

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

***REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE***

**Bassick High School  
Bridgeport, Connecticut**

May 5 - 8, 2013

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# STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

## THE DISTRIBUTION, USE, AND SCOPE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

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

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

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## INTRODUCTION

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of six Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS), the Commission on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), the Commission on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Commission on American and International Schools Abroad (CAISA).

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

- Teaching and Learning Standards
  - Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
  - Curriculum
  - Instruction
  - Assessment of and for Student Learning
- Support Teaching and Learning Standards
  - School Culture and Leadership
  - School Resources for Learning
  - Community Resources for Learning.

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Commission's visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Commission in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

### **Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study**

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Bassick High School, a committee of eight members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Bassick High School extended over a period of several years due to an approved delay granted by NEASC. As such, the self study was conducted from September, 2010 to May, 2013. Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Commission, Bassick High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

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

A visiting committee of 16 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Bassick High School. The Committee members spent four days in Bridgeport, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented teachers and administrators from public schools from four New England states, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Bassick High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 32 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 50 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on the report was agreed to by visiting committee consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the visiting committee's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Commission Standards.

This report of the findings of the visiting committee will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Secondary Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of Bassick High School.

## Overview of Findings

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

Bassick High School has employed the self-study process as a means of examining programs and services it provides for its students as well as its fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning. It has delineated accurately its many accomplishments and some significant needs in the self-study documents. Its identification of strengths and needs along with the conclusions and recommendations found in this report will form the basis for continued school improvement at Bassick High School.

Bassick High School is an extremely important school in the Bridgeport school system. Serving students from one of the poorest economic areas of the state, the role that Bassick plays in providing opportunities to the young people it serves cannot be understated. The visiting committee took note of the many wonderful Bassick High School students who were so welcoming and helpful during our visit. So many of these students are eager to learn, and come ready to take advantage of what Bassick has to offer. Too, the committee was deeply impacted – often in an emotional way – by the commitment and passion that many Bassick educators have for instructing their students. By the same token, the visiting team was duly impressed by the scale and scope of the tremendous challenges that the Bassick students and staff face on a daily basis.

To be sure, there are some significant impediments that Bassick faces in order to properly provide an educational program that meets the needs of its students. First and foremost, the physical plant does

not mirror the promise in the faces of the young people who walk Bassick High School's halls. Further, it is clear that the school does not have a consistent source of operating and capital funds in order to support teaching and learning, and that this has been the case for many years. As this report delineates, this funding challenge negatively impacts almost every aspect of the education program, from major hindrances such as time for teachers to collaborate to educational materials to the minutiae of inadequate cleaning supplies. While it is true that the most important resource that the Bridgeport Public School System provides the students of Bassick is the adults in the building, it is also true that unless this principal and faculty are provided with the resources – time, in particular – to effectively collaborate to improve student learning, Bassick's students will not be given opportunities to gain the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills so vital in tomorrow's economy. While there are many examples of good work at the school, there is also a lot of work to be done by every stakeholder including the district funding entities to ensure that students receive a consistently excellent learning experience in every classroom.

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

Walking through the halls of Bassick, one feels a sense of family and belonging. The students feel comfortable and safe, the teachers are positive and upbeat, and the principal's presence is strong and assertive. That there is uniformity to this experience permeating throughout the building is both comforting and admirable. It is clear that Bassick students are connected to the school and especially to the adults in the school.

However, there is no such uniform experience when walking through the classrooms at Bassick High School. Some classrooms are exemplary: teachers have high expectations for student behavior and academic performance; students rise to the level of their teachers' expectations. Far too many classrooms, however, evidenced behaviors that are indicative of low expectations: students off-task (at best) and disruptive (at worst), unclear instructional objectives, and students tasks lacking in rigor. To be sure, faculty at Bassick are hindered by an aging building, insufficient technology and inadequate instructional supplies. It is also true that Bassick faculty teach students who are often reading well below grade level. Nonetheless, pockets of excellent learning experiences exist at Bassick despite these



obstacles. Further, students who are reading and writing below grade level are capable - and deserving - of learning activities that are rigorous and that demand higher order thinking skills.

### **Support for Teaching and Learning**

As previously stated, Bassick will not be able to meet its obligation to provide life-changing opportunities for its students until the Bridgeport Public School provides a dependable and adequate funding stream that is able to support a minimum level of staff, faculty, facility, technology, and learning supplies.

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## School and Community Profile

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Situated in the Southwestern section of the state of Connecticut and the West end of the City of Bridgeport, Bassick High School is not only located in the poorest socioeconomic neighborhood in the state, it is also located in one of the wealthiest socioeconomic counties in the state.

Ninety percent of our students are children of color. The total minority population is 94%. The breakdown is as follows: 43% Hispanic, 45% African- American, 5% white, 4% Asian and 1% other. Forty percent of our students come from homes where English is not the primary language, and our students' families speak a total of 69 non-English languages.

The Census Bureau reports that Bridgeport has the widest gap between the rich and poor of the 516 metropolitan and micropolitan areas surveyed in the most recent census. Bridgeport's mean income is less than \$19,000.00. The unemployment rate in Bridgeport stands at approximately 15%. Of 446 juniors and seniors, 121 students are non-employed, 22 students work fewer than 8 hours per week, 38 students work between 8 and 16 hours per week, and 14 students work more than 16 hours per week.

Bridgeport Public Schools number 40 and serve approximately 20,450 students. Thirteen private schools enroll approximately 1,966 students. Currently, 1,043 students are enrolled at Bassick, the smallest of the three high schools. Bassick has a relatively stable enrollment in relation to previous years and other schools in the city. The percentage of transient population stands at 27% this year. Expenditure per pupil is approximately \$15,000, which ranks well below the state average. Thirteen percent of local taxation, excluding school construction, is spent on education.

Bassick is a traditional comprehensive high school serving students from grades nine through twelve. Academies have been formed for ninth and tenth grades, grouping them on separate floors within the newer building.

Our two-year average dropout rate is 47 percent, and 53 percent of our seniors graduate. Average daily

attendance ranges between 81 and 86 percent.

On average, teachers miss five days of school per year due to illness, maternity leave, family medical leave and long-term disability.

Based on data from only 32% of our 2012 graduates or their families, 5% of our students were accepted at two-year colleges and 5% were accepted at four-year colleges. Twelve percent of the graduating class entered the work force and 0.7% entered the military. Again, this data does not reflect the progress of 68% of the class of 2012.

Bassick High School enjoys partnerships with Housatonic Community College, the University of Connecticut, Fairfield University, and Sacred Heart University. These colleges have a very visible presence at Bassick, generating many activities and initiatives both inside and outside the school.

Student recognition programs include Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), buildOn, GEAR UP, Student Space College visits, Academic Excellence Awards, and 25 after-school clubs designed to meet students' interests.

# Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

## Core Beliefs and Values

Bassick High School adult stakeholders (consisting of community members, parents, administrators, and teachers) collectively value the individuality and potential of our students. We believe in the ability and determination of our students to actively engage in the learning process and achieve their post secondary educational and career goals as identified in their Student Success Plans. We expect all students to develop 21st Century skills and apply them in academic, civic, and social domains. Adults will provide the resources, support and guidance necessary for students to reach their goals.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations

The Bassick High School community has identified the following learning expectations for all students:

### Academic

We expect our students to demonstrate grade-level proficiency in all 21st century academic skills across all disciplines, to engage fully in and out of the classroom and to demonstrate integrity when making academic choices.

### Civic

We expect our students to foster civic responsibility in their school community and in their local and global communities.

### Social

We expect our students to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships by demonstrating discernment, integrity and respect for individual cultural and racial diversity.

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## Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

*Effective schools identify core values and beliefs about learning that function as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community. Decision-making remains focused on and aligned with these critical commitments. Core values and beliefs manifest themselves in research-based, school-wide 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Every component of the school is driven by the core values and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations.*

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.
2. The school has challenging and measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.
3. The school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.
4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

## Conclusions

The school community has deliberately engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. The process began in 2009 in preparation for the originally scheduled 2011 NEASC accreditation visit; however, due to the school's classification as a "turnaround school" and the subsequent restructuring efforts, Bassick requested a delay for the NEASC visit. Subsequent to the restructuring, there were changes in school staff, as well as in the principal and administrative staff at the high school, and in the superintendent of schools. Bassick was awarded a school improvement grant and chose to become a CommPACT (Community members, Parents, Adults, Children, and Teachers) school. All constituencies of the school community took part in a visioning process. With guidance from the University of Connecticut, parents, administrators, students, teachers, and community members and other school staff were placed in focus groups to identify the strengths, needs, and dreams for Bassick High School (BHS). After this process, they formed cadres to address each concern identified. The ideas expressed were merged with the former 2009 core values, beliefs, and student learning statement to form the current version. The core value and beliefs statement intentionally shifts the focus from students to adults and may, unintentionally minimize the students' responsibility in their own learning. As a consequence of reaching out to all of the constituency groups, they have developed a collaborative and inclusive core values, beliefs, and learning expectations statement that reflects the attitude of the school community. (self-study interviews, panel presentation, teacher interviews, teachers)

The school has challenging and measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for all the students, which address academic, civic, and social competencies. While Bassick High School utilizes rubrics delineating the levels of performance on the 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations for learning, BHS has not identified the targeted high level of achievement expected of the students. School-wide rubrics are displayed in many classrooms. However, many teachers have not consistently incorporated them in

their grading practices. While the expectations for student learning as written are challenging, many teachers report that they have to differentiate the rubrics' levels in order to accommodate for their students' deficiencies in their academic skills. Consequently, they have lowered the expectations for student learning. In the past, there was a deliberate school-wide focus on a specified learning expectation each day of the week. However, this practice has been discontinued. Many students are not aware of these 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, nor are they consistently informed of the connection between their subject matter and those expectations for student learning. As a consequence of these practices, although Bassick has challenging and measurable learning expectations, the school-wide rubrics do not help students practice or achieve Bassick's learning expectations. (students, teachers, self-study, classroom observations)

The core values and beliefs are reflected in the culture of Bassick High School; however, these beliefs do not yet substantially drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and they minimally impact school policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. It is true that Bassick High School takes pride in the rich diversity of its students. There are posters, pictures, and quotations posted throughout the building to celebrate this and to inspire the student body. The curriculum, for the most part, is developed in the Central Office and does not flow from the school's core values and beliefs. It is not clear whether every teacher is responsible for every expectation or if there is a system in place whereby specific content areas take responsibility for specific expectations. In keeping with their core values and beliefs, they have developed the Student Success Plan (SSP) as a means of providing individualized support - academic, civic, and social - and as a means of identifying the pathways for achieving the personal goals of every student in the building. Additionally, BHS adopted the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) program to address school culture and climate issues and its accompanying PRIDE(Punctuality, Responsibility, Integrity, Discernment, Engagement) rubric. BHS also makes use of "Bassick Bucks" as a positive behavior incentive. While an underlying sense of core values and beliefs permeates the relationships, connections, and rapport between staff and students, it

is not clear if this extends to all students by all staff. Despite the incorporation of PBIS, Bassick Bucks, and SSPs, there is only nominal adherence to school rules relative to uniforms, electronic devices, attendance, tardiness, and food consumption in the classrooms. While BHS has made efforts to live by their core values and beliefs, the core values and beliefs are not the fulcrum from which all decisions and activities emanate. (panel presentation, classroom observation, student shadowing, student interviews, teachers)

The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities.

Bassick High School has changed its core values and belief statement three times to accommodate the school's, the district's, and the community's changing priorities. As part of the CommPACT project, BHS utilized research tools to shape changes in its statement. The statement has been discussed among faculty and staff to ensure common understanding. While there was ongoing discussing, reviewing, and revising of the core values and beliefs, BHS has not developed a process to analyze and report out on either the school's adherence to this document or on the students' progress or achievement in reaching the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Staff members state that they are in the process of developing this system of reviewing, monitoring, and revising the school's community adherence to the document. As Bassick continues to make changes in order to meet the needs of all students, so too must the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations change to reflect the work of the school. (teachers, students, interviews, standard committee meeting, leadership meeting).

## **Commendations**

1. The use of the CommPACT process as a means of establishing a foundation for the core values and beliefs



2. The active involvement of all the school's constituent groups as a means to ensure a commitment to Bassick High School's Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
3. The display of core values, beliefs, learning expectations, inspirational quotations, and culturally diverse art work throughout the school
4. The use of Bassick Bucks as an incentive for the student body
5. The formal process in place to regularly review and revise the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
6. The school culture which is reflective of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

### **Recommendations**

1. Identify the targeted level of performance for all rubrics
2. Align learning expectations with specific content areas
3. Ensure that the core value, beliefs, and expectations for student learning is the focal point from which all decisions and activities evolve
4. Develop a system for monitoring all student progress and achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

**2****Curriculum**

*The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The curriculum includes a purposefully designed set of course offerings, co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities. The curriculum reflects the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The curriculum is collaboratively developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on analysis of student performance and current research.*

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
  - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
  - the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - instructional strategies
  - assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
  - inquiry and problem-solving
  - higher order thinking
  - cross-disciplinary learning
  - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
  - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. 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

## Conclusions

Although the Bassick High School Self-Study states that 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are purposefully designed and embedded in every lesson, there is limited evidence that these expectations are being met in most areas. In reviewing curriculum guides and assignments that appear on the ATLAS template, it is apparent that many students are not given ample opportunity to employ higher order thinking skills on many assignments. Further, while there is a suggested district-planning template which provides space to indicate the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectation embedded in a particular lesson, it is not widely used. The lack of up-to-date technology adversely affects student performance and preparation for applying 21<sup>st</sup> century skills beyond their secondary education. Classroom observations provide little evidence that the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are either explicitly stated by teachers or clearly understood by students as daily expectations. Twenty-first century skills were evidenced in some but not in all of observed lesson plans. This is compounded by the focus on breadth of coverage over depth of understanding that was noted in many observed classroom lessons. The design of curriculum and lesson plans focused on specific 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations is not evident in all instruction, and this, in turn, provides students with limited practice and development of these learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, parents, school leadership, curriculum guides, ATLAS, classroom observations)

Perhaps due to the recent changes that have affected Bassick, curriculum is not currently written in a common format in all areas. The district has provided departments with units of study and pacing guides, and core departments (math, English, science and social science) attempt to review and modify curriculum on an ongoing basis. They recognize that the process is still in its developmental stage and not widely applied. Most teachers follow a structured lesson plan in their classroom; however, when asked, not all could produce a written lesson plan. They indicated that they use a format designed to meet their specific observed needs and not a universally applied template. To bring greater uniformity the district has begun using ATLAS, a curriculum mapping and pacing software program. It has not been in service long enough to note any significant improvement. In fact, only one faculty member has

input any data. Time is not being provided for staff members to learn how to use ATLAS and for developing curriculum in ATLAS. Time to discuss curriculum and develop instructional strategies and assessment tools is also unavailable. In this regard, the district has provided Bassick with common performance rubrics but there is scant evidence that they are applied consistently by all faculty members. Instead, when rubrics are used they are developed by teachers to meet their more specific needs. This is also the case with assessment guidelines: the district mandates certain assessments, but it is left to the departments in the high school to develop their own. Once again, time for all department faculty members to engage in informational and developmental conversations to produce a coherent assessment policy is lacking. Although Bassick has begun to revise curriculum, lack of a common format hinders teachers from valuable data analysis to inform, modify and implement best practice. (self-study, classroom observations, teacher interviews, department and school leaders)

While the Bassick High School NEASC Self-Study document indicates that depth of understanding and application of knowledge is emphasized, there is little observable evidence that higher order critical thinking and problem-solving skills are being used consistently in many classrooms. Because many students are significantly and chronically below grade level in both academic preparation and performance, many assignments tend to focus more on fact gathering and breadth of study than on developing higher order critical thinking and problem-solving skills aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. It is evident from some classroom visits that critical thinking can be embedded in lesson plans to facilitate the practice of these skills while also working on remediation. Students in a graphic design classroom are regularly offered multiple opportunities to develop and apply 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Assignments are project-based and allow students to use real-world digital tools in a flexible and adaptable context suitable for independent and collaborative work. Further notable evidence of critical thinking and problem solving occurring in the classroom is demonstrated in an upper-level English classroom. Higher order thinking opportunities are facilitated by the literary analysis of a complex text. In addition, a social studies teacher has displayed how carefully developed questions can help lead students to explore and develop critical thinking skills. Bassick also offers a wide range of

opportunities for authentic learning both in and out of school. The automotive, astronomy, graphic arts programs are excellent examples, as are the expanding opportunities given to students for academic and artistic pursuits in pull-out as well as in after-school programs; for example, the educational partnerships with such organizations and institutions as Yale University, Housatonic Community College, buidOn, GEAR UP, and RCA, among the many. However, some observed assignments and other classrooms have evidenced low-level questioning and engagement with classroom material according to Webb's Hierarchy of Depth of Knowledge. For example, an observed math assignment only requires the students to answer problems according to a given formula with no further evidence of a progression of the assignment that requires students to use higher order thinking in relation to the formula. As a result of the lack in some assignments to be planned and purposeful in the context of higher order thinking, not all students are afforded the same opportunity to develop higher order thinking and problem-solving skills. (curriculum guides, classroom observations, student and parent interviews, teacher interviews, student work, school leaders)

There is little evidence of clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum at Bassick High School. Some curricular alignment is facilitated by common textbooks provided by the district. Teachers may access ATLAS to inform and organize lesson plans and activities in their classroom. There is some evidence that curriculum is transparent within the classroom; however, it is not clearly observable in others. Data teams exist in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, which may lead to greater alignment between written and taught curriculum, but the absence of similar teams in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades does not provide such opportunity. Some evidence of data collection and curriculum revision is occurring at Bassick High School. Although data teams exist, the teachers of these 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> academic teams do not have a meeting schedule purposefully intended to monitor student progress which informs curriculum revision. Student scores, as evidenced by the universal screens of common formative assessments and benchmarks, are not informing curriculum revision and time has not been given by the district to accomplish this, despite the efforts of departments to meet and discuss data; therefore, curriculum revision as a result of the data cycle is not occurring. The visual arts department

has created and implemented a written curriculum that affords the opportunity of revision through the monitoring of department-wide common formative assessments. Other departments have reported that they create course-specific common formative assessments in order to monitor student progress. The evidence of alignment between the written and taught curriculum is limited in lesson plans. Although some teachers provided lesson plans as evidence of a clear link between purposefully developed curriculum and the classroom, a large number of teachers were not able to produce this evidence. While some teachers make efforts administer universal screens and to analyze subsequent data, limited effective time is allotted for the faculty to revise curriculum as evidenced by the data that reflects student need. (self-study, interviews, department leaders, classroom observations)

There is limited effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within Bassick High School and its sending schools. Teachers and administrators acknowledge that while some vertical alignment existed in the past, at present minimal vertical articulation exists between curricular areas or within academic departments. Data is gathered by the Central Office and shared with building administrators, counselors and appropriate support staff. This data is used to develop and articulate action plans for students, but beyond this there is limited vertical articulation of curriculum with sending schools. Information is shared among the three high schools in the district, but usually only involves student performance and not curricular issues. Some parents of special needs students indicate that the action plans developed for their students rely heavily on thorough coordination between Bassick High School and the schools they previously attended. The 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade academic departments along with some of Bassick High School's elective programs have reported that informal meetings, initiated by the teachers themselves, do take place to discuss alignment. Science and math teams are scheduled to meet four times a year. Current curriculum guides and ATLAS provide no evidence at present that any vertical alignment or coordination exists between Bassick High School and its sending schools for the general student population. Despite the efforts of some teachers and programs to create opportunities to study vertical alignment, the absence

of consistent district-wide efforts to vertically align curriculum limits teachers' ability to adequately meet the learning needs of students. (self-study, ATLAS, teacher, department leaders, school leaders)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center, supplies and materials, are insufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. As a consequence of the financial crisis facing the Bridgeport School District, Bassick High School has seen dramatic "excessing," i.e., the dismissal or reassignment of faculty. According to the Endicott survey, taken prior to the staff reductions that went into effect, 20.8 percent of faculty believed that the school had insufficient professional staff to fully implement its curriculum and co-curricular programs. In addition, only 22 percent of the Bassick faculty believed that the physical facilities supported implementation of the curriculum in 2011-2012. Conversations held with all staff reveal universal agreement that Basick High School is underfunded and that programs are affected without exception. Many faculty and staff members have volunteered their time and personal resources to provide adequate educational experience and materials for the students. The district has taken on the responsibility of curriculum development. As part of this, new textbooks are being provided to Bassick designed with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning objectives embedded in the formal presentation and practice of materials in the texts. At present, it is unclear how technology and library/media center resources support the curriculum; however, the district has promised a considerable expenditure of funds on providing necessary technology to students to meet Common Core Standards and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning objectives. These promises remain largely unfulfilled at present. There does not appear to be a transparent connection determining the connection between the resources of the library/media center and the school curriculum. It is difficult to determine how curriculum needs inform what materials and technology is obtained for the library/media center. In addition, careful allocation of diminished operating funds has consequently led to shortages of basic classroom materials resulting in many teachers spending their own money to provide some classroom materials. The efforts of teachers to adequately teach students, including those in co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities, have the

potential to be undermined by inadequate supplies and materials which also hinders the students' opportunities to successfully meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (parents, teachers, school leaders and support staff, library/media center visit, classroom visits)

The district does not provide 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 revision of curriculum was scheduled for the summer of 2012, in order for core courses to align with the Common Core standards. The district provided this time and opened the curriculum writing opportunity and offered a stipend to all teachers in the district on a voluntary basis. However, with the exception of science and math, the district has provided little opportunity allotted during the school year for all teachers to review, reassess the efficacy of curriculum per gathered data as needed. Meetings are being scheduled for this summer to continue working on curriculum, guided by the same invitation given to teachers last year to volunteer their time to this effort. Many teachers interviewed voice their skepticism that their input will influence decisions made by the district in curricular matters. In addition, there does not seem to be an important follow up to this allowing the majority of faculty may review what has been done by the few over the summer. Some classroom teachers have reported that there is no collaborative time embedded into their schedules to revise curriculum as informed by assessment results and to review the current literature on best practices research. Teacher morale and performance are being adversely affected as the time allotted to support their role as assessors, developers and implementers of curriculum is reduced. The lack of opportunity for teachers to remain up to date with current research will ultimately impact students' mastery of skills. (department leaders, school leadership, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

### **Commendations**

1. The emerging use of the ATLAS platform to develop common curriculum
2. The establishment of data teams in grades nine and ten



3. The teachers who regularly embed critical thinking and higher order thinking tasks into their lesson design
4. The teachers effort and willingness to utilize personal resources for materials and supplies to help students meet their learning expectations
5. The purchase of a number of new textbooks
6. The opportunities some students have to apply knowledge beyond the campus through collaborations with educational partnerships

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. Provide training and technology to fully implement the ATLAS platform to provide teachers access to a curriculum in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of the school-wide rubrics
3. Ensure that curriculum at all levels emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking
4. Utilize the supervision and evaluation process to ensure a clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum
5. Provide sufficient staff, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and reopen the library/media center in order to fully implement the curriculum
6. Provide the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum

# 3

## Instruction

*The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Instruction is responsive to student needs, deliberate in its design and delivery, and grounded in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Instruction is supported by research in best practices. Teachers are reflective and collaborative about their instructional strategies and collaborative with their colleagues to improve student learning.*

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations by:
  - personalizing instruction
  - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
  - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
  - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
  - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
  - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
  - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
  - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
  - strategically differentiating
  - purposefully organizing group learning activities
  - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
  - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
  - examining student work
  - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
  - examining current research
  - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

## Conclusions

Instructional practices at Bassick High School are sporadically examined and do not allow for consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Teacher instructional practices at Bassick High School are examined primarily using the recently implemented teacher evaluation process. Though teachers and administrators report that they have reflected both independently and collectively, many feel more time is needed in this area to do this process effectively so that it improves both teaching and learning. During the restructuring process as part of the School Improvement Grant (SIG), department heads returned to teaching a full load and no longer coached individual teachers, a process they felt was beneficial to improve the quality of teaching. The school announcements each day highlight a 21<sup>st</sup> century skill that students and teachers should be focusing on, but there is very little follow through from teachers. There is little monitoring to ensure that what is supposed to be taught is actually being taught. Until there is regular, structured time and a formal process for teachers to examine their practices, there cannot be an assurance that they are consistent with core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, department leaders)

In some areas, teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Many teachers report opportunities for personalized instruction through use of differentiated assignments as a way to meet the needs of diverse learners. This manifests itself as choice in projects/tasks, adapted reader texts for struggling readers and English language learners, re-teaching periods built into the schedule, and independent projects outside of class. Classroom observations show that some classes are very student centered, incorporate differentiated instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, and demonstrate rigor and higher order thinking skills in engaging lessons. Although students report a positive learning experience in most of their classes and with most

teachers, students stated there are not uniformly high levels of expectations from teachers. The inconsistency of expectations for learning and behavior, and the resulting classroom behavior distractions, creates dramatically different levels of engagement in classes throughout BHS. While there is some evidence of cross-disciplinary learning in classroom observations, many teachers stated that since fellow teachers within a certain department may be located in a separate building, there is little opportunity for common planning and reflective practice. Some students indicated that teachers offer opportunities for self-directed and cooperative learning opportunities through research, project-based learning, and PowerPoint group presentations; however, students feel individual versus group work grading expectations are inconsistent. Discussions with teachers indicated a lack of training and few technology tools available to provide opportunities for students to practice all of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Students in the Advanced Placement (AP) classes reported being academically challenged with higher order thinking and problem-solving skills through teacher expectations, classwork assignments, and assessment practices. However, some parents, many students, and classroom observations indicated many classes are not challenging. In addition, several students interviewed identified opportunities for applying knowledge to authentic tasks through student internships and partnerships through community organizations. However, classroom observations and student work indicate these opportunities for meaningful projects and learning are limited. There is evidence in student work of classroom and school-wide rubrics that engage students in self-reflection and assessment. However, school-wide rubrics are used in far less than half of the observed classrooms. Although students feel there are opportunities for integrating technology through use of PowerPoint and video and photo production in the video arts class, there is very limited or no opportunities to incorporate technology in general. All teachers interviewed reported a frustration with a lack of working computers in rooms and computer labs and few working printers; many teachers utilize their own personal laptops and equipment in order to enhance technology. When teachers engage students in higher order thinking skills, problem solving, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, self-assessment/reflections, integrate technology with fidelity, engage students

in hands-on activities through cooperative group work, and personalize instruction consistently, improved teaching and learning will take place. (student panel, parent interview, self-study, department heads, student work, standards for instruction)

Teachers occasionally adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments during instructional time, strategically differentiating, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. There are many teachers who use a variety of techniques to adjust their instructional practices through feedback and informal and formal assessment practice. However, there are some teachers who are not making adjustments as needed. Some teachers are beginning classes with a “Do It Now” warm-up task and are using that task to supplement curriculum. There is no widespread focus of assisting students in acquiring 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations by shared commitment to conduct daily activities in each class related to those expectations. Some teachers are using formative assessment well and are using it to inform instruction and to adjust teaching practices as needed. Some teachers are differentiating instruction, particularly in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, where collaboration among colleagues and professional discourse about strategic differentiation are shared. Some teachers are organizing meaningful group activities that are designed to assist students in collaboration and engagement, while other teachers are not monitoring groups closely enough to have this instructional practice prove to be effective. Some students stated that many teachers provide extra-help sessions to enhance student learning through re-teach periods and after school, and wish that there were more options for help during the school day. When all teachers use effective assessment practices, practice strategic differentiation, organize group-learning activities, and provide additional support in the classroom, students will reach their learning potential and student achievement will increase. (student shadowing, classroom observations, student work, student and teacher interviews)

In some areas, teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by using student achievement from a variety of formative and summative assessments, examining student work,

using feedback from a variety of sources, examining current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practices. The 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade academies have built-in common planning time to meet and review student work and to discuss teaching practices; however, teachers report built-in common planning time for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade is necessary to effectively use data to drive instruction and discuss student work to increase student achievement. Many teachers reported using benchmark data, provided by the district, to assess students. Results are not returned in a timely manner, making progress monitoring and implementation of tiered interventions very difficult. Teachers examine student work, track student progress, collect data, and provide interventions, although many teachers reported no training in data-driven decision making, which the State of Connecticut's two-day CALI (CT Accountability for Learning Initiative) training offers, free of charge, to alliance districts, such as Bridgeport. Teachers, support staff, and the parent resource center adequately use feedback from parents and other teachers as documented through PowerSchool grading reports and emails to inform instruction. Through student discussions and classroom observations, teachers informally use feedback from students to make adjustments in classroom instruction. Although teachers examine current research through professional literature articles and texts, many best practices for increased student achievement and engagement were not evident in classroom observations and student and parent discussions. When professional learning communities and common planning times are available for teachers to meet, discuss, plan, analyze data, use assessments to drive instruction, examine best instructional practices, engage in professional discourse and provide feedback to parents, instructional practices will improve which will benefit students as they strive to meet the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (student work, students, parents, teachers, observations)

Some teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in some content areas and in content-specific instructional practices. As noted in the self-study and during teacher interviews particularly, Bassick High School teachers need more collaborative time and more professional

development germane to their content area and student population. By virtue of the nature of the Teacher Education And Mentoring Program (TEAM), new teachers reflect regularly on their practices and research into best practices in many areas. The new System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) requires teachers reflect regularly in many areas as well. Many teachers attend other educational conferences in their content area as noted in the self-study. Despite these efforts, many teachers at BHS need more opportunities to maintain and gain expertise in their content areas through professional development. Without more opportunity for developing and maintaining expertise, teachers cannot provide the optimum delivery of instruction for leading students to success in their 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations and goals. (self-study, teachers, publications)

### **Commendations**

1. The number of highly qualified teachers at Bassick High School who go to great lengths to reflect regularly on their practice and to maintain their expertise in their content area
2. The excellent rapport among most teachers and their students
3. The excellent differentiation and authentic tasks used and linked to students' backgrounds and interests in some classrooms
4. The provision of common planning time for teachers in the academy programs
5. The number of teachers who adjust their instructional practices based on formal and informal feedback
6. The teachers who personalize learning through the use of differentiated instructional practices

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that teachers are provided with research-based professional development on data-driven decision making and tiered interventions to increase collaboration among teachers and improve student achievement

2. Provide opportunities for structured time during staff meetings, team, or department meetings for teachers to discuss, analyze, and share best practices to improve student performance
3. Ensure all teachers are provided collaborative time to share best practices on assessment practices with content area and department team members to improve teaching and learning
4. Provide professional development to ensure that all teachers' instructional practices engage students as active learners; emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking; and engage students in self-assessment and reflection



## Teaching and Learning Standard

### 4

## Assessment of and for Student Learning

*Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Assessment results are shared and discussed on a regular basis to improve student learning. Assessment results inform teachers about student achievement in order to adjust curriculum and instruction.*

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
  - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students and their families
  - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
  - student work
  - common course and common grade-level assessments
  - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - standardized assessments
  - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
  - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

## **Conclusions**

The professional staff employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, but only on an infrequent basis. After piloting rubrics within Bassick High School last year and providing opportunity for teacher feedback, all teachers within all content areas received rubrics to use as a tool to assess student work within their classrooms. Teachers stated that rubrics are used to assess various projects and assignments; however, they do not consistently use the school-wide rubrics to assess the students' mastery of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. In addition, examined student work displays a lack of rigor when attempting to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. When the school develops a formal process to employ the use of school-wide rubrics to ensure that every student is regularly assessed using these rubrics, it will be more effectively able to assess whole school as well as individual progress in achievement of its expectations. (teacher interview, student interview, student work)

The school's professional staff does not communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students and their families nor does it communicate the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community. Bassick High School is in continuous contact with parents using various forms of communication including phone blasts, written correspondences, and Pearson's PowerSchool. These forms of communication provide parents and students with academic and attendance data, reminders of upcoming school testing dates or activities, and services that may benefit the social, emotional, or academic facets of the student. However, all current methods of communication to parents do not specifically address a student's progress towards achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Parents and community members are unaware of students' progress specifically addressing mastery of the six 21<sup>st</sup> century skills because it is not currently addressed in forms of communication. (self-study, teachers, Endicott survey)

Not all professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Currently, time is being provided within the school day for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade data teams to meet in order to discuss and reflect upon gaps identified within student achievement. Teachers have used this time to modify and adjust departmental and school-wide rubrics, to discuss results of common formative assessments, and to identify pacing adjustments that need to be made to prepare students for C.A.P.T. (Connecticut Academic Performance Test). As a result, data charts have been observed within these classrooms that display students' improvements within identified areas of weakness. Although this collaborative time is provided to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, time is not allocated in the daily schedule to allow for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to collect, analyze, and reflect upon data with department members. As a result, the teachers of these grades are unable to review and discuss data that would improve the instructional practices for students within these classrooms. Most faculty members of Bassick High School lack the sufficient time to discuss and analyze student data because it is not embedded into the school's current daily schedule. Therefore, there may exist inequities in student achievement for students enrolled in grades 11 and 12. (teachers, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

Prior to each unit of study, many teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Within classroom instruction, teachers discussed and reviewed specific learning goals and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills with students when applicable to the lesson. Student work reviewed shows that 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills are being assessed and evaluated both in and out of the classroom setting. In addition, whenever appropriate, classroom teachers incorporate the "21<sup>st</sup> century skill of the day" both within their classroom instruction and through forms of assessment. When communicated by teachers, students are aware of the 21<sup>st</sup> learning expectations and unit learning-specific goals. (teacher interviews, self-study, classroom observations)

Prior to summative assessments, some teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics. Students confirm rubrics are distributed and discussed prior to all assessments. As a result, they are able to self-assess and reflect upon their own weaknesses and strengths within a specific assigned project or required paper. These rubrics vary in range from school wide to teacher created. Since school-wide rubrics were newly adopted this past January by Bassick High School, teachers are still mastering the efficiency of these rubrics and modifying the criteria within these rubrics when necessary. Teachers distribute to students and discuss rubrics as they pertain to learning expectations and assessment thereby making known varying levels of achievement. (student work, students, teacher interviews)

Some teachers consciously employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. During classroom instruction, teachers attempt to ensure that students have an understanding of classroom content using informal assessment strategies. Teachers administer pre- and post-tests in their units of study to identify content area weaknesses in order to modify and adjust classroom instruction. In addition, students are provided with a plethora of both performance and content-based assessments that provide them with the opportunity to be engaged and connected to the objectives and unit standards being addressed within instruction. Some teachers are able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their students by employing a range of assessments within their classrooms as a result of their assessment practices. (classroom observations, student work, teacher interviews)

Teachers in some areas collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Only 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade teams at BHS collaborate on a regular basis within the school day in formal scheduled meetings on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Only 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers meet in data analysis teams. However, no evidence was given to show that 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers meet either formally or informally within the school day. As a result of time not being provided within the current schedule, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers

are unable to collaborate on a regularly scheduled basis to discuss creation, analysis and revision of formative and summative assessments. (teacher interviews, panel presentation, self-study)

Teachers often provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Classroom teachers provide feedback and numerous opportunities for students to master content both in and out of the classroom setting. Some teachers inform students that they have ample time to resubmit assignments and retake assessments until they have provided evidence that the content being assessed has been mastered. However, not all students take advantage of this opportunity provided by teachers. Students are given various forms of social media including Facebook class pages, Instagram, and email that may be accessed out of the classroom and can be used to submit work or to ask questions. Immediate feedback is often provided through the use of these media tools. In addition, teachers provide immediate feedback within the classroom setting by reviewing classwork and homework assignments to gauge students' understanding of content. Although core academic teachers administer district benchmark exams frequently throughout the year, the results are not distributed or reviewed in a timely manner with teachers. Therefore, teachers cannot use this information to make instructional decisions that will positively impact student learning. As a result of teachers providing timely and corrective feedback, students are aware of their academic progress.(classroom observations, students, teachers)

Teachers sometimes use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Common formative assessments have been created for core subject areas to provide an opportunity for teachers to measure their students' progress in attaining the specific Common Core Standards and unit objectives outlined within Bassick High School's new curriculum guides. Also, the school provides time for both 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to meet weekly to review these formative assessments. However, teachers are not mandated to administer these assessments within their classrooms. When all teachers are uniformly administering the common formative

assessments in classes, they will be able to modify and adapt their instruction which will lead to all students having a more effective opportunity to improve their learning. (teachers, teacher interviews, department leaders)

Teachers and administrators individually and collaboratively sometimes examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following: student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, post-secondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni. Since the beginning of the 2012-2103 school year, Bassick High School has implemented time within the school schedule for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to meet on a weekly basis to discuss formative and summative assessments, new curriculum guidelines, and instructional strategies. A new curriculum for all core academic areas was recently introduced and adopted within the city of Bassick, and teachers were provided three days of professional development at the beginning of the school year. As a result of the curriculum being piloted this school year, teachers have stated at all grade levels that time needs to be provided by the district to review assessment data, discuss and revise objectives of units, examine the pacing guidelines suggested, and modify common formative and summative assessments. To address individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, the Standard for Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations Committee distributed 21<sup>st</sup> learning skills rubrics to the BHS faculty in January. These rubrics are not used consistently in all classes. Teachers stated that rubrics are used to assess various projects and assignments; however, they have not been provided an opportunity to collaborate and discuss the success of using these rubrics to assess 21<sup>st</sup> learning skills. Administrators and teachers at Bassick High School use student data from middle schools to address reading achievement gaps by offering a literacy course to students. The data collected by student assessments within this course is consistently reviewed to ensure that students are making adequate instructional

gains. This is made possible by monitoring reading levels and abilities of students to be certain that educational gains are being achieved within the class. Although data is collected to monitor the acceptance rate of students to two-year and four-year colleges, it is unknown if this data is used to revise curriculum and improve instructional practices. As a result of inadequacies existing for common planning among faculty members or for district-wide initiatives, sufficient participation in the data analysis is not evident which hinders the teachers' ability to effectively modify curriculum to improve instruction. (self-study, department leaders, teacher interviews)

Grading and reporting practices are informally reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Grading practices are not consistent across departments. BHS is currently examining options for a revised grading system. Parents are able to access PowerSchool and are given ample opportunities to learn how to access this educational and informational resource. If parents have questions regarding their child's progress, two scheduled formal report card nights within the school year provide them with the opportunity to discuss instructional concerns with their child's teachers. In the absence of the development of a grading practice that is clearly aligned with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, the school and district do not adequately inform students and parents about progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, parents)

### **Commendations**

1. The creation of school-wide rubrics to address 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills and core academic areas
2. The steps taken by Bassick High School to address the failure rate through the presentation of a new grading policy
3. The piloting of a new curriculum within core academic areas to ensure alignment of Common Core Standards
4. The creation of common planning time for the grade nine and grade ten teachers

5. The many teachers who provide timely and corrective feedback to students
6. The use of data charts in classrooms identifying student progress and ongoing learning needs
7. The range of assessment practices employed by teachers
8. The provision of the corresponding rubrics used prior to summative assessments by some teachers

### **Recommendations**

1. Implement a formal process to ensure that all school-wide rubrics are regularly used with all students so that the school can assess individual student achievement of the learning expectations
2. Identify and create a form of communication to ensure that parents are informed of students' progress in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations
3. Ensure that faculty members have adequate time to meet to discuss inequities in student achievement
4. Encourage teachers to continue to communicate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and unit-specific learning expectations to students
5. Continue the ongoing distribution and discussion of rubrics with students to support learning expectations
6. Continue to use a range of assessment strategies within classroom instruction to ensure that all students are mastering content area objectives
7. Implement time within the schedule to ensure that all faculty members can collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative, summative, and common assessments
8. Provide feedback on the results of benchmark assessments to teachers in a timely fashion to ensure that students have time to improve their mastery of content
9. Implement a process for administering common formative assessments in order to improve student learning



10. Schedule common planning for all faculty members to access data in conjunction with data teams and administration
11. Develop regular opportunities for teachers, administrators and teacher coordinators to review progress of student achievement
12. Develop and implement a grading and reporting policy that is aligned with the school's values and beliefs and connected to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
13. Report student progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to all stakeholders

**5**

## School Culture and Leadership

*The school culture is equitable and inclusive, and it embodies the school's foundational core values and beliefs about student learning. It is characterized by reflective, collaborative, and constructive dialogue about research-based practices that support high expectations for the learning of all students. The leadership of the school fosters a safe, positive culture by promoting learning, cultivating shared leadership, and engaging all members of the school community in efforts to improve teaching and learning.*

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).
3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
  - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
  - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
  - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
  - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

## Conclusions

Bassick High School provides a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that supports student learning; however, the belief that all students can achieve to high levels is not pervasive throughout the school. The presence of seven security guards ensures the safety and security of students and teachers. Students provide assistance to their peers both in and out of the classroom and that contributes to the respectful nature felt throughout the building. Student Success Plans (SSPs) help students take ownership of their learning. The Safe School Corridor Plan helps to ensure safety within neighborhoods by close monitoring of students through the use of marked signage, police monitoring, trained parent volunteers, and video surveillance while they are en route to their school. Freshman and Sophomore Academies aim to provide greater structure for students and to increase collaboration among teachers. Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) has been introduced and the staff has begun recognizing students for exhibiting positive behaviors. However, there is inconsistency in expectations for permissible student behavior. For example, in some classrooms all students were actively engaged in their work, yet in another half of the students were listening to music on iPods, texting on cell phones, or engaging in other off-task behavior. Although there is a conscious effort by the school community to promote a safe, positive climate and culture through established programs within BHS, the inconsistency despite these initiatives hinders the students' responsibility for high expectations of learning; therefore, while some students may achieve the school's learning expectations, others may not. (self-study, teacher interviews, administrative interviews, classroom visits)

Bassick High School is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity as every student is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course throughout his or her high school experience. All students are enrolled in Western Civilization, which is a heterogeneously group course. All elective classes are grouped heterogeneously and include special education students and English language learners (ELLs). The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) program is based in a self-contained model and

it allows students to leave for regular education classes according to their needs and abilities.

Opportunities for students to take at least one heterogeneous course are required and available throughout the students' high school experience, however not in all four core subjects. (self-study, administrative interviews, shadowing, teacher interviews)

Bassick High School has a formal program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The implementation of Advisory on a more regular basis within Bassick High School was designed for students to take ownership of their own Student Success Plan (SSP) and to be an active participant in their academic destiny and to promote lifelong habits that will serve them when they graduate from Bassick. The school's PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and PRIDE (punctuality, resourcefulness, integrity, discernment, and engagement) model reinforce and model student behavior and expectations. General concerns from teachers regarding Advisory center on the need for time to implement this program to its fullest. To address this concern, time allotted increased from one day every other week to two consecutive days every other week. Students clearly state they feel there is someone within BHS to whom they can turn in times of need. Teachers, security officers, assistant principals, and the building principal are all people students feel they can go to at any time to assist with their development needs and to address concerns they may have during the course of their four years at Bassick. The teachers are very passionate about their students, care about their students' well being, and want to be a part of the solution to helping kids both in and out of the classroom. Bassick provides students with an adult presence in the building that fosters the opportunity for students to feel comfortable and safe in their search to grow as both students and citizens. (self-study, student interviews, teacher interviews)

To be effective, professional development must be connected to clearly identified needs and sufficient time must be provided for professional dialogue and reflective practice. These components do not exist currently at BHS. Over the past several years, BHS staff has been engaged in transformational school reform initiatives as the school was identified as a persistently low performing school. Initiatives connected with their CommPACT work, funded by the School Improvement Grant (SIG), met with success, but missing was a forward-thinking plan as to how to sustain the work, how to examine its effectiveness and build upon those successes, and how to ensure that new skills and strategies learned, intended to improve both teaching and learning, are implemented faithfully by all teachers through careful monitoring and ongoing support. As a result, efforts to improve student learning have limited success and BHS often falls short of its belief that “adults will provide the resources, support, and guidance necessary for students to reach their goals.” (self-study, teacher interviews, administrative interviews)

School leadership uses research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on the improvement of student learning. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) selected Bridgeport to participate in the new teacher evaluation pilot beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. Administrators received formal training through Danielson’s *Teachscape* model and required all administrators to complete 30 hours of training in addition to five hours of practice in scoring videos prior to taking a proficiency exam. Administrators are required to produce one formal and two informal observations for tenured teacher per year and a minimum of three formal observations for non-tenured teacher per year. In addition to formal and informal observations, administrators and teachers collaboratively work together to create Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) that are aligned to the District and School Improvement Plans. This evaluation process plays a significant role in the attempt to improve instruction in Bassick High School; however, there is limited consistency that shows this improved effort to align goals and objectives for students is paying dividends in the classroom on a daily basis. Classrooms still display teacher-driven lessons, differentiation is not

widespread, and the expectations of teachers for their students are not necessarily reflective of this evaluation process. As a result, while there are examples of attempts by administrators and teachers to improve student learning within the framework of the evaluation process, limited evidence shows that this practice is resulting in improved instruction and student learning; consequently, not all students are able to realize their potential. (administrative interviews, self-study, teacher interviews)

The organization of time does not support research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. Budget cuts have placed department coordinators back in the classroom eliminating a period during the day which was previously used for non-evaluative classroom observations, for teacher support in the planning and execution of lessons, and used as a direct link to the principal in the form of monthly department meetings which served the greater Bassick community as a whole in the teaching and learning process. Teachers state that they believe the needs of all students are not being met due to the lack of collegial common planning opportunities. If given the opportunity to collaborate, teachers state that this can positively impact the teaching and learning environment for the betterment of all students at BHS. Since teachers are not provided with in-house support services, they are unable to focus on collaboration and improve upon the methods and strategies they implore for their students, thus providing the resources, support, and guidance necessary for all students to reach their goals. (self-study, teacher interviews, administrative interviews)

Student load and class size challenge teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Seventeen positions were eliminated in one calendar year (June 2011-June 2012), thus some class sizes increased. Fewer teachers and additional students make it more challenging for teachers to meet the needs of individual students. Common planning time is not regularly available for all teachers nor is a formal professional development plan available to assist teachers in differentiation practices that will afford them the opportunity to reach all learners, especially the struggling, at-risk learner. When the

class sizes and teaching loads are supported by time in the schedule for teachers to work collaboratively, students will benefit from a purposeful, coordinated effort to improve their learning. (self-study, teacher interviews, administrative interviews)

The principal, in conjunction with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership to the staff and students. He has assigned administrators, aspiring administrators and teacher leaders' leadership roles to oversee graduation and certain testing protocols such as CAPT, the mentoring of new teachers and struggling teachers to develop instructional strategies. He has designed workshops to assist teachers in understanding the new evaluation system and to encourage them to share differentiated instructional models to improve student learning across all disciplines. The teachers believe the principal to be a visionary and a supporter of the CommPACT model. He is in communication via email with the staff on the topic of building events, needs and opportunities. He acts on suggestions for improving school culture and student achievement. He is supportive of the Student Success Plan and works to modify the schedule to address the needs of the Student Success Plan Advisory. He has initiated student success programs that encourage students to attain their educational and life goals. The building principal has taken an active role in the implementation, supervision, and consistent follow through of initiatives that are directly linked to the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, central office interviews)

Since 2010 Bassick High School has been a CommPACT school and attempts to engage teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community in a collaborative process to address and take ownership of issues affecting BHS. In 2010, stakeholders were invited to participate in the visioning process. This included member of the PTSO, school governance council, data and grade level team



meetings. The result was 15 Cadres (attendance, college and career, culture, curriculum, data, discipline, evaluation, facilities, incentives, instruction, parents, professional development, remediation, scheduling, and technology) that were created to meet the needs of BHS. The CommPACT model empowered stakeholders to take a more active role and responsibility for the well being of all students. The principal is approachable. His pleasant demeanor, humor, and compassion allow for both students and staff to feel comfortable addressing needs and concerns for both students and the school at large. He is a visible presence who encourages students and meets with students on an as-needed basis. The principal meets with his constituents through building union representatives and department coordinators at first formally but over the course of the school year on an as-needed basis. As BHS continues its efforts to include all stakeholders in meaningful and defined roles that promote responsibility and ownership, students will be more effectively supported as they work to achieve their goals. (self-study, teacher interviews, and student interviews)

Bassick High School teachers are dedicated and care about their students and participate in the process of identifying issues to be addressed in the building. Teachers and their students have created a campus beautification committee for which students generate and create artwork and sayings to “brighten up” the building and have created an “Edible Garden.” Bassick teachers also lead afterschool groups, activities, extra-curricular programs and fundraising efforts to improve student engagement and school culture. In addition, teachers participated in curriculum revision, (e.g., English), and in developing assessment strategies and instructional practices. (self-study, building tour, teacher interviews, administrative interviews)

The principal works collaboratively with both internal and external stakeholders to implement new initiatives intended to help students achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. He has reconstructed the SRBI teams to allow them to function more effectively. Six faculty volunteers work to improve

reading levels for struggling students. The problem of truancy is being addressed by the Central Office in the development of Safe School Corridors with the objective being to prevent the issues that cause students not to come to school. City wide, the schedule is being adjusted to incorporate full-day professional development. Finally, coordination with the district is evident with the introduction of the new teacher evaluation. The principal and the district have worked collaboratively to ensure that the safety of students is paramount, to establish consistency among all three high schools, and to ensure that all teachers are properly evaluated and trained to serve the students of BHS. (self-study, central office interview, administrative interviews, teacher interviews)

Bassick High School is one of three high schools in the Bridgeport community, and as such is directed by the school board. The school board determines the budget and curriculum initiatives. It is apparent that the board determines major policies for all schools in their community. The principal reinforces these policies and practices in his school. He has been able to implement such programs as PBIS, Student Success Plans, and SAT/SBRI to assist students. The budget is under the control of the district with the principal using these funds for his school's needs. Despite issues that are out of the principal's control at the district level, he has the ability to lead and make decisions in his building in the best interest of his students and staff without reservation. (self-study, administrative interviews, central office interviews)

### **Commendations**

1. The safe environment that ensures all students follow a behavior model that will allow them to meet goals and expectations for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning
2. The adults in the building who act as role models and mentors for students to turn to for academic, social, and other needs as they strive to achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

3. The PBIS and PRIDE models that foster positive student behavior and generate a foundation for which to align core values and beliefs within the BHS community
4. The building leadership that fosters opportunities to drive instructional leadership for both teachers and students

### **Recommendations**

1. Review measures to ensure that consistency of high expectations in classrooms is observable in all classroom and learning settings daily
2. Design and implement professional development that allows for professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
3. Coordinate formal meeting times for teachers to meet and discuss professional practices in an attempt to improve teaching and learning
4. Align SLOs and collaborative reflective conversations with teachers and administrators that result in the evidenced improvement of instruction and student learning
5. Continue to examine class loads and size in conjunction with the course offerings to ensure that class size does not inhibit the teaching and learning process

# 6

## School Resources for Learning

*Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of coordinated programs and services. These resources enhance and improve student learning and well-being and support the school's core values and beliefs. Student support services enable each student to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.*

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - deliver a written, developmental program
  - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
  - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
  - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
  - use an appropriate referral process
  - conduct ongoing student health assessments
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
  - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
  - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
  - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
  - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
- collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
  - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

## Conclusions

Bassick High School's support services staff have identified strategic programs to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student to assist them in achieving the BHS 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations. Bassick implemented several CommPACT initiatives - such as academies - aimed at promoting success for the many at-risk freshmen and sophomore students. Though the CommPACT funds will run out this year, Bassick is committed to continue its many initiatives. Climate specialists who were only in place until the end 2011-12 school year due to the lack of funding by the School Improvement Grant (SIG) provided an effective vehicle in refocusing disruptive students, supporting collaboration between the school and the home, and increasing student attendance. SRBI (scientifically research-based interventions) is BHS's early intervention program for at-risk students needing academic and/or behavior intervention. This team meets on a weekly basis for 90 minutes. Members include: an administrator, regular education teacher, special education teacher, guidance personnel, school social worker and psychologist. Parents are also invited to the meeting. Students are referred to this team through teacher, guidance, administrator or parent recommendation during the school year. At the beginning of the school year, students are recommended if they received four or five failing grades the previous school year. At SRBI meetings the team reviews student progress, gives intervention strategies for success and sets a timeline for review. Students are given a case manager who is most familiar with the student. Other programs such as reading interventions, credit recovery (APEX), MAACS tutoring, awareness and readiness for undergraduates (GEAR UP), The Twilight Alternative Education Program, as well as other outreach support programs provide assistance to students in meeting the learning expectations. Although SRBI and other interventions are in place, the number of students in need of interventions and other supports to assist them in meeting the learning expectations far out number those currently receiving them; therefore until these interventions are available to all students, the school cannot ensure that all students are supported as they attempt to fulfill the school's core values and beliefs. (self-study, interviews, observations)

The school effectively provides information to families, especially those most in need, about available student support services in a variety of ways. This includes BHS's website and Facebook, phone blasts, fliers and forms written in English and Spanish, yearly back-to-school night, report card conferences, PowerSchool (which provides parents with access to their child's teachers and grades) and The Parent Resource Center which is open daily and offers a variety of supports to parents and families. Parents are also invited to SRBI meetings by mail and telephone. Identified special education students/parents are notified via mail and telephone about upcoming PPT (Planning and Placement Team) meetings as required by the State of Connecticut. PPT notices also include special education students' rights documents. As a result of these communications, families are aware of the available student support services. By effectively communicating with parents and the community through a variety of modalities, in order to disseminate needed information of school-wide activities, individual meetings for at-risk and special education students, student grades and overall progress, BHS will continue to build a relationship with both home and the community thus fostering respect and enhancing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for all students (self-study, parent interviews, observations)

Support services staff use adequate and appropriate technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. Technology consists of programs like PowerSchool (used to access and track disciplinary data, contact information, health information, attendance, monitor grades and submit progress reports), Clarity, Easy IEP, Microsoft Word and Excel, Lexia (used to improve basic reading skills). Attendance Register, Destiny Online Management System, Gale Databases and World Book Encyclopedia Online. Communication technologies such as e-mail, fax, telephones, websites and letters are used throughout the school to communicate with parents, students, administration, faculty and outside agencies. Software technology to support post-graduate and college planning is not in place at Bassick High School. Guidance counselors were given professional development in Navience, a software program which assists students in their post-secondary

graduation planning, but the program was never purchased according to counselors and administration. Bassick High School utilizes many software packages to support coordinated services for students (with the exception of post-secondary planning software which inhibits the school's ability to effectively provide post-graduation assistance for all students). (self-study, faculty interviews, observation)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. The Bassick Guidance Department includes four certified guidance counselors for a student population of 1,043 students (a ratio of approximately 275:1). This is within the acceptable range of counselor-to-pupil ratio outlined by NEASC. However, due to Bassick High School's high level of crisis situations, number of attendance referrals, plus a lack of coordination in streamlining responsibilities, counselors are frequently mitigating student crisis situations and therefore are not effectively providing adequate counseling services as prescribed by NEASC or by effective state standards. Bassick High School counselors currently provide ongoing crisis intervention services for all students requiring such interventions, individual counseling services for students as needed or as requested, delivery outreach and referrals to community agencies and referrals to community mental health services, and college guidance services as requested. Bassick High School counselors are currently not able to provide the following: a developmental guidance program nor curriculum, individual meetings with all students, students who request a meeting with a school counselor or those with severe behavior or attendance issues. As a result, the use of ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure that each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, is compromised. The lack of ongoing developmental programs and curriculum and a lack of effective software, which assists students in their future post-secondary goals inhibits the development 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for all students at Bassick High School. The lack of administrative coordination to effectively utilize guidance staff undermines the effective and efficient use of all guidance personnel. (self-study, faculty interviews, parent interviews)



The school's health services do not have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, use an appropriate referral process, conduct ongoing student health assessments, use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services. Bassick High School has one full-time school nurse. The nurse is the custodian of medical records for all students at Bassick High School. She reviews medical records for compliance, attends to students who become ill in school and works with students with chronic illness on a daily or as-needed basis. When the nurse is absent, no substitutes are provided leaving BHS without health coverage for that day. Though BHS has a School-Based Health Center (SBHC), students who are not members cannot receive services from the health center. The School-Based Health Center is a community partnership with the Southwest Community Health Center. Services are provided to students who become members upon completion of a SBHC application by parents. Membership includes access to a full-time nurse practitioner, medical assistant, dental services, dental assistant, dental hygienist, social worker and HIV counselor. Services include physical exams, primary care, OB/GYN, vaccines, sick visits, health screening, individual/group therapy and referral to additional community services.

The effectiveness of services provided are monitored through school nurse evaluation by administration at the school level and the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health's annual survey which tracks asthma and immunization compliance in schools. As BHS has only one nurse to serve a student population of approximately 1,100 students, the school's ability to provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, utilize an appropriate referral process, conduct ongoing student health assessments, use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services is greatly hindered. (self-study, faculty interviews, administration interviews)

Library/media services are not integrated into curriculum and instructional practices nor do they have

an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. BHS currently employs one library/media specialist who is currently absent for an extended time due to illness. The school has not hired a substitute for the library/media center thus making it virtually inaccessible by students before, during and after school with the exception of use by a classroom teacher during the school day. As a result, the library/media center serves little benefit in the implementation of the school's curriculum. While the media center houses materials, technologies, and other information services, few support the school's curriculum. According to the staff Endicott survey only 25 percent of staff indicates that library information and service fully support the curriculum. Further, on the student Endicott survey, only 50 percent of students believes that the library has materials they need or want. The library/media center also serves as a multi-purpose venue for college representatives, speakers, receptions, and testing, therefore limiting the availability of that space to teachers and students for its intended purposes. As the library/media center is not adequately staffed and presently unstaffed, services are not integrated into curriculum and instructional practices; consequently, the students of BHS are not provided the necessary technology support in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teachers, parents, self study)

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an inadequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. Bassick High School special education students are presently given few regular education opportunities, inclusive classes or in classes utilizing a co-teaching model. During the 2012-13 school year, special education co-teaching opportunities were given in only a few science and social studies classes. Identified students receive math and English instruction in self-contained classes exclusively. Inclusion/Mainstream opportunities were given in only elective classes. The plan for the 2013-14 school year provides no opportunities for inclusion/co-teaching opportunities for special education students. It is not clear whether Bassick special education students are receiving instruction in core classes from highly qualified, content-certified teachers. Bassick High School provides some services to

support those students who have been identified as ELL students through a series of district and state mandated assessments. There is only one certified ELL teacher in charge of providing instruction to beginner, intermediate and advanced students. The ELL teacher is also in charge of administering placement test upon entering Bassick High School, monitoring and assessing the ELL population. Students are immersed in the regular educational program. This challenging undertaking is not adequately supported to ensure student success. English language learners are evaluated by the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) upon registering at Bassick. According to the results, they are targeted for inclusion in ELL instruction. Once they are in their identified level, they are assessed using TEST1 Basics. Pre-and post-scores are analyzed to guide future placement. Students are also assessed with standardized chapter and unit tests, midterm and final exams. Other assessments include observations and oral language development. Support services for identified special education and ELL students are not adequate in allowing staff to collaborate, providing inclusive opportunities and performing ongoing assessment to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teachers, student, parents, self-study)

### **Commendations**

1. The credit recovery program that provides an effective vehicle for at-risk students
2. The Parent Resource Center and the implementation of ASPIRE survey that link parents' needs and strengths to those of the school and community
3. The student center that provides students with both educational and emotional support
4. The community work programs that promote student growth
5. The school-based health center that provides a wide variety of health services for student members of the SBHC

### **Recommendations**

1. Expand SRBI to meet the needs of all at-risk students

2. Ensure sufficient resources and personnel to implement appropriate services for all identified ELL students
3. Ensure sufficient resources and personnel to keep the the library/media center open before, during, and after school
4. Ensure that all identified special education students are receiving a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, from a highly qualified and content certified teacher, as documented on each student's individual education plan
5. Expand guidance services to effectively meet the social, emotional, and educational needs of all students
6. Expand nursing services to provide sufficient coverage to ensure student safety and health education



## Community Resources for Learning

*The achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.*

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
  - a wide range of school programs and services
  - sufficient professional and support staff
  - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
  - a full range of technology support
  - sufficient equipment
  - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
  - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
  - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
  - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
  - programs and services
  - enrollment changes and staffing needs
  - facility needs
  - technology
  - capital improvements.
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

## Conclusions

A wide range of school programs and services is provided at Bassick High School (BHS) and supported with adequate funding; however, there is no dependable and consistent funding for sufficient professional and support staff or for a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment and sufficient instructional materials. Bassick has exhausted a 2.1 million dollar School Improvement Grant (SIG) utilized over the past three years to support a wide range of valuable programs and services, but there exists no plan that outlines what initiatives were deemed effective in improving teaching and learning and how those initiatives would be sustained. The Endicott survey indicates that 77.8 percent of the staff disagrees that the community and the district governing body provide funding for a wide range of technology support. The Parent Resource Center, of which the Bassick Community is justifiably proud, was created by the Parent Cadre through funding from the School Improvement Grant (SIG) as part of a three-year, federally funded reform initiative that started in 2009. The climate specialists who have contributed to the safe environment at Bassick have been discontinued. The relationship CommPACT will have moving forward is unclear. There has been a decrease in professional development and curriculum revision over the last three years. Many classrooms do not have an operating phone. Teachers often purchase supplies such as paper due to lack of adequate funding for materials. Special education and English language learning students, in particular, are not sufficiently staffed with teachers, paraprofessionals and resources. Inadequate equipment, staff, materials, technology and funding prevent the students' ability to study, practice and acquire twenty-first century learning skills. As Bassick High School moves forward, all stakeholders must address the need for dependable funding so that teachers will be able to provide the resources, support, and guidance necessary for students to reach their goals as stated in the core values and beliefs. (self-study, facility tour, school leadership, Endicott survey, students, teachers, teacher interviews)

Bassick High School inadequately funds, develops and plans programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant. Though personnel frequently catalogue the need for repair and replacement of equipment, the replacement and repair of such is not done in a timely manner. Written electronic schedules and programs exist which illustrate the maintenance of the building and repairs. While the building and facility was clean, the halls and rooms showed evidence of recent cleaning and improvement, and the smell of fresh paint was noticed in some rooms. According to the Endicott survey, 70.8 percent of staff disagrees that the school is clean and well maintained on a routine basis. Students state that the school is not cleaned on a daily basis. There are three day-time custodians, one split shift and five night-time custodians to care for the buildings totaling over 250,000 square feet. The plan for the maintenance of the building, equipment repair and replacement is unclear. The funding plan for maintenance equipment repair and replacement was unavailable. Several teachers stated that most maintenance and custodial projects are prioritized based on the availability of those workers, and it is sometimes years before work orders are closed. Maintenance certificates for the boiler and elevator are up to date and available for viewing. Bassick High School does not consistently provide a clean and well-maintained facility to foster the acquisition of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills in an appropriate setting, nor does it create a physical environment that fosters good teaching and learning; as a result, students are hindered in their acquisition of their 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, school tour, staff, students, Endicott survey )

The community funds and implements a substantial but inadequate long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollments changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology and capital improvements. The absence of athletic fields and facilities is not addressed in any long-range plans. During the Sunday panel presentation, students commented that the absence of playing fields significantly limits the number of students participating in co-curricular activities and sets student-athletes at a very distinct disadvantage. Rather than not having a “level playing field,” they have “no playing field.” There is a proposal for a Klein Music Academy including a Black Box theatre to be built

at the school in the future. This will address the obvious lack of space and resources to further promote the performing arts at BHS. According to the superintendent “Bassick is the number one facility priority for the district.” He has submitted a proposal to the state to renovate Bassick. For fiscal year 2013, Bassick was allocated 12 million dollars for renovation of small learning centers; also in the district Central High School was allocated 33 million dollars and Harding High School was allocated 36 million dollars. The plan to increase technology access includes purchasing orders for Chromebooks for each student at Bassick. According to the Endicott survey, 62.6 percent of the faculty is either in disagreement or is undecided if the school has long-range plans to address facilities, future programs, services, staffing levels and capital improvements. The review and creation of the long-term plans is done entirely at the district level. Among the staff, students and parents there is a strong skepticism concerning these long-term plans. The lack of input and authority in the creation and implementation of long-term plans does not ensure that the needs of the facility, enrollment changes, staffing needs, technology and capital improvements will occur to support student learning. (self-study, Endicott survey, superintendent, Central Office staff)

Faculty and building administrators are not involved in the development and implementation of the budget. Allocation of funding is decided solely at the district level. The school principal’s input is not sought in the development of the budget. He has input only with regard to the “allocation of human capital.” According to the self-study, “The only budget that the school administrators and faculty have control over are grants that the school obtains independently and the \$26.00 per-student (funding) provided to the building by the Board of Education for supplies such as copy paper and office materials.” The decision making and control of the school for the allocation of funds is also constrained by the entities providing those funds. Department coordinators are not consulted in the determination of financial needs for equipment, texts, or material. The ability of the school to adjust resources based on the needs of students impairs students from achieving their 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott survey, standard 7 subcommittee panel, principal, department head panel)



The school site has limited support of the delivery of high quality school programs and services. There is adequate space to hold all classes; however, the space allocated for certain uses is not always appropriate. For example, a classroom in the old building was converted into a computer lab despite the room having only two electrical outlets. There are no on-site athletics fields or outdoor sports facilities, so outdoor physical education classes and competitive outdoor athletics are not possible. The lack of transportation to the outdoor sites requires students to walk two blocks to practice at Wentfield Park. The inadequacy of science labs results in upper level science not being taught in laboratory rooms. The school has effectively addressed safety concerns with the Safe Schools Corridor Plan. Bulletin boards and murals celebrating diversity, promoting and celebrating student achievement, and quotes from people such as George Sheehan, Henry Ford and Edwin Markham adorn the halls create a safe, encouraging and empowering environment in the school. The Edible Garden, a student and faculty volunteer garden, will be planted this year. This garden, funded by the Green Village Initiative, will produce fruits and vegetables that will be purchased by the food services at Bassick for Bassick and the two other district high schools. There is a unique presence of an on-site observatory at Bassick. The auto shop is being expanded in an attached building and will provide a career pathway to Gateway Community College. There are examples in the school of teachers to make considerable effort to utilize the site's assets to support high quality educational experiences directly connected to the achievement of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Although there are some unique characteristics to this aged facility, inadequacies in instructional space, improper maintenance and lack of planning, make it difficult for a rich, engaging 21<sup>st</sup> century learning experience to be available to all students. (facility tour, student panel, self-study, Endicott survey)

The school consciously maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations.

The Board of Education developed and implemented a High School Transformation Plan to ensure the school is healthy and safe for all. The school's facilities were inspected by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and were found to be in compliance. Records of the inspections for elevators, boiler and storage of hazardous materials are catalogued and updated on the head custodian's computer. Fire exits and plans are clearly marked. Wheelchair-bound students have ready access to clearly marked location where they can communicate their presence to rescue personnel for quick evacuation. The staff and students of Bassick are assured by the documentation of the facilities' compliance with local, state and federal fire health and safety regulations, an environment in keeping with the Bassick's core values and beliefs that promotes the acquisition of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectation. (self-study, facilities tour, standard 7 subcommittee panel, documentation)

Most professional staff members actively engage parents and families in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. All teachers are required to maintain contact with their students' families and enlist them as partners with the school to help students succeed. Freshman and sophomore teams meet twice per week. Parents are frequently invited to team meetings to discuss their child's academic, social and behavioral progress. Climate specialists recently played an instrumental role in establishing relationships with parents and invited them to work in collaboration with teachers and the school in problem solving for their students.

While relationships established by the specialist continue, the school no longer employs these specialists due to funding. Bi-annual parent teacher conferences are held with both afternoon and evening hours to facilitate parent work schedules. The Parent Resource Center is a great source of pride and a source of increased parent participation. The Parent Resource Center has a section on the school website to inform parents of the services offered. Using the parent interest surveys, administered in Spanish and English, programs are arranged based on identified interests. Computer skills, home ownership, parenting skills, job search/resume writing and nutrition were some of the "high need" areas on the survey. In response, People's United Bank was invited to offer two

workshops for parents on how to become a homeowner. In March of 2012, a ten-week program on parenting teens was offered. During parent group meetings for this visit, it was clearly stated that parental involvement is sorely lacking. Although the PTSO (parent - teacher - student organization) has been reactivated, its membership currently number only 10 to 15, and they acknowledge that far greater numbers are needed if they are to promote better school-home relationships. Parents cite the need to work multiple jobs, language barriers, and limited time as reasons for not working more closely with their school. Although there is an absence of substantial parental involvement and challenges that impact effective communication with parents , the school is strongly and actively engaged in multi-dimensional and innovative strategies have resulted in a marginally increased parental influence on student achievement of 21<sup>st</sup> learning expectations. (self-study, parent panel, subcommittee panel, facilities tour)

The school extensively develops productive parent, community, business and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Under the facilitation of the SIG and the CommPACT coordinator, the ASPIRE. survey, a web-based application, has been administered to parents, teachers and community members to gather information matching adult volunteers with teachers “wishing to utilize outside expertise to enrich teaching and learning.” The closing of the career center had a negative impact on inclusion of business and industry’s direct implementation of school-to-career programs at the school. Yale University School of Medicine has partnered with Bassick through the GEAR UP initiative since 2008. Wi-mentor program, an internet-based mentoring program, is present at the school facilitated by the United Way. Through buildOn students provide services at several food pantries and homeless shelters. They also tutor and mentor younger students, garden, and assist community partners. BuildOn members are offered the opportunity to experience Trek For Knowledge through which students go to other countries to build or to help build schools. Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP) seeks to engage organizations, public officials, and community leaders around issues that matter to all members of the Bassick community. Many local colleges and

universities provide student teaching interns and student mentor programs. Dual enrollment programs through Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University and Housatonic Community College allow students to take college courses and to receive credit while still attending Bassick. Other agencies and programs that partner with Bassick include The College Place (which provides workshops for parents and students on the college application process); Bridgeport Area Youth Ministry; Computer Genesis IT Fundamentals (which teaches students to build and troubleshoot computers); WIAA (an after-school technology certification program that is offered at no cost to qualifying students); Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers (which recruits mentors and trains economically challenged students to develop them as teachers and leaders in the community); University of Bridgeport Educational Talent Search (which provides academic support and advising); College Ed University of Connecticut (which guides students through the college planning and career exploration process); and Workshop in Business Opportunities (which teaches entrepreneurial skills and works with Bassick High School to plan and present a Career Fair project for selected students). Community, businesses and nonprofit organizations provide Bassick students with strong and needed pathways into 21<sup>st</sup> century careers. (self-study, student panel, subcommittee panel)

### **Commendations**

1. The Parent Resource Center that provides an excellent opportunity from parents of all cultures to engage and participate in the school
2. The expansion of the automotive program to support a popular program for students to obtain 21<sup>st</sup> century school to career skills
3. The partnerships with local colleges and universities which expand learning and mentoring opportunities for students
4. The Edible Garden in connection with the Green Village Initiative that provides student with a significant authentic task learning opportunity

5. The partnerships with community agencies and businesses that provide a strong connection between Bassick and the Bridgeport community

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that the district's plan for a complete remodel of Bassick High School includes sufficient planning and support for the maintenance and cleaning of the buildings
2. Ensure that successful programs are provided for in long-term budget planning
3. Ensure sufficient site-based budget control to ensure that Bassick High School's educational program meets the needs of the student body
4. Provide sufficient input into budget development to appropriate members of the school community which ensures that needs are appropriately met
5. Ensure that the introduction and implementation of new technology is supported with relevant professional development

## FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This comprehensive evaluation report reflects the findings of the school's self-study and those of the visiting committee. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administration, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in Bassick High School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

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

A school's initial/continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting committee and others identified by the Commission as it monitors the school's progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle. To monitor the school's progress in the Follow-Up Program the Commission requires that the principal of Bassick High School submit routine Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports documenting the current status of all evaluation report recommendations, with particular detail provided for any recommendation which may have been rejected or those items on which no action has been taken. In addition, responses must be detailed on all recommendations highlighted by the Commission in its notification letters to the school. School officials are expected to have completed or be in the final stages of completion of all valid visiting committee recommendations by the time the Five-Year Progress Report is submitted. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards are not being met in a satisfactory manner or if additional information is needed on matters relating to evaluation report recommendations or substantive changes in the school.

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 15. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The Commission urges school officials to establish a formal follow-up program at once to review and implement all findings of the self-study and valid recommendations identified in the evaluation report. An outline of the Follow-Up Program is available in the Commission's *Accreditation Handbook* which was given to the school at the onset of the self-study. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by Commission staff following the on-site visit.

APPENDIX A

**Bassick High School  
NEASC Accreditation Visit  
May 5 - 8, 2012**

**Visiting Committee**

<p>Joel Stenbridge Newton South High School Newton, MA 02459</p> <p>Steve MacDougall NEAS&amp;C Bedford, MA 01730</p> <p>Darryl Burke Bulkeley High Lower School Hartford, CT 06114</p> <p>Rachel Jupin New Bedford High School New Bedford, MA 02740</p> <p>Danielle Durso Ansonia High School Ansonia, CT 06401</p> <p>John Smurthwaite Amity Regional High School Woodbridge, CT 06525</p> <p>Daisy Torres Maloney High School Meriden, CT 06450</p> <p>Barbette Warren Manchester High School Manchester, CT 06040</p> <p>Sarah Buckley Taunton High School Taunton, MA 02780</p>	<p>Christopher Coleman Mount Pleasant High School Providence, RI 02908</p> <p>Paul Menard Nashua High School North Nashua, NH 03063</p> <p>Cheryl Viveiros New Bedford High School New Bedford, MA 02740</p> <p>Matthew Forker Stamford High School Stamford, CT 06902</p> <p>Bill White New Britain High School New Britain, CT 06902</p> <p>Carina Pinto De Chacon Mount Pleasant High School Providence, RI 02908</p> <p>Mary Sobin Farmington High School Farmington, CT 06034</p> <p>Christopher Burke Springfield Central High Springfield, MA 01190</p>
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## NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS &amp; COLLEGES

## Commission on Public Secondary Schools

## SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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



Standard 1:

**Commendations**

1. The use of the CommPACT process as a means of establishing a foundation for the core values and beliefs
2. The active involvement of all the school's constituent groups as a means to ensure a commitment to Bassick High School's Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
3. The display of core values, beliefs, learning expectations, inspirational quotations, and culturally diverse art work throughout the school
4. The use of Bassick Bucks as an incentive for the student body
5. The formal process in place to regularly review and revise the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
6. The school culture which is reflective of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

**Recommendations**

1. Identify the targeted level of performance for all rubrics
2. Align learning expectations with specific content areas
3. Ensure that the core value, beliefs, and expectations for student learning is the focal point from which all decisions and activities evolve
4. Develop a system for monitoring all student progress and achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations

## Standard 2:

### **Commendations**

1. The emerging use of the ATLAS platform to develop common curriculum
2. The establishment of data teams in grades nine and ten
3. The teachers who regularly embed critical thinking and higher order thinking tasks into their lesson design
4. The teachers effort and willingness to utilize personal resources for materials and supplies to help students meet their learning expectations
5. The purchase of a number of new textbooks
6. The opportunities some students have to apply knowledge beyond the campus through collaborations with educational partnerships

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. Provide training and technology to fully implement the ATLAS platform to provide teachers access to a curriculum in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of the school-wide rubrics
3. Ensure that curriculum at all levels emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking
4. Utilize the supervision and evaluation process to ensure a clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum
5. Provide sufficient staff, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and reopen the library/media center in order to fully implement the curriculum

6. Provide the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum

Standard 3:

### **Commendations**

1. The number of highly qualified teachers at Bassick High School who go to great lengths to reflect regularly on their practice and to maintain their expertise in their content area
2. The excellent rapport among most teachers and their students
3. The excellent differentiation and authentic tasks used and linked to students' backgrounds and interests in some classrooms
4. The provision of common planning time for teachers in the academy programs
5. The number of teachers who adjust their instructional practices based on formal and informal feedback
6. The teachers who personalize learning through the use of differentiated instructional practices

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that teachers are provided with research-based professional development on data-driven decision making and tiered interventions to increase collaboration among teachers and improve student achievement
2. Provide opportunities for structured time during staff meetings, team, or department meetings for teachers to discuss, analyze, and share best practices to improve student performance
3. Ensure all teachers are provided collaborative time to share best practices on assessment practices with content area and department team members to improve teaching and learning
4. Provide professional development to ensure that all teachers' instructional practices engage students as active learners; emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking; and engage students in self-assessment and reflection

#### Standard 4:

##### **Commendations**

1. The creation of school-wide rubrics to address 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills and core academic areas
2. The steps taken by Bassick High School to address the failure rate through the presentation of a new grading policy
3. The piloting of a new curriculum within core academic areas to ensure alignment of Common Core Standards
4. The creation of common planning time for the grade nine and grade ten teachers
5. The many teachers who provide timely and corrective feedback to students
6. The use of data charts in classrooms identifying student progress and ongoing learning needs
7. The range of assessment practices employed by teachers
8. The provision of the corresponding rubrics used prior to summative assessments by some teachers

##### **Recommendations**

1. Implement a formal process to ensure that all school-wide rubrics are regularly used with all students so that the school can assess individual student achievement of the learning expectations
2. Identify and create a form of communication to ensure that parents are informed of students' progress in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations
3. Ensure that faculty members have adequate time to meet to discuss inequities in student achievement
4. Encourage teachers to continue to communicate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and unit-specific learning expectations to students
5. Continue the ongoing distribution and discussion of rubrics with students to support learning expectations

6. Continue to use a range of assessment strategies within classroom instruction to ensure that all students are mastering content area objectives
7. Implement time within the schedule to ensure that all faculty members can collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative, summative, and common assessments
8. Provide feedback on the results of benchmark assessments to teachers in a timely fashion to ensure that students have time to improve their mastery of content
9. Implement a process for administering common formative assessments in order to improve student learning
10. Schedule common planning for all faculty members to access data in conjunction with data teams and administration
11. Develop regular opportunities for teachers, administrators and teacher coordinators to review progress of student achievement
12. Develop and implement a grading and reporting policy that is aligned with the school's values and beliefs and connected to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
13. Report student progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to all stakeholders

Standard 5:

#### **Commendations**

1. The safe environment that ensures all students follow a behavior model that will allow them to meet goals and expectations for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning
2. The adults in the building who act as role models and mentors for students to turn to for academic, social, and other needs as they strive to achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
3. The PBIS and PRIDE models that foster positive student behavior and generate a foundation for which to align core values and beliefs within the BHS community

4. The building leadership that fosters opportunities to drive instructional leadership for both teachers and students

### **Recommendations**

1. Review measures to ensure that consistency of high expectations in classrooms is observable in all classroom and learning settings daily
2. Design and implement professional development that allows for professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
3. Coordinate formal meeting times for teachers to meet and discuss professional practices in an attempt to improve teaching and learning
4. Align SLOs and collaborative reflective conversations with teachers and administrators that result in the evidenced improvement of instruction and student learning
5. Continue to examine class loads and size in conjunction with the course offerings to ensure that class size does not inhibit the teaching and learning process

Standard 6:

### **Commendations**

1. The credit recovery program that provides an effective vehicle for at-risk students
2. The Parent Resource Center and the implementation of ASPIRE survey that link parents' needs and strengths to those of the school and community
3. The student center that provides students with both educational and emotional support
4. The community work programs that promote student growth
5. The school-based health center that provides a wide variety of health services for student members of the SBHC

## **Recommendations**

1. Expand SRBI to meet the needs of all at-risk students
2. Ensure sufficient resources and personnel to implement appropriate services for all identified ELL students
3. Ensure sufficient resources and personnel to keep the the library/ media center open before, during, and after school
4. Ensure that all identified special education students are receiving a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, as documented on each student's individual education plan
5. Expand guidance services to effectively meet the social, emotional, and educational needs of all students
6. Expand nursing services to provide sufficient coverage to ensure student safety and health education

Standard 7:

## **Commendations**

1. The Parent Resource Center that provides an excellent opportunity from parents of all cultures to engage and participate in the school
2. The expansion of the automotive program to support a popular program for students to obtain 21<sup>st</sup> century school to career skills
3. The partnerships with local colleges and universities which expand learning and mentoring opportunities for students
4. The Edible Garden in connection with the Green Village Initiative that provides student with a significant authentic task learning opportunity
5. The partnerships with community agencies and businesses that provide a strong connection between Bassick and the Bridgeport community

## **Recommendations**

1. Ensure that the district's plan for a complete remodel of Bassick High School includes sufficient planning and support for the maintenance and cleaning of the buildings
2. Ensure that successful programs are provided for in long-term budget planning
3. Provide sufficient input into budget development to appropriate members of the school community which ensures that needs are appropriately met
4. Ensure that the introduction and implementation of new technology is supported with relevant professional development