and style guide are used by all staff when writing curricular units. This common template documents connections to district goals and the MHS Vision of a Graduate; however, teachers are consistent in articulating meaningful connections between the curriculum unit and the vision of the graduate. The template organizes units into essential questions, content standards, language focus areas, practice standards/dispositions, objectives, and common instructional strategies, experiences, resources, and assessments. However, teachers need time and guidance on using the templates effectively to make substantial progress in writing the curriculum. A limited number of staff revised and adjusted the written curriculum during content PLC and district professional development days. Progress on the curriculum unit development is quite limited. Most courses have had minimal or no progress since the Collaborative Conference. Few units have incorporated the focused language areas or a stated alignment to the vision of the graduate. Some content areas have nearly complete documents in a limited number of courses, while others are missing all curriculum units.

As school operations return to a greater sense of normalcy following the height of the pandemic, it will be imperative to build upon this foundation and recommit to the work of writing curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. Opportunities for growth to fully implement this area include providing *Understanding by Design* (UbD) training for new staff and refresher training for more experienced faculty, leveraging the skills and understandings of the training to write effective curriculum unit maps, and ensuring staff has dedicated time to write the curriculum.

## Recommended Next Steps

Prioritize completing the curriculum documents to ensure equitable and shared learning experiences for all students

Use available time, such as PLCs, department meetings, summer work, or other opportunities to complete curriculum units

Provide training for new staff and refresher training for experienced staff in *Understanding by Design*

Use the knowledge gained from *Understanding by Design* training to complete units still in progress and revise existing units to make them more effective

Devise a method for clearly and accurately articulating how each curriculum unit supports the vision of the graduate

Ensure faculty discussions during PLCs are focused on best practices in instruction, assessment, and student work to enhance the curriculum

Clarify the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and team leads to empower teachers to make substantive additions and improvements to the curriculum

## Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- department leaders
- priority area meetings
- school summary report
- teachers

# Priority Area 3

---

## Priority Area

Ensure school-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of all students by developing and implementing a plan to ensure that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with learners reflecting the diversity of the student body while maintaining learning environments and practices that are inclusive (Standard 3, Principle 3.5)

## Action, Impact, and Growth

The school has taken various steps to ensure that courses are heterogeneous and representative of all learners. The school strives to provide all students access to challenging academic experiences in heterogeneous classrooms. Most classes are heterogeneous, excluding Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Over time this realignment will further support the goal of offering a schedule that meets the needs of its learners while creating diverse learning environments.

Students are encouraged to take courses that reflect individual interests and goals. Classes are open to all students who wish to take them, and practices that might discourage a learner from taking a specific course have been eliminated.

Course offerings expanded to include foundations/fundamentals courses in math and English language arts (ELA) to provide students who may lack prerequisite knowledge with the skills needed to access a broader range of courses. All students can take electives of their choice and experience classes they may not have had access to previously. For example, two new music courses, Learn to Jam and Band Fundamentals, were developed for students who may or may not have musical knowledge and skills to play an instrument. Therefore, students with no prior experience can access these new course offerings.

The school established an effective partnership with Quinsigamond Community College (QCC), allowing students to earn community college credit. To support enrollment, MHS adjusted the content of tenth-grade courses to more closely align with QCC's prerequisite courses, meaning that the successful completion of these courses, which may include special education or English language development supports, can allow a student entrance into the college-credit course without the English language-heavy Accuplacer. Therefore, the changes made to the tenth-grade English courses can potentially increase access for all students to college-credit-earning courses.

As another step to support students, the school modified homework expectations. Rather than work being assigned and completed at home, a portion of class time is used to complete assignments.

## Recommended Next Steps

Revamp the ELD teacher schedules as planned so that they teach only content areas and can keep class sizes less than 20 students

Research, analyze, and develop plans to incorporate differentiated instruction in heterogeneous classes

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- community members

- department leaders
- priority area meetings
- priority area observations
- school board
- school leadership
- school support staff
- student-led conferences
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

# Priority Area 4

---

## Priority Area

Develop more productive family partnerships to support learning through engaging families and students in the school improvement process and as partners in each learner's education and reaching out specifically to families of traditionally underserved populations and those who have been less connected with the school (Standard 3, Principle 3.6)

## Action, Impact, and Growth

The school improvement plan was developed with input from the school council, student leadership council, and school leadership team. The school council is composed of six parents, two community members, five staff members, and one student. Lead teachers are assigned responsibilities for coordination and oversight of goals within the school improvement plan.

The school leadership communicates with families on an as-needed basis and elicits parent input through surveys on some major decisions, including the change to the school start time. The school generated two family newsletters, one in 2019 and one during the current academic year, from a team of teachers as a professional practice goal. They plan to complete two per school year, provided electronically to families in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. The newsletter provides families with school information, news, and student work in different languages to help all families feel more connected to the school and highlight multilingual students' perspectives.

At the start of the pandemic, MHS, as part of the greater community, began directly providing essential services to families in need, including the delivery of meals, the distribution of Chromebooks and wireless hotspots to students and families who needed them, and in-person home check-ins conducted by a guidance counselor and administrator. As the school transitioned back to in-person learning in 2021, students were provided with technology assistance and internet access through hotspots as part of a greater district initiative.

Family engagement is facilitated by in-building translation and interpretation services to communicate in the families' home language. School-to-home written communication can be translated, and teachers can access interpreters for in-person and online meetings and phone calls. Multilingual staff members can communicate directly with families in their native language, eliminating the need for an interpreter. Some teachers communicate directly with families by using a web-based application tool that translates email messages and sends them as text messages, having learned of this tool through colleagues. Families can call the school directly to speak with someone in three high-incidence languages. Dedicated phone lines are available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and are published on the home page of the school's website.

Instructional teams in grades 9 and 10 have a dedicated meeting time once per 7-day cycle to discuss student concerns. During these meetings, the team of teachers identifies students for whom they feel family communication is needed. The team coordinates the content of the email and who will send it.

In an established peer mentoring program, multilingual students welcome newly enrolled students, take them on a personal tour of the school building, assist them with accessing services and check in with them to ensure they are settling into their new surroundings. The peer mentoring program provides newly enrolled students with a personal connection to the school from the moment they arrive. Upon arrival at the school, this support can deeply impact one's sense of belonging, mainly if the new student is an English learner. The new student will hopefully feel less alone in the new environment by being provided with a mentor who speaks the same language. Additionally, this program benefits the peer mentors by providing leadership experience, strengthening communication skills, building confidence, and reinforcing a sense of school pride.

The school has access to two district wraparound coordinators. If, after working with the school adjustment counselor, it is determined that additional support is necessary, the school can arrange the next steps with the wraparound coordinator. Wraparound coordinators can provide assistance with completing MassHealth forms,



access to vision care, and Uber gift cards. McKinney-Vento students are automatically connected to the wraparound coordinators. These services can extend beyond the student to the entire family.

The school hosts events for students and families, including the annual Curriculum Night, Junior Parent Night, Sophomore Parent Night, and MEFA Night. As the community returns to post-pandemic routines, the goal is to re-initiate hosting two off-site family engagement sessions per year specifically focused on the needs of their underserved families that have been successful in the past.

Overall, strengthening relationships with families has had some positive impacts. Through the availability of interpretation and translation services, teachers have a greater capacity to communicate with families in their home language. Some teachers feel more confident arranging meetings with families. Some teachers reach out to families ahead of Curriculum Night, increasing family participation. Individual teachers share effective communication practices that have had a positive impact on communicating directly with families. Furthermore, staff members have an increased awareness of an individual and collective responsibility to reach out to families.

The pandemic required the school to redirect its efforts at family outreach by providing essential services. While this may have slowed the school's progress in developing systems and structures for educational outreach, it offered an opportunity to connect families to the school. Leveraging this momentum, along with the existing services in the district, will help retain connections with families while building more and stronger partnerships. Growth opportunities include expanding the use and frequency of the family newsletter; extending communication efforts to more students, including non-English learners; establishing more coordinated communication protocols between the school, teachers, and families; and using community resource centers or other local organizations to support off-site school events. As student needs become more complex, it will be important for the school to develop an organizational flow chart and referral process for staff to request student support.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

Host off-site family engagement sessions focused specifically on the needs of underserved families

Develop a referral resource tool, including an organizational flow chart, to support faculty and staff who have identified a student in need of support

Leverage existing community organizations to expand outreach to families through off-campus events that bring the school into the neighborhoods

## **Sources of Evidence**

- priority area meetings
- school board
- school leadership
- school support staff
- school summary report
- students
- teachers

# Priority Area 5

---

## Priority Area

Incorporate healthy social-emotional learning principles into instructional strategies and develop a culture through which students and staff avail themselves of academic and emotional support programs (Standard 1, Principles 1.1, 1.3, 1.7)

## Action, Impact, and Growth

This priority area focuses on three principles: a positive, safe, respectful school community; a collective responsibility for all aspects of learning; and a school culture that fosters civic engagement and social responsibility. The school environment is warm, welcoming, and safe. The group working on this priority area is primarily a volunteer group comprised of two school adjustment counselors, two teachers, one school psychologist, and one of the assistant principals; however, one stipend position is allocated for implementing SEL work. Other staff that helps support social-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives and work includes other guidance counselors, school adjustment counselor, district-wide social workers, and a school psychologist.

Dr. Kalise Wornum is working with the school. This work is still in the planning phase but is a first step toward providing staff professional development in SEL and cultural proficiency. The school psychologist implemented an alternative lunch space for students in the back of the cafeteria, with approximately 15 students sitting alone or in small groups. This space offers a quiet, less overwhelming setting for students during lunch with counseling support if they choose. The SEL group initiated a teacher refresh space where teachers can go during the school day to regroup if they feel overwhelmed by the demands of teaching. The area is nicely decorated with comfortable seating and has candy, hand lotion, and affirmation stickers.

The adjustment counselors work with grades 9 and 10 health classes to teach SEL strategies. The lessons include stress management, self-care, and other SEL strategies for student success. An SEL tab on the school website has some resources for students and families. SEL is incorporated into the Panther period, an extended homeroom or advisory. Students can use Edgenuity, an online platform, to access SEL videos, lessons, and questions that teachers can use to provide SEL instruction. However, teachers piloting this program feel Edgenuity falls short in enhancing SEL practices.

The Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) program, offered for many years, is staffed by a school adjustment counselor and an academic support person for students who require re-entry into the larger school population. For example, students who are returning from hospitalizations or for concussion protocols are eligible.

Teachers have the students' best interests at the forefront of teaching and decision-making. Staff is sensitive to the challenges students faced during the pandemic and how that carries over in returning to a more normal academic year. Teachers find it difficult to re-engage students in academics and attendance. Teacher "burnout" concerns staff due to pandemic stressors; however, the administrative team has slowed new initiatives to support teachers' social-emotional well-being. As a result, there is a recent commitment to implement SEL for students and staff.

The SEL working group implemented several initiatives and is still fully integrating SEL into instruction and the school culture. The SEL work is in its early stages and will require more work in implementing a comprehensive whole-school SEL model. However, due to the staff's efforts, students overwhelmingly feel connected and supported at school.

## Recommended Next Steps

Implement a comprehensive SEL Multi-Tiered System of Support for all students, including a universal screener, multiple tiers of SEL interventions, ongoing data collection and continual assessment, and parent involvement

Provide professional development focused on SEL, belonging, and cultural proficiency

Support teachers in self-care and SEL work

Explore and integrate SEL curriculum materials

Build upon the SEL section of the website

Consider strategies such as a community outreach platform to connect students and families to community resources for mental health and other social-emotional needs or joining an SEL job alike group to generate and share ideas about social-emotional in other districts

Collaborate with the local collaborative for resources with partnerships, professional development, contracted service providers, consultants

## **Sources of Evidence**

- classroom observations
- department leaders
- facility tour
- priority area meetings
- priority area observations
- school leadership
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

# Priority Area 6

---

## Priority Area

Develop written beliefs about learning (Standard 1, Foundational Element 1.2a, Principle 1.2)

### Action, Impact, and Growth

Marlborough High School (MHS) has a written document describing its core values and the vision of the graduate but has yet to establish beliefs about learning. Although there is some understanding of the beliefs about learning, it has yet to be actionable. The staff will work on it as they enhance the framework of their core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

In the 2015-2016 school year, MHS began developing core values, beliefs about learning, and the vision of the graduate. The faculty, staff, and student body were surveyed to help determine a set of core values. During the 2018-2019 school year, the staff revisited these values and re-approved the same core values. Under the guidance of the principal, a committee analyzed these values into a statement to capture their vision of the graduate. Following the Collaborative Conference, integrating the graduate's vision into the school's culture and practices continued. A committee identified and defined a set of academic, social, and civic (behavioral) expectations. After surveying and speaking with staff members, the committee presented these findings to the leadership team with a caveat that the expectations felt more like a list of rules rather than an accessible, living document. After re-evaluation, new documents were drafted, identifying a vision of expectations for students and the shared responsibilities for teachers and staff. This document was reviewed and approved by the staff in May 2019. In September 2020, copies of the expectations were created and displayed in classrooms, on the school's website, and included in the student and faculty handbooks. These shared student and teacher expectations were adjusted to reflect the substantive change in the school schedule due to hybrid, remote, and in-person learning and teacher/student understandings. The document was adjusted again in the spring of 2021 to reflect anticipation of the return to full in-person learning. In winter 2021-2022, these student expectations were examined to become the basis for the written beliefs about learning. A draft of the newly formatted beliefs has been created and shared. A plan to elicit staff feedback, make changes, survey students, and incorporate them into school documents is in place, and the process is ongoing. The school developed its beliefs about learning. The core values and beliefs about learning support the vision of the graduate. The vision of the graduate is incorporated into the district template for curriculum maps, where teachers are prompted to include a statement about how the course supports the district's vision of the graduate. The school established a clear vision and academic and social expectations; however, it has yet to fully develop and communicate its beliefs about student learning and how these beliefs form the foundation of its learning community.

### Recommended Next Steps

Ensure the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations

Develop and implement a formal process to assess and communicate individual learner progress toward achieving the school's vision of a graduate and an annual report on whole-school progress toward learner achievement of the vision of the graduate

### Sources of Evidence

- priority area meetings
- priority area observations
- school leadership
- school support staff
- school summary report

# Part 3 - Reflection on Student Learning

---

## Reflection on Student Learning

Instructional practices meet students' needs inconsistently in some areas. However, the staff truly cares about meeting students' social, emotional, financial, and family needs. The school supports English learners, students with disabilities, and students learning at the college preparatory level. Significant amounts of time and energy have been spent integrating a higher influx of English learners into the school community. There is an emphasis on the importance of new programming, such as career training, the partnership with Quinsigamond Community College for dual enrollment, enhanced elective opportunities for all students, and multiple extracurricular and volunteer opportunities designed to foster student interest and abilities, all of which have a direct impact on students' sense of belonging. However, instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student inconsistently. For example, the school wants to provide better heterogeneous instruction, and overall assessment results have improved since changing to the heterogeneous model. Still, teachers have yet to provide differentiated instruction based on individual student needs. Training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is helping teachers with more effective strategies. Teachers use some grouping and tiered intervention strategies to help meet the needs of learners.

Students have some opportunities to be active learners and lead their own learning. However, opportunities are based on course selection offerings and assessment methods. Some students are given a choice in project-based assessments and can demonstrate their learning in rich, positive ways. There are often choice-based projects or assessment options, such as English writing assignments or presentations, history research projects and papers, and musical performances. Some teachers, specifically those in English language arts and history, structure their courses to accommodate the speed with which honors-level students access the curriculum. Students can take on new tasks independently or in a small group and then help the rest of the class by providing supplementary materials such as graphic organizers, task breakdown lists, and extra review of the primary source material. However, these options and availability depend on the educator's teaching style. As one example, rigorous options are commonly available in humanities classes. Teachers provide opportunities for choice in learning. For example, English teachers offer choices for research, poetry, and reading selection; history teachers use newly redesigned theme-based curricula to allow students more depth and rigor.

Learners at Marlborough High School engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills inconsistently. Inquiry and problem-solving are predominant in many upper-level/Advanced Placement classes. In Civics and English, students are engaged, goals are written on the board, and students answer questions that relate to essential unit questions. In a math class, the teacher uses formative check-ins with students and changes the trajectory of the lesson based on student comprehension. In a world language class, the daily objectives and assignments are displayed on the board, and the teacher circulates to assess student progress and offer assistance as needed. With this introductory task, students reteach the material to peers in several instances. In an English class, students work on poetry and draw current-day meaning from the poet's vocabulary and tone. However, overall, the use of higher order thinking is sporadic. Some students feel grades nine and ten honors classes offer few opportunities to exhibit higher order thinking skills or access curricular material at a rigorous pace. High-performing honors-level students think they are under-challenged in classes where the pacing of instruction is slower to accommodate all students.

Learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies in some classes; however, this informs classroom instruction and curriculum in a limited way. Summative assessment retakes and test corrections are encouraged by many teachers; however, this has yet to be school-wide or practiced consistently across grade levels or departments. Students show what they are learning and what they can do with that knowledge through formal quizzes and tests, research projects and papers, poetry analysis, reading myths, and reapplying mythology in new ways. Some students are using world language acquisition to communicate with peers and make sense of multilingual posters and materials within the school, science labs, computer-aided design (CAD) classes where 3D projects are created, in film literacy class where live-action film is produced, music classes where students perform at all levels, and others to demonstrate learning. All teachers have yet to use assessment results to improve student instruction and curriculum; however, staff use PLCs and team

meetings to analyze student performance and data to make meaningful changes in their subject area, specific classes, or grade levels.

Learners have some opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their own learning. Some teachers provide quality feedback and have students revisit work to promote student mastery of the curriculum; however, this has yet to be a school-wide practice.

Learners use technology in all classes to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning. Students use 1:1 Chromebooks. All classes use the Google Suite tools with various curriculum or department-specific software options. Special education teachers use Read and Write, allowing students to access dense primary sources in alternative ways to increase understanding. Students can access engineering and CAD classes and produce tangible items through instruction; world language classes use team games to enhance communication and review key concepts; history and ELA classes research broad theme-based topics and use technology to find and present information differently. Students in a film/television work on a filming project. The school offers a robust Virtual High School program with universal student access. The e-hall pass system is commonly used. An example of an extracurricular use of technology has students being social media coordinators for clubs.

# Part 4 - Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization

---

## Conceptual Understanding

MHS is building a shared understanding of the high-leverage strategies identified in the school's priority areas to support growth and improvement. Learning is defined through the lens of the core values of respect, kindness, teamwork, responsibility, and effective problem-solving. These core values are the foundation of the school's vision of a graduate: "A Marlborough High graduate is kind, respectful, and prepared for the 21st century. They communicate effectively, think critically, collaborate productively, and solve problems efficiently." The school established a clear vision and academic and social expectations; however, they have yet to fully develop and communicate their beliefs about student learning and how these beliefs form the foundation of their learning community.

There is a schoolwide focus on professional learning communities (PLCs) existing across all departments and/or small learning communities (SLCs). These PLCs are intended to develop and refine protocols that drive outcomes focused on curriculum and instruction, analysis of student learning data, project-based learning (PBL), and tiered interventions. However, the implementation of the model is inconsistent. Therefore, the full potential of the model has yet to be realized. Issues such as substitute coverage have made it challenging to meet as often as was intended. Further, inconsistent expectations of effectively using this time create inefficiencies and confusion among the faculty and staff. Some teams use the time to collaborate and plan; others use it for curriculum mapping, and others are unsure of what to do.

The school has taken various steps to ensure that courses are heterogeneous and representative of all learners. Courses are open to all students who wish to take them, and MHS has eliminated practices that might discourage a learner from taking a specific course. Due to these adjustments, courses in mathematics, science, ELA, history, and electives are more representative of the school's population. Further, the school modified homework expectations; rather than work being assigned and completed at home, a portion of class time is used to complete these assignments. This has been met with mixed feedback, often due to a lack of shared understanding between the faculty, students, and administrators on the purpose of this adjustment.

The school has a goal for curriculum writing. There is a curriculum map template for all courses and a style guide for how to work with the template. This guide is essential for all teachers to ensure that they are working on the curriculum in a consistent format and understand what is expected when completing the template. However, there has been limited progress in the development of a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices.

Altogether, these initiatives have the potential to serve as a framework of shared understanding designed to inform curriculum, instruction, assessment, programs, and services. With clear expectations and communication, the leadership team and faculty will be poised to build on this framework and expand the definition of learning in the school.

## Commitment

The school is committed to growth and improvement in the priority areas and explicit written communication about their beliefs about learning. The school revised the schedule to ensure dedicated PLC time, invested in the students' and faculty's social-emotional health and wellness and created more heterogeneous classrooms. Much work has been done to develop a vision of the graduate and core values, and there is a commitment to complete the written beliefs about learning fully.

The school improvement plan was developed with input from the school council, student leadership council, and school leadership team. The school council is composed of six parents, two community members, five staff



members, and one student. Lead teachers are responsible for coordinating and overseeing school improvement plan goals.

The school is poised and committed to continued growth and improvement. The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have understandably slowed the rate of implementation. As the school moves forward, it will be essential to engage all faculty in each of the priority areas and affirm commitment to the school's vision of the graduate and the implications for full implementation of that vision, including implementing curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices that provide students opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and demonstrate growth and achievement of the school's vision of the graduate.

## **Competency**

The school has begun to build educators' capacity to implement their priority areas. Time has been provided to conduct PLCs, and most staff have had PLC professional development. Additional adjustment counselors have been assigned to the school to support the social-emotional needs of all students.

MHS has an active school council and an updated school improvement plan to coordinate school improvement efforts. Also, the principal convenes a student advisory group composed of a student advisory council and class officers to provide feedback and a student voice to school improvement efforts. In addition, members of the MHS leadership team, which include lead teachers and administrators, meet during the summer for a retreat, bi-weekly throughout the year, and during the evenings in the first term to design and implement action steps tied to school improvement. Further, the principal seeks feedback from the faculty and staff to make adjustments in practice relative to school management and operations.

While MHS has several ongoing initiatives, efforts should be made to weave these together with an overarching pattern designed to increase educators' competency for implementing the school's developing beliefs about learning, making effective use of PLC time, the coordination and delivery of a multi-tiered system of support, and working on the curriculum in a consistent format and have the understanding of what is expected when completing the curriculum mapping template.

## **Capacity**

The school has the necessary time, resources, and support to progress in its priority areas. The district, school administrators, and the school committee are dedicated to ensuring educators have the support they need, including time and resources. The school has sufficient professional development time, including four full days and six half days to progress toward their priority areas. A negotiated educator evaluation system provides systematic feedback to educators regarding practice and progress toward their professional growth goals.

When the school begins to fully implement the vision of the graduate, core values, and beliefs about learning, it will be important to dedicate similar time and resources to build shared understanding, commitment, and competency in the areas necessary for success.

# Commendations

---

## Commendation

The time available for many teachers to participate in professional learning communities

The creation of the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate

The broad range of electives offered to all students

The courses available to prepare students for targeted career paths

The integrated social-emotional learning philosophy and belief for students to learn, they must feel valued and welcomed

## Commendation

The opportunity for teacher teams to meet in PLCs during the school day to discuss student concerns, analyze student work, develop assessments, and revise curriculum

## Commendation

The support from content supervisors to facilitate curriculum writing

The documentation of the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate

## Commendation

The accessibility of all curriculum units in a shared Google folder

## Commendation

The availability of translation services within the school

## Commendation

The communication provided to parents through newsletters available in three languages

## Commendation

The dedicated phone lines in English, Spanish, and Portuguese published on the home page of the school's website

## **Commendation**

The coordinated efforts of the ninth and tenth grade teams to communicate with families

## **Commendation**

The peer mentoring program for new students

## **Commendation**

The caring, compassionate staff that embraces opportunities to assist underserved populations

The feeling of safety and connectedness for students

# Additional Recommendations

---

## Recommendation

Design learning and assessment experiences that are cognitively challenging and require learners to exercise a full range of thinking skills and learning dispositions in all classes

## Recommendation

Ensure instructional practices include strategically differentiating, individualizing, or personalizing based on student learning needs

## Recommendation

n/a

## Recommendation

n/a

## Recommendation

n/a

## Recommendation

n/a

## Recommendation

n/a

## Recommendation

n/a

# **FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES**

---

This Initial/Decennial Accreditation Report of the Visiting Team reflects the findings of the school's Summary Report and those of the visiting team. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administrators, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administrators yearly of progress made in aligning with the Standards for Accreditation.

A school's initial/continued Accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing the school's improvement/growth plan based on the Priority Areas validated by the visiting team and recommendations 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, the Commission requires that the principal submit a First Report of Progress and Planning and routine Three- and Six-Year Reports of Progress and Planning describing the school's progress implementing the Priority Areas as well as submitting an updated improvement/growth plan. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards or Priority Areas for Growth are not being met in a satisfactory manner, if additional information is needed on matters relating to the school's alignment with the Standards for Accreditation, or substantive changes occur in the school.

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Substantive Change Policy requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days of occurrence any substantive change which impacts the school's alignment with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Report of Substantive Change must describe the change itself and detail the impacts the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included on the next page. All other substantive changes should be included in the Reports on Progress and Planning and/or the Annual Information Report (AIR) which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed a Self-Reflection that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need, hosted a Collaborative Conference, developed an improvement/growth plan, and completed a Summary Report. The time and effort dedicated to the Accreditation process, school improvement/growth, the Summary Report, and the preparation for the visit ensured a successful Initial/Decennial Accreditation visit.

# **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

---

## **NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Schools**

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has an impact on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Report of Substantive Change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact on the school's ability to meet the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding - cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- grade level responsibilities of the principal
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services
- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees
- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency

# **Roster of Team Members**

---

## **Chair(s)**

**Chair: James LaBillois** - Brockton Public Schools

**Assistant Chair: Mr. David DiPietro** - Gloucester High School

## **Team Members**

**Desiree Chumsantivut** - Southbridge High School

**Tara Grosso** - Hull High School

**Inna London** - Framingham Public Schools

**Anne Ludes** - Massachusetts Academy of Mathematics and Science

**Lynn Radford** - Lunenburg High School

**Stacey Rogers** - Plymouth Public Schools