

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

**Commission on Public Schools**



**Commission on Public Schools**

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

Gilford, NH

October 18, 2020 - October 21, 2020

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# School and Community Summary

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## School and Community Summary

### GILFORD SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

#### The Community

Gilford High School serves the communities of Gilford and Gilmanton. Gilford has 7,140 residents (although the population swells considerably in the summer months) and is in the heart of New Hampshire's Lakes Region. Gilford encompasses 38.8 square miles of land area and 14.7 square miles of inland water area. The neighboring town of Gilmanton has 3,779 residents. Lake Winnepesaukee and Gunstock Ski Area establish Gilford as a resort community. Gilmanton is a bedroom community for residents who commute to Laconia, Concord, and other cities.

Gilford is twelve miles east of Interstate 93, Exit 20, directly off Route 11A. Gilford Village consists of a store, a community church, a community recreation center, a town library, as well as the Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. Downtown Gilmanton is nine miles southeast of Interstate 93, Exit 20, and is located at the junction of Routes 140 and 107. Though its downtown is smaller than that of Gilford, the town of Gilmanton covers 57.6 square miles of land and 1.9 square miles of inland water area.

Opportunities for employment in Gilford exist in many industries, including recreation, tourism, health, manufacturing, and retail. Tourism is a major industry, with Gunstock Mountain Resort being a primary employer of seasonal help. The addition of the Bank of New Hampshire Pavilion, Lowes, Wal-Mart, Hannaford, and Shaw's has added to the local economy. There is a wide array of businesses within the community, including auto repair, service, and sales; realtors, insurance agencies, banks, and financial institutions; restaurants, marinas, and yacht clubs; legal services; and building contractors. The unemployment rate for Gilford is less than 3 percent. The largest employer in Gilmanton is Stratham Tire. Eighty-six percent of working residents commute to another New Hampshire community. The unemployment rate for Gilmanton is 3.1 percent. The equalized tax rate for Gilford is \$17.26 per thousand, and the rate for Gilmanton is \$23.91 per thousand. The percentage of families in the Gilford school community with incomes below the poverty level is 7.8 percent, and in Gilmanton, it is 10.8 percent.

#### The School and the Students

Gilford High School is in the historic district in the center of Gilford Village. The Gilford Middle School is attached to the high school, and the Gilford Elementary School is located across Belknap Mountain Road. The high school is situated on approximately twenty acres adjacent to town fields and recreational facilities. The building, which opened in 1974, was constructed as a modified open-concept facility. In 2004, the middle school separated from the high school when a new middle school was constructed, and a comprehensive high school renovation was completed. These two major projects increased the square footage at the high school from 133,098 to 141,679 and allowed for the creation of individual classrooms.

Gilford High School has a 9-12 grade configuration with a total enrollment of 490 students. The town of Gilmanton pays tuition to send 141 students to Gilford High School. For 2019-2020, an increase of 6.3 percent in enrollment is projected. The student population is 96 percent Caucasian, with 4 percent representing other ethnic groups. The school operates on a block schedule of five, seventy-minute classes a day, which meet five days a week for sixty days. 11.875 percent of the student body qualifies for the federal free and reduced lunch program, and 15 percent of the student body has been identified as in need of special education services. The high school's per-pupil expenditure for 2015-2016 was \$18,551. In 2016-2017, the per-pupil expenditure was \$18,864. The tuition charged to Gilmanton increased from \$17,741 in the 2015-2016 school-year to \$17,879 in 2016-2017.

The teaching staff totals 35.6 teachers, creating a student to teacher ratio of 13:1. In addition, the professional staff includes one Reading Specialist, three guidance counselors, one Student Assistance Coordinator, five special education teachers, one Career and College Readiness Coordinator, one school nurse, one School Psychologist, one Media Specialist, one Behavioral Specialist, one Athletic Director, one Assistant Principal, and

one Principal. There are also twelve Para-educators and a School Resource Officer on staff. In those classes required for graduation, the average class size is seventeen. Other than band and chorus, a serious attempt is made to limit class sizes to no more than 24 students. The average student attendance rate for the past three years is 95 percent, while the average teacher attendance rate is 97 percent.

Forty-six percent of the class of 2018 attended a four-year college, while 23 percent attended a two-year college, and 27 percent entered the workforce directly. About 2 percent chose to enter the military following graduation. Students graduating from Gilford have been accepted to such schools as Boston University, Brandeis, Brigham Young, Colby, Dartmouth, the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University, Keene State College, Clarkson, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the U.S. Military Academies. Gilford's average three-year dropout rate is 0.65 percent, and 0.01 percent of our students take more than four years to graduate.

The school operates on a trimester, block schedule. The day consists of five seventy-minute periods. As of October 2019, the schedule also includes an Intervention/Flex block twice a week for 40 minutes. Both students and teachers can schedule the intervention/flex block as needed. All students, except seniors, are expected to take five courses each trimester. A process exists whereby students can apply for an assigned study hall if their individual circumstances warrant one. Each half-credit course runs every day for 60 days. Thus, students have the opportunity to earn 7.5 credits each year.

Student performance in school is measured exclusively by trimester grade reports. Assessments within courses are further delineated as formative or summative. A formal reassessment policy is also in place. A final exam at the end of each trimester constitutes 15 percent of each course grade. Student's progress each trimester is monitored through Alma, a computerized student grade reporting system that is accessible by parents and students via the internet. Alma allows frequent and consistent monitoring of students' performance by parents and school personnel.

Each spring, juniors participate in the College Board School Day-SAT English language arts/reading/writing/mathematics assessment and the New Hampshire SAS for science. Most students participate in the College Entrance Examination Board's PSAT/NMSQT, SAT I & II, as well as the ACT test. From the class of 2019, 94 students participated in the SAT Reasoning Test and the ACT achievement test. The mean reading score for Gilford students was 520 compared to the national score of 531 and a state score of 533. Gilford's math mean was 519 compared to the national score of 528 and a state score of 526. The average composite score for the ACT was 25. There are currently 61 students enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses where they are expected to take the College Board's AP examination. In 2018-2019, eighty-two percent of test-takers earned a score of three or better on the AP test.

GHS offers a variety of co-curricular activities for student enrichment, and approximately 70 percent of students participate in these activities. A sampling of student activities includes the following: Math Team, Drama, Inter-Act, Pep Band, Environmental Club, First Robotics, Youth and Government, Amnesty International, and Unified Club. Approximately 65 percent of students are involved in sports. There are seventeen boys teams, twenty girls teams, and four coed teams. In the 2018-2019 school year, there were 25 Scholar-Athletes. There are two community theater groups open for student participation, and several choral and instrumental programs. Due to its unique location, Gilford offers many diverse recreational opportunities, including skiing (downhill, cross-country, and jumping), snowboarding, snowmobiling, ice hockey, ice fishing, tennis, and swimming. GHS students have access to a tennis center, two skating rinks, a town beach, a county ski area, and athletic clubs.

The J. Oliva Huot Technical Center at Laconia High School offers GHS students in grades 11 and 12 the opportunity to enroll in career and technical education programs during the school day. Night courses are offered at the New Hampshire Community Technical College, Southern New Hampshire University, and the Laconia Adult Educational programs. Through Project Running Start, an agreement with the New Hampshire Community and Technical College system, Gilford High students can earn college credit for high school courses in Business, Math, French, Spanish, and Art.

Gilford High School has developed numerous partnerships with local businesses and non-profit organizations throughout the Lakes Region. These partnerships offer students the opportunity to tour, interview, shadow, and intern with people in professions of interest and become involved in community service. Many local service

organizations sponsor annual scholarships to worthy graduates who intend to further their education. In 2018 the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation provided Gilford students with \$57,875.

Students are recognized for academic, athletic, and artistic achievements. Approximately 120 students make the honor roll each trimester, and the results are published in the local newspapers. Outstanding juniors and seniors are selected for membership in the National Honor Society. Each June, the school celebrates an annual Senior Awards Night to recognize the scholastic achievements of the senior class as well as outstanding juniors. Seasonal athletic awards nights to applaud athletes are held at the conclusion of each season. Each spring, the performing arts faculty sponsors an end-of-year awards night to honor the students in the areas of theater and music. Individual accomplishments are often noted through daily announcements, newsletters, Principal weekly updates to staff and parents, and local papers.

### School Improvement Planning

Gilford High School has engaged in a variety of school initiatives to improve student learning. The faculty has been aligning their curriculum using Understanding by Design (UbD) to facilitate offering a guaranteed, viable curriculum to all students regardless of the course level.

The school has a program aimed at its at-risk population. Selected students can earn English, Math, Science, and Social Studies credits in a personalized setting at the District's Meadows facility located approximately three miles from the high school. These students are offered credit recovery opportunities. This program helps meet the needs of students requiring a non-traditional program.

GHS continues to assess students in English and Math using the Northwest Educational Assessments (NWEA) administered to all freshmen and sophomores. These reading, language arts, math, and science tests provide valuable information to classroom teachers about their students' strengths and weaknesses.

GHS continues to work within a 70-minute block, trimester organization. This allows faculty and students to focus on developing a greater depth of understanding in their courses. A twice a week 40 minutes intervention block was implemented in October 2019. Along with the invention, there are weekly 20-minute advisory meetings.

GHS implemented community service for all of its graduates, with the graduating class of 2018 being the first to meet this requirement.

The most important challenges facing the school include:

- Addressing the increase in students diagnosed with psychiatric conditions, drug misuse, and behavior challenges and the resources needed to support both students and families
- Ensuring that current competencies accurately reflect student learning
- Improving school climate so that all students, teachers, and staff feel more welcome and valued in the building
- Investigating an intervention block during the day to support learners
- Providing more frequent department-specific collaboration opportunities

The school is most proud of:

- Students having multiple outlets to contribute to school culture (Ambassadors, Unified Club, Interact, Performing Arts, NAMI Trainers, Athletics, etc.)
- Access to technology including the 1:1 Chromebook initiative
- A facility that is well-maintained & safe
- We know our students through crafting relationships
- Numerous teachers taking part in Performance Assessment development workshops and committees along with Collaborative Learning Assessment training
- The creation of the Gilford School District's Portrait of a Learner along with rubrics and benchmarks

# Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

## The Mission Statement of the Gilford School District

The Mission Statement of the Gilford School District is to provide innovative education, creating pathways to success for all learners.

## The Core Values and Beliefs of the Gilford School District

- We believe all people can learn and that individuals need to be offered diverse learning opportunities that are rigorous, personalized, authentic, and relevant to their future; learning takes place in a variety of settings.
- We believe that the teaching and learning environment in the Gilford School District must be physically and emotionally safe, where risk-taking and failures are supported and successes celebrated while providing multiple pathways to future goals. We know challenges provide opportunities for self-reflection, perseverance, and growth.
- We believe that partnerships in an engaged community are critical in supporting teaching and learning. We value the relationship between the communities of Gilford and Gilmanton.
- We believe our educators are essential in helping learners develop the intellect and strength of character necessary to live in an ever-changing world. We believe collaboration, respect, perseverance, personal growth, creativity, and excellence are central to achieving our mission.

## The Vision of the Gilford School District

The Gilford School District (GSD) aspires to prepare each learner to thrive as an adaptable citizen by providing a rigorous education, while supporting the whole child. GSD expects our learners to be self-directed and engaged. We succeed when we each:

- demonstrate critical and creative thinking,
- persevere through challenges and solve problems;
- communicate and collaborate as a learner and community member.

## The Pillars of the Gilford School District

- Teaching and Learning
- Leadership, Governance, and Community Engagement
- Resource Management
- Safety, Health, and Wellness

## Gilford School District Portrait of a Learner

- Collaborate
  - Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams
  - Exercise flexibility and willingness to accomplish a common goal
  - Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work
- Innovate
  - Use a wide range of idea creation techniques to identify and address a problem or task
  - Elaborate, refine, analyze and evaluate ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts
  - Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work and understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas
  - Act on creative ideas to make meaningful contributions
- Self-Direct
  - Set goals with success criteria

- Utilize time and manage workload efficiently to complete tasks without direct oversight
- Demonstrate initiative towards growth
- View challenges, setbacks and failures as opportunities for learning
- Critically Think
  - Identify, define, and solve authentic problems
  - Analyze collected information for credibility and relevance
  - Construct and critique viable arguments and make decisions using evidence and reasoning
  - Reflect critically on learning experiences, processes, and solutions

# LEARNING CULTURE

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## Learning Culture

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

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

# STUDENT LEARNING

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## Student Learning

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

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



# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

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## Professional Practices

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

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

# LEARNING SUPPORT

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## Learning Support

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

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

# LEARNING RESOURCES

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## Learning Resources

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

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

# Introduction

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

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

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

### Preparation for the Accreditation Visit

Accreditation coordinators and a steering committee composed of the professional staff were appointed to supervise the school's accreditation process which includes the self-reflection, the Collaborative Conference visit, the development and implementation of a growth plan, and the Decennial Accreditation visit. At Gilford High School, a committee of 13 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the accreditation process.

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

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

### The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of six members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Decennial Accreditation visit to Gilford High School in Gilford, New Hampshire. The visiting team members spent four days conducting a virtual visit to the school; reviewed the Self-Reflection Report, Collaborative Conference Report, and Decennial Summary Report documents; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents; and the Chair and Assistant Chair spent one day in the school visiting classes to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools' Standards for Accreditation and the degree to which the school is making progress toward their identified Priority Areas for Growth as indicated in the school's improvement/growth plan.

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

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

# **Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture**

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## **Foundational Element 1.1a**

Students and staff at Gilford High School feel safe and secure. The Emergency Preparedness Committee meets regularly to review, revise, and update not only the Emergency Operations Plan but also general safety protocols, drills, and exercises. The school resource officer plays an important role in developing proactive relationships with students. There is a sense of unity between the police and fire departments and the school. Parents find that the school fosters a culture of kindness, which prevents bullying from becoming a larger issue.

### **Rating**

Meets the Standard

# Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

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## Foundational Element 1.2a

Since the Collaborative Conference Visit, Gilford High School worked diligently to create a viable vision of the graduate. A diverse committee composed of administrators and teachers conducted research, attended workshops, solicited input from all school community constituencies, and worked with a noted consultant to craft Gilford's *Portrait of a Learner*. The school's Portrait of a Learner, which applies to students across the district, consists of four attributes and includes a number of important transferable skills which the school expects all students to be able to effectively demonstrate prior to graduating. To measure students' progress, the school has created a set of performance outcomes expressed as "I can" statements. The school's mission statement, guiding principles, academic, social, and civic expectations were all reviewed as part of this process, and the school board resoundingly approved the final product. At this time, Gilford meets this Foundational Element as its *Portrait of a Learner* is now complete and is being used across the entire school district.

## Rating

Meets the Standard

# **Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning**

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## **Foundational Element 2.2a**

The school has an established curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments. There is a common template for the curriculum based on the Understanding by Design model which includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, skills, instructional strategies, assessment practices, higher order thinking skills, and learning activities. Students are largely aware of the skills and competencies that need to be met in class and on any given assignment.

### **Rating**

Meets the Standard



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

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## **Foundational Element 3.1a**

Gilford High School has a school improvement/growth plan, which is created by community members, staff members, teachers, students, and administrators and is approved by the school board. The improvement plan includes school-specific goals based on identified priorities and is used to inform decision-making throughout the school. The plan includes goals relating to expanding social-emotional support for students, aligning student learning with competencies, creating time for intervention and enrichment, and providing opportunities for departmental collaboration to improve student learning.

### **Rating**

Meets the Standard

# **Foundational Elements 4.1a - Learning Support**

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## **Foundational Elements 4.1a**

Gilford High School has formal and informal processes to identify and refer students who need additional assistance with academics or social-emotional issues. The school provides a wide and varied range of formal and informal, proactive and reactive intervention strategies including extra help from teachers, competency recovery, structured study halls, an after-school homework club, a writing center, a learning lab, academic support, tutoring, counseling services, and the pyramid of intervention. LEAD block, which is an intervention block, has also been implemented since the Collaborative Conference Visit to better assist students who require interventions during the school day.

### **Rating**

Meets the Standard

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

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## **Foundational Element 5.1a**

Gilford High School's building and site support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services. The facility ensures a safe, secure, and healthy environment for all students and adults. The inclusion of technology, common spaces for students and staff, and the flexibility to accommodate learning supports curriculum and programs. The building, which is meticulously cleaned and well-maintained, meets all applicable federal and state laws and complies with local fire, health, and safety regulations. The work of the Emergency Preparedness Committee and the school's Emergency Operations Plan help to create a school in which students can focus on learning.

### **Rating**

Meets the Standard

# Foundational Elements Ratings

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## Foundational Element Ratings

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

# Priority Area 1

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## Priority Area

Priority Area 1: Address the increase in learners needing support in the areas of emotional, social, and mental health as well as those struggling with substance misuse.

## Action, Impact, and Growth

### Action

Gilford High School has made great strides in creating a variety of services and interventions designed to support the social-emotional needs of all students. Counselors, teachers, the school nurse, and administrators have worked together to develop and implement a series of programs in an effort to decrease the number of students needing outside mental health, substance abuse referrals, and counseling groups for social-emotional needs, as well as those who elect to homeschool. The professional staff also strives to reduce disciplinary referrals, absences, and course failures while increasing class engagement and graduation rates. Many of these new programs were introduced in the fall of 2019 but were put on hold by the shift to remote learning in March 2020, due to the onset of the pandemic. The school indicates that, so far, little data has been collected to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions.

Programs include the navigating recovery and substance misuse prevention group, the invisible illness support group led by the school nurse, and a “Back on Track” academic intervention program. Additionally, the “Girls in the Shadows” program was designed to support girls who were having difficulty engaging in the social fabric of the school. The “Choose Love” program is a schoolwide initiative to instill kindness into the everyday lives of students and staff. Spearheaded by the assistant principal, a committee designed and distributed activities to be completed in advisory groups with some teachers choosing to extend the experience into the curriculum as well. The Wellness Center also opened last year. Using funding from the parent-teacher association, the school was able to purchase equipment to support teacher and student relaxation, mindfulness, yoga, and more. Teachers can reserve the space to visit with their classes, and students can schedule time in the space during the “Learn, Excel, Achieve, Dream” (LEAD) intervention block, with specific programs, such as “Mindful Mondays,” available to students as well. The Peer Counseling program, which was developed when the school counseling department noticed that students would often visit the office to discuss problems that friends were experiencing, stands out as an opportunity for students to provide support for each other. The school counseling department staff recognized a need to ensure students were better equipped for these delicate conversations. To this end, an initial group of 6-8 students were selected to complete a training program and became the inaugural group to staff the peer counseling room during lunch. They are available to any peers who want to chat, and they involve the counselors when necessary.

The implementation of these programs was greatly eased by the introduction of the twice-weekly, 40-minute LEAD intervention block as students could use this time to elect to visit the Wellness Center or participate in a specific group. The flexibility introduced by this schedule minimized the time students would miss class and enabled more students to participate since it was not outside of the school day. Student appointments for this block are scheduled using an electronic schedule management system that empowers students to self-identify while preserving a level of anonymity that could not be achieved by pulling students from classes.

The current status of these interventions has been complicated by the pandemic. While introduced last year, the LEAD intervention block was removed from the schedule this year due to the health concerns of mixing cohorts. Many of the groups and programs are similarly suspended this year but there is a clear commitment to restart once it is safe to do so. The Peer Counseling program, however, will continue to run this year with additional structures in place to adhere to pandemic related safety protocols.

## **Impact**

The intended impact of these programs is the overall hope that students will be more comfortable in the school environment which will empower them to be more focused and successful learners. Specifically, the Wellness Center has become a space for students to decrease stress, learn mindfulness, and engage in workshops during the LEAD intervention blocks. Additionally, the “Girls in the Shadows” group was so successful, it is no longer needed at this point, as no additional students have been identified to participate. The Peer Counseling program had 9 students access it last year between November and March; of those students, 3 of the students attended twice and 6 attended 4 or more times. The long-term goal of this program is to normalize counseling services for students, provide safe contacts for students in need, and ease the transition to traditional counseling services if the need arises.

## **Growth**

There are a number of opportunities for growth as the school strives to increase programs and interventions for social and emotional support. One such opportunity is related to the promotion of these programs. Currently, students are identified for participation by the professional staff. It would be easier for students to self-identify if the programs were more prominently promoted in the school and described in the school counseling department section of the school website. The development and implementation of a structured referral system would better ensure that no student in need is overlooked. Additionally, with the onset of the pandemic, the possibility of remote learning, and the removal of the LEAD intervention block from the schedule this year, alternative versions of these programs could be explored. Lastly, a number of data points are discussed in the School Summary Report as ways to measure success including attendance, homeschool, and dropout rates, graduation rates, counseling rates, and the number of disciplinary referrals. It would be valuable to gather this data to establish benchmark levels in order to better track changes in these data points.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

### **Next steps identified by the school to support growth**

The school will intrinsically embed the social and emotional strategies and supports into the curriculum rather than expand separate opportunities outside of class

### **Next steps identified by the team to support growth**

Create and implement a process to systematically collect and assess social and emotional intervention data to better understand the efficacy of these programs and to inform decision-making

Increase awareness of social and emotional support opportunities among students and parents

## **Sources of Evidence**

- parents
- school leadership
- school summary report
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

# Priority Area 2

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## Priority Area

Priority Area 2: Ensure current competencies accurately reflect student learning.

## Action, Impact, and Growth

### Action

Gilford High School has been at the forefront of competency-based education, first piloting it about fifteen years ago. The school has a written curriculum with a consistent format throughout. Each course provides a description of the elements of the course, transfer goals, competencies, essential question(s), enduring understandings, units of study, and performance-based assessment practices. This curriculum template, across all disciplines, is aligned with the school's adoption of the competency-based learning model.

Students at Gilford High School regularly engage in learning activities across the curriculum that involve them as active learners and encourage the use of inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. Many departments have integrated these important skills into their curriculum and competencies. Students engage in analysis, synthesis, and inquiry in social studies and science classes, solve problems in math and science, demonstrate critical and creative thinking and making connections in English classes, and express their creativity and critical analysis in Art. According to the NEASC survey, over 93 percent of teachers state that they use project-based learning in their classes, and 90.2 percent of students and 66 percent of parents agree. Project-based learning is tied to the competencies and, to some degree, rubrics are used to measure the students' competence. In some courses, such as AP World History, students engage in authentic tasks that require them to rely on and apply real-life knowledge and skills to be successful.

### Impact

The math department is looking at revamping its competencies to be less content-based and more skills-based to allow for multiple attempts at meeting the competencies. The science department is matching its competencies to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and departments are using collaboration time to assess and evaluate current competencies, which has led to updated language to better align with contemporary national and state standards. Departments have common performance tasks lined up with rubrics and are graded accordingly. If an assignment in social studies is measuring three competencies, then the student will receive a three-columned grade sheet, reflecting three different grades respectively. Report cards have traditional A-F grading, but competencies are broken down for students to see. Grades are split into formative and summative, having 90 percent summative and 10 percent formative. For instance, when a performance task is measured in the social studies department, 90 percent is then broken down to each competency being worth 30 percent. In addition, the school has established a student information system, ALMA, which is a competency-based grading platform that will link standards to grading.

Students have mixed feelings in relation to the importance of formative and summative assessments. Some students feel that there is a disconnect between the "quizzes" and "tests," while other students believe that the formative assessments are a good form of review. The competencies as written by each department vary considerably from skills-based to content-based, and, with these variabilities, the students sometimes find understanding them challenging.

Departments have developed tools to improve students' depth of knowledge, had preliminary conversations about aligning course competencies with national standards and worked to align rubrics within departments. Collaboration has also allowed departments to develop and refine formative and summative assessments and to consider how to evolve curriculum so it better reflects the *Portrait of a Learner*.

To help measure competencies, performance assessment workgroups meet on a somewhat regular basis, and through the work of these groups, teachers developed Understanding by Design (UbD) units with performance

assessments that allow students to show mastery of competencies across disciplines and grade levels. The performance assessment workgroups initiative is teacher-led with administrative support, assuring that the competencies reflect student learning. The completed work of the performance assessment workgroups has increased student engagement in the curriculum and improved achievement in various competencies across disciplines. The teachers who worked in performance assessment workgroups have developed learning tools that improve students' depth of knowledge in the competencies with real-world applications. The performance-based assessments that have been created have increased the application of knowledge within each of the competencies, provided a multitude of opportunities for student-led learning, and increased personalization of learning which allows students to find success. The school also has recovery time for acquiring competency within the schedule.

The school operates on a trimester, five-block schedule. Prior to the pandemic, the day consisted of five seventy-minute periods. As of October 2019, the schedule also included an intervention flex block, also known as Learn, Excel, Achieve, Dream (LEAD) twice per week for forty minutes. The ability for students to have multiple chances to show their understanding of the competencies is built into the schedule. Students and teachers have the ability to schedule the intervention flex block as needed. All students, except seniors, are expected to take five courses each trimester. A process exists through which students can apply for an assigned study hall if their individual circumstances warrant one.

## **Growth**

The performance assessment workgroups should make a repository of tools that can be used by teachers across disciplines and grade levels. The repository would have the capacity to improve student learning and achievement because it will provide a more common experience for learning competencies in all disciplines and grade levels. The group also has the potential to strengthen cross-curricular connections which can help further ensure that the core competencies reflect student learning. Future department collaboration will allow the evaluation of the relevance of competencies in relation to state and national standards and the transferability of skills and knowledge across the district. The department collaboration time will provide opportunities to analyze student assessment data to determine student progress in meeting the competencies and to work on common language in rubrics. In some instances, the core competency audits in a few departments have resulted in updated rubrics and the evaluation of the effectiveness and relevance of the competencies in relation to the transferability of skills across disciplines. Expanding this effort to all departments would represent significant growth, especially since the audits have helped alignment with the newly-developed district-wide *Portrait of a Learner*. Additionally, the continuation of the Gil-Gil meetings with Gilmanton and Gilford middle school content teachers will further support growth by promoting better alignment with social studies, math, English, and science curricula, as well as K-12 competencies.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

### **Next steps identified by the school to support growth**

The school will develop and implement a plan to coordinate and communicate expectations regarding competency development and usage to ensure consistency, transparency, and relevance to the use of the competencies

The school will create a system to communicate any and all changes in the competencies to all stakeholders

The school will align, refine, and revise competencies to ensure that all grade levels are teaching skills that are transferable from grade to grade in each subject area

### **Next steps identified by the team to support growth**

Refine or develop rubrics and use them to assess the mastery of the competencies

Provide time for staff to review competencies, and develop rubrics and assessments to measure them



Ensure consistency in the language of all competencies

## **Sources of Evidence**

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

# Priority Area 3

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## Priority Area

Priority Area 3: Time for students to meet with teachers and school counselors to address academic and social-emotional needs and enrichment opportunities.

## Action, Impact, and Growth

### Action

Gilford High School has taken significant steps toward implementing Priority Area 3, focused on the Learn, Excel, Achieve, Dream (LEAD) block. The block was developed on the heels of the 2018 Collaborative Conference. As an outcome of the Self-Reflection and Collaborative Conference Reports, the block was going to be investigated; however, the school committed to creating the block prior to the Decennial visit. The school's growth plan states that it will implement and evaluate the LEAD block to personalize early intervention with the expectation that students' academic achievement will improve and expand other opportunities and provide learning opportunities that promote positive peer collaboration and self-reflection in hopes of improving school culture. The school's Summary Report states that students are evaluated at various points throughout the intervention process to determine the next steps. The school has a Pyramid of Interventions that does not incorporate the LEAD block.

Priority 3 in the growth/improvement plan includes 11 theory of action steps that the LEAD program is designed to address. The plan also includes a step to assign all students to a LEAD Block except seniors who, by virtue of maintaining a 3.25 GPA, are eligible for open-campus release. The teacher and staff guide for trimester 1 does not outline this exception and does not address how these students will access support. This same growth plan also states a need for peer collaboration and self-reflection.

The LEAD block was developed and the first iteration implemented in the first trimester of the 2019-2020 school year with the intent of phasing in new elements each trimester. Each week, teachers assign students to a LEAD block using the Enriching Students software program. During Monday's advisory, students who were not yet assigned LEAD blocks can sign up for the teacher or activity of their choice, which ensures that every student gets assigned. LEAD blocks are scheduled for 40 minutes on Tuesdays and Thursdays between the second and third blocks. The intention of LEAD is to support students with their academic needs during the course of the regular school day, which is communicated to teachers in the For Teachers & Staff 2019 LEAD Time Trimester 1 document. Students are recommended to be signed up for LEAD based on drops in grades, missing assignments, and re-assessment. Selecting students to attend LEAD is informal in nature with some departments using it more than others.

Students use the time for grades that may be dropping, missing assignments, re-assessment, and staying caught up on current work. Students also use the time for co-curricular activities such as weight-lifting, establishing relationships with teachers, or learning meditation. Some students are using the block to visit academic classes more toward the end of the semesters. Much of the enrichment is occurring informally as well, and students feel that it is having impressive results. Members of the school counseling department have used the LEAD block for some interventions, such as Girls in the Shadows and Navigating Recovery. The school counseling department also uses the LEAD block to meet with students about scholarships, meditation techniques, and the traditional counseling curriculum they would have delivered in classrooms.

While there is no formal system in place to follow trends about how, when, or by whom LEAD is being used, on December 11, 2019, teachers and staff used part of an early release day to assess the effectiveness of the LEAD block using anecdotal evidence.

### Impact

Data from December 2019 indicate a drop in students' failing courses after the implementation of the LEAD block; however, that is a continuation of an earlier trend. There were 120 failures on September 23 and 102 failures on October 28. LEAD implemented on October 29, and, on December 10, there were 54 failures. Data gathered from teachers in December 2019 show mixed results. When asked in an internal school survey how many students they signed up for LEAD to see them academically, 54.1 percent of teachers responded, "a few," and 32.4 percent of teachers responded, "most." Teachers were also asked how many students are using their classrooms to just take a break during LEAD, and 70.3 percent responded "a few," and 21.6 percent said "none." According to documentation from the "LEAD Block discussion" on December 11, 2019, teachers and students had used the block for re-assessment and extra time. Some teachers indicated additional days of LEAD blocks would be helpful. Some teachers reported that LEAD was not effective as an academic intervention; some reported "sort of" and some reported "yes." This reflection revealed logistical and equity issues that led to department meetings in January designed to make improvements to the program. School counselors find that using the LEAD Block reduces the amount of time the counseling curriculum interrupts classes.

Students find the LEAD block to be productive. They appreciate the ability to re-assess during school hours and find time to stay caught up. They also appreciate the opportunity to connect with teachers outside of class time. Some spaces have been so popular that the caps on student attendance have needed to be adjusted. Parents feel that the LEAD block is important and that, because the program has been suspended during the pandemic, it has had a significant impact. The school has a clear commitment to restart once it is safe to do so. Nevertheless, the 4th block has recently been extended by 20 minutes to incorporate a structured study hall and give students extra opportunities to complete their work or make a plan with teachers. Teachers don't see this as taking the place of LEAD but view it as a temporary way to address some of the needs.

## **Growth**

Beginning in March 2020, LEAD was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting transition to remote learning for all New Hampshire schools. In the 2020-21 school year, LEAD remains suspended to be in compliance with the district's reopening plan. It is the intent of school leaders to resume the use of the LEAD block and possibly even expand it when the pandemic has ended or is under control. Thus, any growth has stopped until further notice. While there is not yet significant data to support the effectiveness of the LEAD block, there is incredible potential for growth both in academic success as well as teacher-student relationships. The school counseling department also has considerable ideas for how to use the LEAD block to further their goals, particularly from Priority Area 1: to address the increase in learners needing support in the areas of emotional, social, and mental health as well as those struggling with substance misuse.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

### **Next steps identified by the school to support growth**

The school will increase the number of LEAD days, add enrichment opportunities, and include more time for department collaboration.

The school will examine the bell schedule to see if other opportunities for LEAD and intervention exist.

The school will investigate other opportunities for competency recovery.

### **Next steps identified by the team to support growth**

Create concrete action steps to effectively promote positive peer collaboration and self-reflection to improve school climate

Ensure that the goals of the LEAD program are limited and directly related to the scope of the program to promote focus

Create a robust system to collect and analyze data to ensure the LEAD program remains relevant and meets the needs of all students

Incorporate LEAD into the pyramid of intervention

## **Sources of Evidence**

- parents
- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- students
- teachers

# Priority Area 4

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## Priority Area

Priority Area 4: To ensure student learning, more frequent department-specific collaboration opportunities shall be devoted to working on subject-specific goals that reflect the school goals along with the district strategic plan.

## Action, Impact, and Growth

### Actions

Over the past two years, Gilford High School has worked toward the goal of reclaiming some of the collaborative time lost when a contract issue made it impossible for teachers to meet on late arrival days approximately three times per month. During that time, each department worked in small groups to achieve goals set forth by the curriculum coordinator, a position that has since been eliminated. Examples of successes during that time include the transition to competency-based assessment, setting and aligning district goals for faculty and students, revisiting and rewriting scoring rubrics, implementing Understanding by Design, and addressing social-emotional learning.

The reclaiming of this time has also been requested as part of an effort to sharpen the focus of already taxed administrators, whose duties now include overseeing the curriculum in addition to their previously held duties.

The early release schedules designed to address the need for additional collaborative time were provided by the school for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. These schedules demonstrate that there was a net loss of one hour of annual scheduled professional development between those two years, rather than the increase that was intended. The 2019-2020 schedule does not take into account the advent of the pandemic and the repercussions that teaching remotely may have had. The time during these early release days has often been set aside for school-wide initiatives and state-mandated programs or other professional development, leaving very little time for departmental collaboration during these scheduled days. While the school has been benefitting from using faculty members as in-house specialists who share areas of knowledge and the whole-staff professional development has improved in its dynamics overall, the loss of smaller group time is felt by all.

The faculty believes that the school will not return to the manner in which professional development was offered before the schedule change and is struggling to implement some of the proposed solutions. One problem is that the administration now has to balance the needs of the curriculum coordination and development alongside their other duties, therefore removing some of the focus on curriculum-centered issues. The school tried to resolve the issue with a pair of initiatives: increased meeting time through early release days, and use of LEAD block time. The plan to use LEAD block time as a way for teachers to collaborate with their departments means that each department would have a designated day on which they would meet while students receive help and attention in other academic areas. Due to the nature of their trimester schedule, this use of the LEAD block was to begin implementation at the beginning of trimester number two, beginning in early 2020. As the pandemic struck within a few weeks of the beginning of the implementation of the program, the initiative was put on hold. The professional staff has no data or knowledge of the results of the attempt to gain more time to collaborate through this method. The school does, however, plan to implement this use of the LEAD block as soon as it is safe to restart it.

### Impact

The attempt to increase the number of hours available during scheduled early release days netted a one hour per year loss of scheduled professional development time between the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. The pandemic caused collaboration to become a higher priority as faculty members shifted to a fully remote teaching model in March of 2020, and the school board, recognizing the need for more planning for this academic year, granted one departmental day for the development of standards and best practices for in-person, hybrid, and remote learning models.

The work that has been most negatively impacted by the loss of time addresses the fairness and equity of common assessments within each department. For example, within the social studies department, several courses offer the same content, and have the same summative assessments, but are leveled courses with differentiated methods of instruction that allow key components to be scaffolded in different ways. Collaborative meetings allow teachers within the same departments to compare formative steps that garner the most successful outcomes for students. Without this time, students do not have the opportunity to benefit from teacher innovation in the same way that additional collaborative time would allow.

There are still meetings to address vertical alignment, i.e., Gil-Gil meetings, and the use of UbD continues, but the loss of the position of the curriculum coordinator, who directed the K-12 curriculum work is felt by all. There is a frustration that the district is simply maintaining its work and that, without more time and direction, it will be unable to move forward at a measurable pace.

Without sufficient coordination and time to collaborate within departments and as an entire district, many of the initiatives undertaken by the district, the schools, or the various departments begin to become haphazard and disconnected. Departmental meetings allow small groups of teachers to make progress in their particular areas of need and help to solidify the overarching goals of the district, not only for providing more time to teachers for collaboration but also for meeting the needs of students academically, socially, and emotionally.

## **Growth**

The effort to increase the number of hours of departmental collaboration has largely been stalled or delayed due to the pandemic and other factors. Although there are regular meetings with the school board in which teachers and others share items of interest with both the board and the community, there does not seem to be any direct connection between what is shared and how collaborative time, especially departmental time, is directly connected to the results presented at the meetings. There is no other direct communication with the community that would allow them to see the value of the additional time that the faculty feels that they need in order to achieve district, school, and departmental goals and improve teaching and learning. The implementation of the proposed initiatives may not replace the many lost hours of departmental collaboration but may help to sharpen the focus of the school and district on curriculum goals and alignment, bettering the school experience for Gilford and Gilmanton students.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

### **Next steps identified by the school to support growth**

Since the original attempt to address the issue of limited departmental time for planning and collaboration were derailed by the pandemic, Gilford High School intends to implement the original plans to use the LEAD block as additional collaborative time, once it is re-introduced to the schedule. Therefore:

The school will use the LEAD block as additional collaborative time.

The school will evaluate the effectiveness of using the LEAD block as additional collaborative time.

### **Next steps identified by the team to support growth**

Ensure that the professional development schedule includes time for professional collaboration around the collaborative analysis of student work to improve teaching and learning

Provide time within the schedule for staff to complete department-specific tasks such as competency updates, the development of rubrics, and common assessments

Communicate the expected positive impact on student performance and outcomes of any initiatives undertaken during collaborative professional development time

## **Sources of Evidence**

- community members
- department leaders
- priority area meetings
- school summary report
- teachers

# Priority Area 5

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## Priority Area

Priority Area 5: The development of a vision of the graduate, i.e., a portrait of a learner, that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success and the providing of feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress in achieving this vision.

## Action, Impact, and Growth

### Action

At the time of the Collaborative Conference, it was determined that the school was not yet meeting Foundational Element 1.2a. While the members of the school community had a clear idea of what students should know and be able to do upon graduation, they had not yet articulated a clear written statement describing a vision of the graduate. Shortly after receiving the final report of the visiting team, the principal and a select committee embarked on a mission to learn about the process of creating and implementing a vision of the graduate in order to develop one for the school and its students. The leadership team which consists of the superintendent and the three school principals dedicated time and focus to the concept of a vision of the graduate and made the critical decision to involve all three schools in the process, thus creating a document, now identified as the *Portrait of a Learner*, that would be applicable to all students, K-12. To begin the process, a group of faculty members attended a two-day workshop sponsored by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and later arranged for one of the highly engaging presenters, Abby Benedetto, to come to Gilford to work with the entire faculty one day prior to a system-wide in-service day dedicated to the creation of a *Portrait of a Learner*. To further that concept, district professional development time was dedicated to gathering input from staff working in mixed groups as to what students should know and be able to do after twelve years in the Gilford Schools. A diverse committee made up of the leadership team and 2-3 teachers from each building, was established and students, staff, and parents were surveyed for their input on the attributes Gilford learners should possess when they graduate. The school board was involved in the process as a few members participated in some of the committee work. Throughout the process, the board was kept apprised of the progress through monthly reports by the principal. Ultimately, a rather unwieldy list of some eighty attributes was narrowed to six and then further refined to the four which currently compose the Gilford school district's *Portrait of a Learner*: Collaborate, Innovate, Self-Direct, and Critically Think. During the summer of 2019, a committee developed the district's *Portrait of a Learner Performance Outcomes*, and the document was introduced in the fall of that same year. In December of 2019, the principal invited educators from a number of other schools in the area, and 12-15 schools sent representatives to share ideas and strategies regarding the creation of a vision of the graduate.

Shortly after the *Portrait of a Learner* was introduced, a plan was developed to begin its gradual implementation by having every teacher incorporate in their instruction at least one transferable skill from one of the four attributes and to assess it and report the outcomes to students. That plan was interrupted when the school was required to adhere to a state mandate to close its doors in mid-March due to the threat of the pandemic and immediately switch to remote learning which they continued until the end of the school year. Since reopening this fall for in-person learning, the focus understandably has been on maintaining student and staff safety and doing whatever is necessary to remain open for in-person learning. Any further work on the incorporation of the *Portrait of a Learner* has been put on hold for the foreseeable future. At some point, the *Portrait of a Learner* committee will reconvene and work on developing a plan to effectively assess student mastery of the attributes in the *Portrait of a Learner* with a target date of 2021 to begin implementation. The school has already begun a discussion of creating a way for students to take ownership of the process and self-assess and demonstrate their acquisition of the transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions contained in the attributes of the *Portrait of a Learner* and connect a faculty member to the review of their assessment through the existing advisory program.



## Impact

One impact of initiating the new *Portrait of a Learner* is that it involved a very smooth process for faculty and students. That transition was facilitated by the fact that many of the attributes were already embedded in the curriculum and were already being taught and assessed in the classroom by many teachers but not in any organized or systematic way. Another significant impact was that, from the beginning, there was a substantial agreement with, as well as buy-in and support for, the creation and adoption of the *Portrait of a Learner* by most faculty members. There was general consensus around the need for a school community to be able to clearly identify what their students should know and be able to do upon graduation and to be able to demonstrate that their students were meeting those expectations. That consensus was made stronger by the concerted effort to solicit the input of important constituent groups in the school community and because being able to clearly identify what their students should know and be able to do upon graduation made sense to stakeholders.

## Growth

There are several opportunities for growth as the *Portrait of a Learner* is integrated into curriculum, instruction, and assessment and becomes a natural part of the culture of the school. Specific higher order thinking and other transferable skills will be incorporated throughout the school's curriculum and become part of classroom instruction and assessment, enhancing both significantly. Post-pandemic, when the *Portrait of a Learner* is widely promulgated, all students and parents will clearly understand what transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions are necessary for future success. Over students' four-year high school careers, they and their families will receive constant feedback on their individual progress in achieving the *Portrait of a Learner*.

## Recommended Next Steps

### Next steps identified by the school to support growth

The school will re-start the incorporation of the *Portrait of a Learner* into the culture of the school as early as Fall, 2021.

The school will begin implementing the performance outcomes to measure student progress in successfully demonstrating the attributes all graduates will possess after four years at Gilford High School.

The school will create a way to inform students and families of individual student's progress toward attaining and demonstrating mastery of the skills and attributes that compose the *Portrait of a Learner*.

### Next steps identified by the team to support growth

Develop and implement an effective plan to inform parents and the community about the *Portrait of a Learner*

## Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- priority area meetings
- school board
- school leadership
- school summary report

# Part 3 - Reflection on Student Learning

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## Reflection on Student Learning

Instructional practices, in many cases, have been designed to meet the learning needs of each student. Most teachers use various forms of differentiation, personalization, and individualization of instruction to better meet the needs of students. Additionally, a variety of instructional strategies are used to meet student needs. These include formative assessment, group work, independent work, teacher-led discussions and lectures, and inquiry-based lessons. In chemistry and biology lessons, the instruction is designed to allow students to move through their learning at a varying pace, spending more time on concepts with which they struggle and moving quickly through those they easily grasp. The calculus teacher works in the same section with a small group of students completing tasks for their Calculus AB course and one student completing tasks for Calculus BC. The teacher designs the learning for the BC student with periodic benchmarks which allows for flexibility in the pace between benchmarks. Opportunities for students to personalize and individualize their learning include extended learning, independent study, and taking online courses. The structure and supports employed afford most students access to rigorous learning opportunities. The addition of the LEAD block is a significant step in meeting the needs of all students as it provides the opportunity to meet individual student needs through one-on-one or small group support, more time for students to complete learning, and extensions of learning to appropriately challenge all students. To some degree, the school relies on leveled classes to meet varying student needs. At times, this limits students' ability to vary their schedule to meet desired goals or take on certain challenges that might benefit them.

The instructional philosophy and practices often allow students to actively engage in learning and at times lead their own learning. The school is committed to professional development on performance-based assessment workgroups and cooperative learning at work through stipend summer training. The professional staff has implemented the Understanding by Design (UbD) unit development process across the school. At this point, teachers are planning units using the UbD format and many of the teachers have implemented performance assessment workgroups and, to a lesser degree, cooperative learning at work practices. The school estimates between 40-50 percent of their teachers have participated in performance-based assessment workgroups training. The school does not yet have a system to ensure all teachers receive training in performance-based assessment workgroups or cooperative learning at work. Where used, these practices are resulting in an increase in student learning that is personalized, relevant, and authentic, and provide students with opportunities to determine learning outcomes. Examples of this include students in AP World History researching trade routes and creating a t-shirt to represent their learning and students in history classes practicing speaking skills through an open-ended project for which they select a topic and prepare a presentation with a partner to demonstrate speaking skills. According to the NEASC survey, over 93 percent of teachers state that they use project-based learning in their classes, and 90.2 percent of students and 66 percent of parents agree. While close to 70 percent of teachers report that they allow students to make choices about their own learning, only 53 percent of students agree. Similarly, around 60 percent of teachers indicate that they allow or encourage students to make suggestions about how and what they learn, while 43 percent of students agree. Forty-two percent of teachers agree that they allow students to design their own learning. When the LEAD block is active, students have the opportunity to choose the activity that most makes sense for their learning.

Students regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking across the curriculum. These skills are integrated into most units of study and into the discipline area competencies. This practice has been furthered by the ongoing professional development on developing and implementing performance-based assessments workgroups and cooperative learning at work in which many teachers have participated over the last several years. An example of inquiry, critical thinking, and analysis is students in physics using Gizmos software to explore the relationship between time, distance, and velocity. They use the software on their Chromebooks to test hypotheses, think critically about the relationship between these variables, and reinforce and revise their thinking. In Chemistry, students use models to create 3-dimensional molecules, allowing them to understand the relationship between various types of bonds and to help develop their ability to visualize 2-

dimensional representations in 3-dimensions. Psychology students engage in Socratic circles to share articles and ask questions in preparation for assessments. According to the NEASC survey, 95 percent of teachers feel that they engage students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills, 65 percent of parents and students agree.

In most classrooms, learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum; however, this is a work in progress. Many teachers have participated in performance assessment workgroups, which has resulted in more opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning through authentic and relevant assessments. For example, in English classes, students create a thesis and present it to an outside audience. According to the NEASC survey, 81 percent of teachers state that they use a variety of assessment strategies to measure student learning, and 75 percent of students feel that they are provided with a variety of assessment opportunities to demonstrate their learning. As a result of professional development efforts around formative assessments, a variety of formative assessment strategies are used to check for student understanding and to help inform decisions regarding instruction. Teachers use such strategies as Quiz Yourself in a science class, Parking Lot in a math class, warm-up exercises in world language classes, dipstick using whiteboard paddles in a variety of classes, and multiple computer applications specifically designed to quickly assess students during the lesson to check for understanding or mastery of certain knowledge or skills. There is widespread use of rubrics to clearly define student learning goals which are shared with students when assessments are introduced. Many teachers use summative assessments to inform their instruction as well as to revise the curriculum. In some disciplines, common assessments are administered, and the data is used to evaluate consistency in curriculum and instruction. According to the NEASC survey, close to 75 percent of teachers state that they use common assessments in their courses, and over 83 percent regularly use assessment results to adjust their instruction. Unit-specific learning goals are communicated to students at the beginning of units. Embedded in many units across curricular areas is learning consistent with the school's *Portrait of a Learner*, but these are not regularly made apparent to students, and there is not a consistent system or coordination of assessment to determine students' growth and achievement of this vision.

Students often have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning. Most teachers provide both formative and summative feedback in a timely manner to help students understand their strengths and areas for growth. For example, students receive feedback from their peers using such strategies as pair-share and suggestive and corrective feedback from teachers on their writing, projects, or other forms of summative assessments. It is common to see students working in Google Documents and peers and teachers providing feedback on the work through comments. Across the curriculum, students are given opportunities to use the feedback provided on an assessment to revise or improve their work and resubmit it to demonstrate their learning and receive some form of credit; however, this practice is not universal as this is a suggested but not required practice. Art students routinely revise and improve their artwork. The math department has a policy regarding test retakes and a process to recover competency credit. According to the NEASC survey, nearly 90 percent of teachers indicate that they provide their students with timely and meaningful feedback, and close to 65 percent of students agree. In the 2019-2020 school year, some teachers and students had begun to use the LEAD block to facilitate reassessment and revision, but this effort is currently paused to accommodate pandemic reopening procedures.

Students use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning. Every student has a Chromebook provided to him or her to use in class and at home. The school's wireless infrastructure allows students and teachers to use technology as needed without interruption. The use of technology in classes is common and effective. Teachers across subject areas design lessons and homework in documents that students access through Google Classroom. In a Geometry class, students work on the Pythagorean Theorem. They engage in problem-solving as they complete problems in a Google Document, which allows them to enter comments regarding areas of confusion. This permits students to support each other by answering questions and ensures that the teacher can see common areas of struggle. Gizmo software is used by physics students to simulate movement and create graphs of time vs. distance and time vs. velocity. They easily manipulate the movement and see real-time graphs that allow them to understand the relationship between distance and velocity. In many classes, teachers skillfully use smartboards to focus students' attention on important concepts, problem-solving steps, and material. According to the NEASC survey, over 90 percent of teachers agree that they regularly use technology to individualize the pace of learning for their students, and 84

percent of students report that they use technology to share information and to collaborate with their peers. Beyond the integration of technology within the classroom, the school also enables students to use technology to further their own learning, challenge themselves academically, and recover credits by accessing learning opportunities online through programs such as PLATO, Virtual High School, or the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School.

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

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## Conceptual Understanding

In the two years since the Collaborative Conference, Gilford High School has been taking steps to ensure the necessary conceptual understanding to successfully support its successful completion of the goals included its Priority Areas for Growth. As the school states in its Summary Report, “optimal learning begins with high-quality teaching, effective performance-based assessments, common rubrics, and opportunities for students to reassess in order to demonstrate mastery of clearly defined competencies across all curricular areas.” The school is striving to meet that goal. Evidence of a shared understanding among professional staff of what effective learning looks like can clearly be seen in the sizable percentage of teachers who are actively engaged in several professional development groups. Both the performance assessment workgroup and the cooperative learning at workgroup have 40-50 percent of the staff as active participants. Forty percent of the staff were involved in summer work last year and even during the pandemic shutdown, 21 percent of the staff continued to engage in professional development work. Additionally, the school has put considerable effort into developing the *Portrait of the Learner* and has put significant funding and time into developing teacher understanding and adoption of Understanding by Design (UbD), Performance-Based Assessments, and competencies.

The professional staff is learning how to most effectively use the new LEAD block and remain engaged in activities to collaboratively foster that shared understanding. The understanding of the need for, and implementation of, social-emotional learning strategies are consistent across the faculty. Teachers have a desire for an understanding of collaboration. The professional staff was also part of developing the *Portrait of the Learner* and are beginning to implement it in practice.

Student's understanding of social-emotional well-being needs to be further developed. While all students stated they knew where to go for help, significantly fewer understood the broader range of available resources. Students are not clear about what collaboration is or their role in it. Students also show a limited understanding of the *Portrait of the Learner*; nevertheless, a few students have been awarded the student of the month distinction that is now tied to the document.

## Commitment

The Gilford school community is fully committed to increasing alignment with the 2020 Standards for Accreditation. The school's five Priority Areas for Growth are all referenced and reflected in the Standards. Over the past two years, members of the school community have been engaged in addressing the areas to strengthen the alignment of the school to the Standards and to initiate the reforms to improve teaching and learning throughout the school. Most significantly, upon receipt of the Collaborative Conference Report in early 2019 which identified that the school was not meeting one of the Foundational Elements because it had not yet created a vision of the graduate, school leaders, teachers, and community members immediately began a comprehensive and inclusive research-based process to create a meaningful document that reflected the community and the needs of its students. That process involved having staff members attend a workshop on the vision of a graduate and surveying teachers, students, and parents to determine consensus around what attributes and skills students should possess by the time they graduate from Gilford High School. A critical decision was made early on to create a *Portrait of a Learner* which would apply to all students, K-12 in the Gilford school district. To further the understanding of the rationale for and the process of creating a *Portrait of a Learner*, the school brought in an expert consultant to work with all district professional staff. The same presenter worked with the *Portrait of a Learner* committee to create an exceptional set of performance objectives which are presented as “I can” statements to encourage student ownership of the document. In an attempt to gain additional insight from colleagues, the professional staff hosted educators from a number of neighboring schools for a round-table discussion on the creation, implementation, and assessment of the vision of the graduate. The resulting document was introduced and plans are being made to implement the skills and attributes gradually into classroom instruction and to have the results reported to students. These plans are on hold due to the

pandemic which forced the closure of schools across New Hampshire and propelled the school into remote learning for the remainder of the school year. The understandable pause in the implementation of the *Portrait of a Learner* and its incorporation within the school culture has obviously affected the level of awareness most students, parents, and community members have of the document. While there has been some discussion of the *Portrait of a Learner* in some classrooms and the document has been used to identify a student of the month for recognition, student and parent knowledge and understanding of the four attributes students need to demonstrate prior to graduation is still limited. Because the process to create this important guiding document was so comprehensive and inclusive, there is tremendous buy-in and support for the concept of a *Portrait of a Learner*. Furthermore, the significant involvement in and support for the project by the superintendent and the school board clearly demonstrates a commitment not only to the *Portrait of a Learner* but to a community-wide growth mindset which has resulted in not only acceptance of but also enthusiasm for the improvement of teaching and learning which is shared by the entire school community.

## Competency

For the most part, the faculty understands and acknowledges the changes that need to be made in order to align with the Standards. Since the Collaborative Conference Visit in 2018, the school has made significant progress in addressing Priority Areas that overlap with the school growth/improvement plan and the district strategic improvement plan. While the school recognizes the need for improvements, there are times when the implementation of action steps and measures of success do not clearly align with the Standards.

The school community has dedicated time and planning to the creation of the school's *Portrait of a Learner* and realigned the student of the month to that new document. However, students and parents have limited awareness of the *Portrait of a Learner*, and, while the school has developed a comprehensive set of performance outcomes to measure success, it has not yet determined how to fully integrate the attributes in the curriculum or in classroom instruction or how to assess student attainment of those attributes and skills. To that end, there is a general consensus among the professional staff and the school's leadership that additional training in the area of assessing the *Portrait of a Learner* would be essential in ensuring its ultimate success.

The school recognizes the need for professional development in Understanding by Design (UbD), Performance-Based Assessments, and competencies. Additionally, a significant number of faculty members have received training in UbD and performance-based assessments. The school is still struggling with how to ensure all faculty members are adequately trained in these areas. The school also continues to struggle with finding sufficient time for professional development. Alignment among the district's schools is encouraged by the district's strategic plan, but there is little time to meet, and the district is struggling with the loss of the district curriculum coordinator position that managed the alignment. Additionally, over years, the school board has significantly reduced the release time for professional development.

The school has embraced the importance of social-emotional learning as essential to supporting the well-being of all learners. Following the lead of the principal who makes an effort to connect with each student by sending handwritten notes of encouragement and congratulations in an effort to make every student feel connected, a number of new and varied programs were introduced in the Fall of 2019, including the opening of the Wellness Center, implementation of the school-wide Choose Love program and establishment of the peer counseling program. In this initial phase, students and parents have limited knowledge of the more targeted initiatives; however, those involved with each of the programs find them to be constructive. Once it is safe enough for these programs to restart, the expanded promotion will allow for even more students to benefit from them.

## Capacity

Gilford High School has a significant capacity to achieve the goals set forth in the Priority Areas. Both the community and the school board are supportive. The community rallies around the school and supports its mission. For its part, the board acts on a stable tax base which in turn produces a reliable, sustainable, and responsible budget. The resources have supported the purchase of essential software such as Enriching Students and Alma, the school's new student management system which provides the capacity to track and

develop data which in turn will help the school measure success. Through the budget and the Agreement Between Gilford School Board and Gilford Education Association that allows teachers to apply for and receive up to \$2,000.00 to improve their knowledge, there is ample funding and support for teachers to further develop their learning both through credit-bearing courses and professional development especially in areas related to identified priorities.

The focus on the Priority Areas, along with the leadership and support of administrators and staff has built capacity for the school to effectively and meaningfully achieve the goals that have been set. The programs put into place, such as performance assessment workgroups and the Learn, Excel, Achieve, Dream block, lay the groundwork of dedicated time and staff expertise to ensure success. The community has also emphasized the importance of shared professional development in the district strategic plan.

Three recent changes to the Gilford district may hinder the school's capacity to move forward. The elimination of the district curriculum coordinator has made it more difficult for teachers and administrators to ensure the cohesiveness of their work, while the elimination of weekly professional development time for teachers to collaborate and the temporary suspension of the LEAD block due to the pandemic takes away the potential for department collaboration. While there is still work to be done embedding the *Portrait of the Learner* into the school culture, the inclusive process used speaks to the strong support within the town and school community. The robust process provides a framework and relationships for future collaborative endeavors. With conceptual understanding, commitment, and competency in place, the school can meet its goals as long as the resources of funding and time remain in place.

# Additional Information

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## Additional Information

### **Team Feedback on the Loss of the District Curriculum Coordinator Position**

Based on conversations with various members of the Gilford school community and the team's observations during the Decennial Accreditation Visit, the visiting team finds that the elimination of the district curriculum coordinator position two years ago has presented some serious challenges to the continuity of the K-12 curriculum and to the continued success of several of the critical efforts underway to improve teaching and learning at Gilford High School. The loss of that important position has left departmental leaders looking for both advocacy and guidance regarding the next steps in developing curricula, competency updates, assessments, and rubrics. Furthermore, there is a concern that coordination and vertical articulation between the high school, middle school, and Gilford and Gilmanton elementary schools are significantly compromised by the loss of an administrator who represented a significant unifying force of direction and continuity for the school and the district. The team is aware that the duties and responsibilities once held by the former curriculum coordinator are now being competently shared and executed by the members of the leadership team and, while the work of curriculum coordination continues, many members of the school community feel that this substitution does not serve the best interests of the professional staff, administrators, teachers, and students. The visiting team, composed of a group of experienced educators, shares the concerns of the school's professional staff. The team believes that, in the interest of maintaining curriculum continuity and optimal organization among the schools and within departments, the Gilford school district should address this issue so that the valid concerns of the professional staff are resolved.



# Commendations

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## Commendation

The development and implementation of a wide variety of thoughtful programs designed to support the social-emotional needs of all students

## Commendation

The creation and implementation of the peer counseling program

## Commendation

The systemic use of technology to support and enhance student learning, especially the teachers' use of technology to enhance instruction, inquiry, and assessment

## Commendation

The students' use of formative feedback from peers, self-evaluation, and teachers to improve student learning

## Commendation

The use of a variety of formative and summative assessment strategies to measure and inform student learning

## Commendation

The widespread use of rubrics to clearly define learning goals for students

## Commendation

The opportunities for students to engage in activities that promote deep understanding, analysis, and creative thinking

## Commendation

The commitment to training for and the implementation of performance-based assessment practices

## Commendation

The school-wide implementation of the Understanding by Design model of curriculum development

## Commendation

The commitment to training for and the implementation of cooperative learning at work strategies

The development and implementation of the Learn, Excel, Achieve, Dream (LEAD) block to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all learners

The adoption of software such as Enriching Students and ALMA to facilitate student support and provide feedback on student progress

The development and implementation of lessons that allow students to learn at a pace that meets their needs

The positive personal communication through handwritten notes by the principal and faculty to acknowledge students' achievements

The superintendent's dedication to and support of the effort to create and implement a *Portrait of a Learner* for the entire school district

The leadership of the principal in convening a roundtable discussion involving a number of neighboring schools to share strategies around creating a *Portrait of a Learner*

The development of a clear set of attributes and skills that compose the Gilford school district's *Portrait of a Learner*

The development of a comprehensive set of performance outcomes to measure students' acquisition of necessary skills which are identified as "I can" statements

The commitment and leadership of staff to continue the performance assessment workgroup to improve teaching and learning

The dedication of the staff who are actively engaged in a variety of professional development groups and activities to improve teaching and learning

The commitment of administrators and staff to safely maintain in-person learning to benefit their students despite the threat posed by the pandemic

The support of the school board and the communities of Gilford and Gilmanton to ensure the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services for all students

# Additional Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Communicate expected student outcomes and the impact on learning with all stakeholders when devising initiatives(*Principle 3.6*)

## Recommendation

Create and implement consistent practices regarding students' ability to revise and retake assessments to demonstrate mastery of concepts(*Principle 2.8*)

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a system for assessing and reporting student achievement of attributes defined in the *Portrait of a Learner*(*Principle 2.1*)

## Recommendation

Increase students' ability to lead their learning through student choice, the pursuit of personal interests, and opportunities for creative expression across all curricular areas(*Principle 2.5*)

## Recommendation

Ensure that the school's schedule and the leveling of students enables all students to access appropriate levels of challenge in their learning(*Principle 3.5*)

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a system to train all teachers in desired teaching practices, such as performance-based assessments and cooperative learning at work(*Principle 3.2*)

## Recommendation

Develop a system to track work habits in addition to academic skills to provide more detailed feedback for student growth and development(*Principle 2.8*)

## Recommendation

Develop a system to track work habits in addition to academic skills to provide more detailed feedback for student growth and development(*Principle 2.8*)

## **Recommendation**

Develop and implement a way to provide cohesive, consistent, and relevant curriculum leadership to improve teaching and learning(*Principle 3.4*)

## **Recommendation**

# **FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES**

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This Collaborative Conference visit report reflects the findings of the school's Self-Reflection and those of the visiting team. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administrators, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administrators yearly of progress made in addressing visiting team recommendations.

A school's initial/continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting team 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 submit routine Three- and Six-Year Progress Reports documenting the current status of all 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 team recommendations by the time the Six-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 Decennial Accreditation 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 the school's alignment 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 on the next page. All other substantive changes should be included in the Three- and Six-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Information Report (AIR) which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The Commission urges school officials to use the results of the Collaborative Conference Report as well as the school's identified priority areas for growth to draft a school growth and improvement plan, and to review and implement the findings of the Self-Reflection and valid recommendations identified in the Collaborative Conference report. An outline of the Follow-Up Program is available in the Commission's Accreditation Handbook, which is available on the Commission's website.

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed a Self-Reflection that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the Self-Reflection and preparation for the visit ensured a successful Collaborative Conference visit.

# **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

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

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

# **Roster of Team Members**

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## **Chair(s)**

**Chair: Mr. Paul Mangelinkx** - New England Association of Schools & Colleges

**Assistant Chair: Mr. W. Scott Prescott** - Virtual Learning Academy Charter School

## **Team Members**

**Ursula Askins-Huber** - Profile School

**Kevin Coen** - Springfield High School

**Ms. Paige Rowse** - Needham High School

**Geoff Simard** - Exeter High School