

Two-Year Progress Report
Rocky Hill High School
October 1, 2012

Section I – Detailed Responses to Highlighted Recommendations

1. **Cite some specific examples to document that the principal has sufficient autonomy to lead the school.**

Classification: Rejected

The principal has sufficient authority and autonomy to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations of the school. In a period of a few years, there have been changes in both high school and central office administration. Consequently, there have been many district-wide and building initiatives that have been misperceived by the faculty as directives resulting in a loss of principal autonomy.

A very important fact to understand is that the principal joined the district shortly after the superintendent and therefore the faculty perception may have been vague or misunderstood as to where directives originated. At this point in time the faculty can clearly see that both superintendent and principal were operating under their designated roles. According to a survey conducted in May, 2012, 70.9% of the staff agreed that the principal has sufficient autonomy and authority to guide the school in fulfilling its mission and expectations. In situations where the superintendent and principal needed to work together collaboration was easily facilitated.

There is a wide range of specific examples that substantiate that the principal has sufficient autonomy to lead the school. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, Data Teams and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) were formed. The principal scheduled teachers into data teams for the purpose of evaluating and revising curriculum written in the Balanced Curriculum format. He also monitored the progress each team made. In response to teachers requesting more collaboration time, the principal created PLCs. As a result, many teachers now have built in time during the day to meet and collaborate with their colleagues. Also, as a way to help struggling ninth grade students, the principal formed the Ninth Grade Team in the fall of 2011. This team consists of all general level ninth grade teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators who meet once a week. They discuss the progress of their students and propose interventions to help those students who continue to struggle. Following the guidelines of Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI), the principal has added structured study halls, a math problem solving class, and reading classes to support students who are struggling. These resources are utilized by the Ninth Grade Team and all students in the school.

In addition, the principal has the authority to hire new staff members for the school. This includes teachers, coaches, and tutors. The principal determines the scheduling of classes and teacher assignments.

The principal converted a conference room in the library into a computer lab in response to the inadequate access to the one lab previously available. The availability of the second lab has allowed more teachers access to technology for their classes.

The principal also formed an Administrative Council to help shape and guide initiatives of the school. This group consists of teachers, guidance counselors and school support staff who represent the various departments within the building.

A recent state mandate required schools to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The principal had the autonomy to determine how PBIS would be implemented in the school. He led a team of teachers and students to develop this new program which became known as ROCK. The ROCK program began in the 2011-2012 school year. PBIS has recently evolved to become a part of the Safe School Climate Committee (SSCC). SSCC also addresses bullying in schools.

The principal's autonomy is exemplified by the creation or revision of many programs and policies in the school. The Freshman Orientation Program was restructured to provide more personalization to help incoming students establish a connection to their new school. The principal revised the District's Summer Reading Program in response to a student led initiative requesting an update of the program.

2. Update progress on the plan to renovate the high school, including a preliminary timeline seeking voter support of the project.

Classification: In Progress

In a referendum held on June 5, 2012, the voters of Rocky Hill supported funding the high school renovation project as defined in the Educational Specifications Draft. Work now moves into the stages of logistics, finite planning and execution as delineated in the architectural plans. The Educational Specifications include a rationale for the building project, a long range educational plan, a historical perspective, and a detailed description of the planned renovations for each program and defined area of the building. For example, the specifications for each zone include an explanation of current space and condition, limiting factors, and a conception for the final design that addresses the aforementioned limitations. District administrators, architects, and the project construction manager met on June 6, 2012. The Educational Specifications were revised at this meeting to include additional parking and a pool heating system, as approved by voters of the referendum. District administrators submitted a grant application and final Educational Specifications to the State of Connecticut on June 30, 2012. Pending legislative approval of the grant, funding will become available July 1, 2013. Simultaneous to the state approval process, the town will establish a building committee, accept bids from construction and architectural firms, and establish the building footprint. Construction and architectural firms for the final stages of the project were chosen in August 2012. The final design phase began in September 2012. A building committee with representative stakeholders from the town and board of education has been assembled. It is anticipated that ground breaking for the project may begin as early as summer of 2013 with completion estimated to take 1.5 years.

3. **Develop analytic rubrics to assess individual achievement of the social and civic expectations.**

Classification: In Progress

In April of 2012 a committee was established to modify the social and civic to make them measurable. The committee developed four simplified and measurable expectations:

1. Students will exhibit respect for others and follow school rules.
2. Students will demonstrate responsible citizenship
3. Students will understand the importance of physical, emotional, and social wellness.
4. Students will understand the importance of Global Awareness.

These revised social and civic expectations and their methods of measurement will be presented to the faculty and Board of Education for approval in the fall of 2012.

A rubric has been developed to assess students' respect for others and adherence to the school rules. The data from the rubrics will then be presented to students and parents in a separate category on student report cards every marking period.

Responsible citizenship will be measured through student completion of a required number of community service hours. A system is being developed to monitor and make available service opportunities to students. Accumulated community service hours will also be presented to students and parents on quarterly report cards.

Understanding the importance of physical, emotional, and social wellness will be measured in Health and Physical Education (P.E.) classes. As the Health and P.E. teachers are in the process of revising the curricula, these expectations will be measured using course based rubrics. With these expectations as a driving force, the Health and P.E. department has proposed more personalized classes, such as lifeguarding, team sports, and adventure sports. This allows students to pursue individual interests that will promote the life-long practice of wellness.

The Global Awareness expectation will be measured during Homeroom Advisory periods. Over the past few years we have successfully implemented a homeroom-based advisory program. Advisory groups meet twice each month for a forty-five minute time period in which various lessons occur. In the past, some of the most memorable and impacting activities have revolved around making our students more globally aware. Advisory group surveys indicated that students were most impacted by our "Falling Whistles" activity that provided information about the ongoing campaign for peace in the Congo. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, a greater emphasis will be placed on activities that focus on and measure students' global awareness.

- 4. Develop a focused plan to ensure the school's core values and beliefs about learning are a guiding force in school-wide decision-making, including resource allocations.**

Classification: In Progress

Rocky Hill High School ensures that the school's core values and beliefs about learning are a guiding force in school-wide decision making. The recent passing of a town wide referendum allocated \$45 million to the renovation of the high school. The building project addresses the philosophy and mission of the high school and will enable delivery of 21st century curriculum to Rocky Hill students. State of the art science labs, library media center, improved instructional space, and increased availability of technology will allow students to achieve the academic learning expectations in an ever-changing world.

Reading Across the Content Level I & II are courses created in the 2010-2011 school year that are designed to address reading on standardized testing. The Math Problem Solving class was created to provide assistance to students in need of additional support. Structured study halls have been created to assist identified students. These study halls offer more one-on-one support to enrolled students.

The Ninth Grade Team was established in the 2011-2012 school year to provide more assistance to those freshmen who require more resources in order to achieve the school-wide learning expectations. Individual student learning needs are identified by this team. Students are provided with skill based support in reading, writing and/ or math as deemed necessary to ensure their academic success.

PLCs and Data Teams enable teachers to collaboratively focus on presenting a challenging curriculum to students that enables them to fulfill the school's beliefs about learning. Significant tasks in a curriculum are identified by these teachers and allow students to master the academic expectations.

The SSCC program, as it is being implemented at Rocky Hill High School, addresses the school's core value of fostering responsible citizenship. The ROCK program began in the 2011-2012 school year. Signs have been created and posted in all spaces in the building that model how the school's core values can be applied by students in different environments.

5. **Ensure that teachers are regularly involved in the review, evaluation and revision of the curriculum, including Balanced Curriculum documents.**

Classification: In Progress

At the time of the NEASC evaluation, the curriculum authoring process was in the early stages. Since then the faculty has made tremendous progress establishing A Balanced Curriculum across all disciplines. Below is a subject-specific summary of completed balanced curricula:

English	Short Story and Composition
	Literary Forms
	American Writers
	Advanced Composition
Social Studies	Western Civilization 1
	Western Civilization 2
	Civics
	American History
	American and World Politics
Math	Algebra 1
	Geometry
Science	Earth and Its Environment
	Biology
	Chemistry
Business	Personal Finance
	Accounting
	Advanced Accounting
	Marketing
Family and Consumer Science	Child and Adolescent Development
	Early Childhood Education
	Culinary
Physical Education	Grades 9 and 10
World Language	Spanish 2
	French 3
Art	Photography

	Ceramics
Tech Ed	Graphics
	Exploration of Technology

The Balanced Curriculum contains significant tasks for each subject. These significant tasks require critical thinking, inquiry, and problem solving. Teachers for each subject established common assessments related to these significant tasks and these are administered to students. Data teams were created in 2010-2011. The purpose of the data teams is to regularly review student work to improve curriculum and instructional practices. Currently, 72% of teaching staff are part of a data team. In the academic subjects, data teams are organized by course (i.e. all Western Civilizations I teachers are a data team). Presently, data teams have been established for most 9th and 10th grade academic courses and several electives while there are plans to continue to implement teams for the upper grades and more elective classes. Typically, as a team completes writing a curriculum, this group then becomes the data team that teaches and evaluates the curriculum. Data teams are designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Balanced Curriculum as needed.

- 6. Ensure that all curricula in all courses include the integration of inquiry, problem-solving, and critical thinking.**

Classification: In Progress

The Balanced Curriculum adopted by Rocky Hill High School is centered on student completion of significant tasks. Examples of significant tasks include science labs, art critiques, the use of infant simulators in Family and Consumer Sciences, social studies simulations and English essays and research. Units are designed so that students spend 60% of the learning time on these significant tasks. Curricula that have been written in the Balanced Curriculum format include the majority of the freshman, sophomore and junior core courses. Additionally many Business, Family and Consumer Science, Physical Education, World Language, Art and Tech Ed courses have been completed. Teachers who have been involved in writing these curricula are currently in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of the significant tasks in accomplishing the intended learning goals. It is expected that all remaining curricula will be written in the Balanced Curriculum format by 2015, in accordance with the district’s Curriculum Review Plan.

- 7. Develop and implement a plan, including professional development, to ensure that all teachers consistently employ teaching practices which engage students and afford student-centered instruction.**

Classification: In Progress

As explained in Highlighted Recommendation #6, the Balanced Curriculum format is centered on student completion of significant tasks. These student-centered tasks are designed to engage students in higher order thinking.

Data Teams, PLC, and Curriculum Writing focus on creating increased opportunities to more actively engage students in the learning process. PLC teams collaborate during the school day to create lessons that involve their classes in student-centered learning. Data teams evaluate the effectiveness of significant tasks in engaging students in meeting the learning goals. For example, through PLC time, the English Department has added a unit on *Night* that focuses on the historical context of the novella and requires students to work in small groups to research components of World War II and present their findings to the class.

The number of co-taught classes at RHHS has increased in the past two years. This allows for more student centered learning in heterogeneous classes. In the 2012-2013 school year, the Ninth Grade team will be scheduled to enable team teaching and increased opportunity for student-centered instruction.

Although no professional development has been offered by the Rocky Hill District that specifically focuses on student-centered learning, funding is made available for teachers to access this training.

8. Ensure that all teachers regularly engage students in self-assessment and reflection.

Classification: In Progress

Rocky Hill High School teachers routinely engage students in self-assessment and reflection. Based on a May 2012 survey, the most widely utilized self-assessments include school-wide rubrics (81%) and project/unit rubrics (76%). Other self-assessments that are regularly used include department rubrics (51%) and journal entries (17%). The frequency at which that these self-assessments are being performed ranges from daily (5.7%) to twice per quarter (52%).

Examples of self-assessment tools utilized in the English department include writing self-assessment rubrics, a “You Be the Teacher” short story project that includes a group and individual reflection component, the “Walk in Someone Else’s Shoes” reflection for the *To Kill a Mockingbird* unit and quarterly goal sheets with accompanying self-assessments. Other examples of student self-assessment and reflection include weekly journal writing in Botany on individual performance and progress of plants. All lab report rubrics for science classes have a self-reflection component. The History department participates in a simulation on the Constitutional Convention with a post-lesson essay reflection. Western Civilization participates in the “Renaissance Hall of Fame” project which includes extensive student self-reflection in research and presentation skills.

9. Implement a plan to provide increased formal time for all teachers to collaborate for the purposes of improving instruction and student achievement.

Classification: In Progress

Rocky Hill High School has made it a priority to build time into the schedule for the development of teaching plans, coordination of classroom activities and curriculum, and collection and interpretation of student data. This has been accomplished through the implementation of PLCs, data teams, and a ninth grade team.

PLC time has been provided to teachers who teach the same course (i.e. all biology teachers), regular education and special education teachers who co-teach a single course, and co-curricular teachers (freshmen year general level Western Civilizations I and English teachers) an opportunity to collaborate. PLC teams meet once or twice a week during 43 minute periods. During the past school year, there were approximately twenty PLC teams. Fifty-five percent of the faculty is part of at least one PLC team.

The Ninth Grade Team explained in Highlighted Recommendation #4 is another way in which formal time has been provided for collaboration. The team itself consists of eight general level teachers, three special education teachers, four guidance counselors, and one administrator. During weekly meetings, the team discusses ways to help individual students, collaborate on cross-curricular lessons and determine instructional strategies to implement in the classroom.

Data teams provide the opportunity for teachers to evaluate student work for the purpose of improving student learning. Most data teams consist of regular and special education teachers who share the same course. Teams select a skill or concept they want to focus on during the school year. Data derived from student work is evaluated and strategies are developed to improve student performance.

10. Develop, fund, and implement a program of professional development for all teachers to ensure best teaching practices, the use of technology to improve learning, and other topics identified by the professional staff.

Classification: In Progress

A District Wide Professional Development Committee was established in 2011. The committee is composed of teachers throughout the district including two Rocky Hill High School teachers. The committee meets two times per year and its focus is to determine professional development needs in the district. For example, this committee was vital in the development of district-wide, after school technology training on a variety of topics. Technological instruction has been provided by the district's IT department including Smart Board training, Google Docs, Acer Tablets, Moodle, and PowerSchool.

The Administrative Council has proposed that a sub-committee be created at the high school at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year to communicate with the district committee the professional development needs of the high school staff.

In addition to the formal plan, many teachers have participated in subject specific or best practice professional development that has then been shared informally, during PLC time and in department meetings.

11. Implement fully the teacher evaluation and professional improvement plan so that it meaningfully supports the improvement of instruction.

Classification: Rejected

The visiting committee recommended that the teacher evaluation and professional improvement plan be fully implemented in order to meaningfully support the improvement of instruction. A committee looked at the recommendation and rejected it on the belief that both the current teacher evaluation system and professional improvement plan are already fully implemented to support improved instruction.

The evaluation system in place has clear expectations and benchmarks for both non-tenured and tenured teachers. Non-tenured teachers in their first 2 years go through a series of both formal and informal observations. The formal observations include meetings prior to the scheduled observation while all observations have follow-up meetings with the evaluating administrator to provide constructive feedback and to help improve instruction as needed. Non-tenured teachers in their third and fourth years develop professional improvement plans similar to the tenured teachers. They continue with formal and informal observations, as well. By the end of the school year, they complete a self-evaluation of their own improvement and relate it to improved student learning. This is then discussed in a final meeting with their administrator.

Tenured teachers create professional improvement plans designed to last for a maximum of five years. These plans focus on a specific area the teacher wants to work on. When outlining the plan with their evaluating administrator at the start of the school year, teachers are expected to describe how their plans meet the “ultimate goal of improved student learning,” how the plan will “impact student learning,” and detail ways in which teachers “know that [their] efforts have been successful.” At the end of each school year, teachers submit written evidence with data and supporting information to prove that their plans show improved instruction and student learning. Evaluators work with the teachers throughout the entire process to ensure that the plans are actually focused on improved student learning. If the evaluator determines that the plan needs to be changed, more focused, or redone completely, he works with the teacher on ways in which to do this by providing guidance and suggestions. Those teachers then resubmit their plans. At the end of each five year evaluation cycle, teachers must submit lengthier written reports that include data, evidence, student work, and other examples that prove student learning and draw conclusions from the work that was completed during the entire five years of the plan. Teachers are fully expected to provide evidence to their evaluators that demonstrate this.

The evaluating administrators complete their own summative evaluations of every teacher at the end of each school year, after meeting with each teacher. Evaluations include what the teacher has done well, ideas for areas of improvement, and recommendations and suggestions for the next school year.

All phases of the Rocky Hill professional improvement plan and teacher evaluation system ensure that teachers are providing the highest level of student instruction. Through the system in place, there are several ways to ensure that improved student learning is constantly occurring and that self-reflection is used to enable teachers to constantly better themselves and the teaching they do. All parts of the teacher evaluation system and professional improvement plan are fully implemented

It should be noted that the State of Connecticut is currently piloting a new teacher evaluation system that will be implemented in all of the state's school districts beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

12. Ensure that all teachers are involved in the regular review of student work for the purposes of improving curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment practices.

Classification: In Progress

Teachers are involved in the regular review of student work for the purposes of improving curriculum, instruction and assessment through data teams and PLCs.

Data teams were created in 2010-2011. Training and support was provided by school administrators and an outside consultant (from the Leadership and Learning Center) for the design and implementation of data teams. Currently, 72% of teaching staff are part of a data team. As stated earlier, data teams regularly review student work and student performance is interpreted and strategies are developed with the ultimate goal of improved learning. Data teams meet during the school day and substitutes are provided to cover classes. Presently, data teams have been established for most 9th and 10th grade academic courses and several electives while there are plans to continue to implement teams for the upper grades and more elective classes. Typically, as a team completes writing a curriculum, this group then becomes the data team that teaches and evaluates the curriculum.

PLC time is another mechanism that teachers use to evaluate student work and collaborate. Regular education and special education teachers have the opportunity to meet and reflect on student performance to improve instruction and assessment.

- 13. Develop and implement a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.**

Classification: Completed

The Advisory Program is a formal and ongoing school wide program that achieves the goal of creating a relationship between teachers and students that extends beyond the academic classroom. The program is overseen by an advisory committee consisting of two administrators, one guidance counselor and eight teachers. The advisory committee provides relevant materials, gathers post-activity data, and analyzes the success of the program. At the end of the school year, data is also collected from students to determine which activities were most meaningful to them and what they would like to see implemented in the future.

An advisory group is classified as a homeroom consisting of 20-24 students and two faculty members. The advisory group stays together freshman through senior year. The school calendar includes a bimonthly 45 minute advisory period.

In the past two years, advisory activities have included problem solving, community and global awareness, study strategies, college preparation and monitoring individual student performance.

Students were taught the problem solving model in order to identify and solve a school-specific problem. This strategy will help students to achieve the school-wide learning, problem solving expectations. Each advisory group chose a specific problem to target. Some advisory groups used this problem solving model to revise the school cell phone policy. The students' revised policy allowed for the use of cell phones during study halls and in the cafeteria during lunch periods. This policy was accepted and implemented by the administration in the 2011-2012 school year.

One very successful example of a global awareness activity was Falling Whistles. Student Council members delivered a presentation on the plight of child soldiers in Africa and students raised funds to rehabilitate these children.

Individual student progress and study strategies have been addressed prior to midterm and final exams. Faculty mentors of each advisory group met one-on-one with each student to review their academic progress. Students shared strategies for exam preparation in small group sessions.

Advisory sessions that personalize each students' educational experience and assist them in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning will continue and evolve in the coming years.

14. Cite specific progress made to engage in a formal long-term planning process to fully address all facilities concerns identified above.

Classification: In Progress

The Rocky Hill High School building project will address the philosophy and mission of the school. To meet the educational needs of the students of Rocky Hill, the Board of Education is proposing to “renovate as new” and expand the high school adding approximately 11,700 square feet. The renovations of the facility will address all code violations at the school and will result in securing the life safety and educational qualities expected by the residents of the Town of Rocky Hill. On June 5, 2012 the residents of Rocky Hill overwhelmingly approved a referendum allocating 45 million dollars for the renovation of the high school.

The final renovation design, as outlined in the Educational Specifications draft, will address all facilities concerns identified in the NEASC Visiting Committee report. To support teaching and learning in the Library Media Center, the final design will include a 21st century school library which will serve as the hub of academic studies and provide support and access to all disciplines. This may require relocating the library within the building to accommodate the increased space. The space will be expanded to include a larger print collection, electronic online circulation system, a state of the art computer lab with 30 stations and additional computer stations available throughout the space. A separate learning center will accommodate students enrolled in virtual high school courses.

ADA accessibility throughout the building will be addressed in the final renovation design. ADA seating will be provided in the gymnasium and natatorium. All restrooms and water fountains in the building will be fully ADA accessible. The main entrance will allow accessibility to the main level of the school. The installation of a new elevator will provide accessibility to all levels of the building. A wheel chair platform lift will be installed to provide access to the auditorium stage. Renovations will also include a redesigned ADA compliant band and chorus room. All classroom and hallway spaces will be designed with ADA needs in mind.

The final design of the new science department space will include 10 classrooms. These include 2 Earth Science classroom/lab combinations, 4 biology classroom/ lab combinations with lecture lab benches and computers for all students, 3 chemistry classroom/ lab combinations with prep area between classrooms for storage and lab preparation, 1 physics classroom with mobile work tables and hanging electric outlets, and a complete renovation of greenhouses for the botany program. The new chemical storage space in the science department will comply with all storage regulations. Funding has been allocated for hiring and training a Chemical Hygiene Officer and a person has been hired to fill that position, beginning in September 2012.

The renovated Rocky Hill High School will address all safety and interior environmental concerns. The final design will meet or exceed all Connecticut High Performance Building Requirements. A new HVAC system will provide air conditioning throughout the building and including dehumidification of the pool area. Technology server storage areas will include a dedicated cooling system.

A new public address and clock system will be integrated to work with the phone system to allow paging and announcements from any telephone. The current 1981 antiquated fire alarm system will be replaced with a modern fire prevention and sprinkler system that meets all Connecticut and National fire codes.

Recommendations unrelated to the building renovation that have been addressed include the following. Fire proof locking file cabinets were purchased for the guidance department and the school psychologist's office to ensure that student records are safe and confidential. A dedicated phone line was installed in the nurse's office for the purpose of transmitting confidential student records via fax. Areas of refuge for fire have been identified and made public. The identification of the chemical hygiene specialist is currently in progress. Funding for this position has been established and a training program has been identified. As indicated in the November 1, 2011 Special Progress Report, all materials stored in the boiler and mechanical rooms have been removed. Unsafe chemical storage has been addressed in the chemistry department with the installation of lipped storage shelves to prevent spillage. No chemicals are stored outside of appropriate storage cabinets. No problem has been found in the area of proper ventilation of the chemical storage room. In the electrical equipment room, near the auditorium stage, a wire cage exists to separate electrical components from stored materials as approved by the Rocky Hill Fire Marshall.

Two-Year Progress Report
Rocky Hill High School
October 1, 2012

Section II – Evaluation Report Recommendations

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

- 1. Ensure that the social/civic expectations for student learning are measurable.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #3.

- 1. Establish indicators to assess the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: The social and civic expectations committee has rewritten the social and civic expectations into a measurable format. These expectations will be presented to the faculty and board of education for final approval.

- 2. Establish a formal process to ensure that the mission statement is a guiding force in school-wide decision-making.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #4.

- 3. Create a formal plan for the regular review of the mission statement and expectations for student learning – by representatives of all stakeholders – to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, and state and national standards.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: Although there is not yet a single formal plan to review the mission statement and expectations for student learning, a variety of ideas have been introduced and many will be implemented this year. Such suggestions are: including the school mission statement in the newsletter sent to parents and staff and in the student operated newspapers during the 2012-2013 school year, and preparing a mission statement centered homeroom advisory activity every year. To ensure the aforementioned expectations are met, surveys will be conducted of the following

groups: PAC, Student Council, and Departments and Association of Students and Principals at the beginning and end of each school year.

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Curriculum

- 1. Revise the Balanced Curriculum template to include the integration of school-wide academic expectations and rubrics, suggested teaching strategies and assessment techniques, and enduring understandings and essential questions.**

Classification: Rejected

Response: It is impossible to revise the A Balanced Curriculum[®] (ABC) template as it is a copyrighted model. A Balanced Curriculum[®] (ABC) is a standards-based backward design oriented curriculum development approach that has been approved, implemented, and recommended by the Connecticut State Department of Education as an acceptable curricular framework. Moreover, there is a body of research that supports the effectiveness of the model. Finally, the ABC design is based on standards, integrates assessments with corresponding rubrics, effective teaching strategies, and learning expectations all of which are developed by teachers working collaboratively. At the time of our visitation the school had just begun the curriculum authoring process. Since then a remarkable amount of curriculum has been rewritten and vastly improved.

- 2. Include faculty input when determining and designing curriculum formatting.**

Classification: Rejected

Response: The Rocky Hill Public School System adopted A Balanced Curriculum © in 2009 and throughout its implementation faculty input has been, and will continue to be integral to its completion. At this time we are working toward all teachers and classes following this formatting model. This topic will be addressed if the school system determines it necessary to change the formatting in the future.

- 3. Provide time for all teachers to regularly review and update the balanced curriculum.**

Classification: Completed

Response: Formal time has been, and will continue to be provided for all teachers to regularly review and update the balanced curriculum. Teachers for each subject established common assessments related to these significant tasks and these are administered to students across all levels for the given subject. The administration ensures that each department is allocated one block of time per month for a data team to review data borne out of the balanced curriculum and

assess progress as a result. The data teams' members track student progress and ultimately reconvene to discuss the results and strategize on ways to improve student learning. Furthermore, the administration has reconfigured the schedule to include PLC time (PLC) for various pairs or small groups of teachers. These teachers meet and improve the balanced curriculum during assigned open periods. Teachers also have the option of utilizing curriculum writing days to review and update the balanced curriculum.

4. Ensure that all courses integrate inquiry, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #6.

5. Ensure that all faculty members have access to sufficient materials in all disciplines to implement the balanced curriculum.

Classification: In Progress

Response: The concern of insufficient teaching materials to support A Balanced Curriculum has been addressed. The NEASC visitation was conducted during the early stage of the curriculum revision process. New textbooks and supporting resources have been purchased for the 9th grade science curriculum. New workbooks were also purchased to enable differentiation in the Algebra II curriculum. Additionally, copies of novels read in the English curriculum were purchased to support the timeline of the balanced curriculum. As the process of curriculum revision continues for all courses, the need to purchase additional materials and new textbooks will be addressed.

6. Update and install sufficient technology to support the balanced curriculum.

Classification: In Progress

Response: The installation of sufficient technology to support the Balanced Curriculum is a continuing goal for RHHS. LCD projectors have been installed in all classrooms and Smart Boards have been installed in all science classrooms, Family and Consumer Sciences and business classrooms, and some foreign language classrooms and art classrooms. With the planned future renovations, all classrooms will be equipped with Smart Boards.

7. Provide formal opportunities for planning and documenting interdisciplinary experiences.

Classification: In Progress

Response: Many formal opportunities for planning and documenting interdisciplinary experiences have been provided for the 2011-2012 school year and they will continue moving forward. This year an interdisciplinary group (9th Grade PLC Team) meets formally every Friday for on 45 minute period. As a result, Earth Science and Algebra I, as well as English I and Western Civilization I will provide interdisciplinary experiences for a pilot group of freshman in Fall 2012. Schedules will allow teachers to observe and monitor the progress of these interdisciplinary experiences.

8. Increase opportunities for regular professional development in curriculum revision for all faculty members.

Classification: In Progress

Response: Measures have been taken to increase opportunities for regular professional development in curriculum revision for all faculty members. The administration ensures that each department is allocated one block of time per month for a data team to review data borne out of the balanced curriculum and assess progress as a result. The data teams' members track student progress and ultimately reconvene to discuss the results and strategize on ways to improve student learning. Furthermore, the administration has reconfigured the schedule to include Planned Learning Community time (PLC) for various pairs or small groups of teachers. These teachers meet and improve the balanced curriculum during assigned open periods. Teachers also have the option of utilizing curriculum writing days to review and update the balanced curriculum. The assistant superintendent and district Language Arts coordinator provide support and expertise during this process.

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Instruction

1. Ensure that all teachers consistently employ teaching practices, which engage students and afford student-centered instruction.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #7.

2. Establish a formal mechanism for eliciting student and parent feedback regarding effectiveness of instruction.

Classification: In Progress

Response: A formal mechanism for eliciting student and parent feedback regarding effectiveness of instruction has been created for the 2012-2013 school year. There is a survey planned for parents to complete in the 2012-2013 school year, and an evaluation tool has been written for teachers to elicit feedback from students at the end of each semester. As these have yet to be implemented, we have used other vehicles in the past to encourage communication. For example, parents and students have complete access to teacher grade books via PowerSchool. Also, parents and teachers regularly communicate through e-mail and individual phone calls. The annual Open House provides parents and teachers the opportunity to form an initial communication, and our parent advisory committee (PAC) meets once per month with administrators to discuss instruction and other parent generated concerns. All students and parents are welcome to attend.

3. Establish a method for fostering more effective student reflection and self-assessment.

Classification: In Progress

Response: A method for increasing effective student reflection and self-assessment is built into the school wide rubrics measuring academic expectations. For more explanation, see highlighted recommendation #8.

4. Involve more faculty members in common planning time to collaborate, to improve instruction and encourage cross-disciplinary lessons.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #9.

5. Integrate technology significantly into all departments, provide professional development opportunities in the use of technology in teaching, and ensure sufficient technology support.

Classification: In Progress

Response: Technology continues to be significantly integrated into all departments with sufficient technological support and technology education opportunities. LCD projectors have been installed in all classrooms and Smart Boards have been installed in all science classrooms, Family and Consumer Sciences and business classrooms, and some foreign language classrooms and art classrooms. Wireless access is now available throughout the entire building. In the future, all classrooms will be equipped with Smart Boards. Also, the district now provides district-wide, afterschool training on a variety of topics including, Microsoft Office, PowerSchool, Smart Board, and Google Docs.

- 6. Increase professional development opportunities for the entire faculty to support differentiated instruction and interdisciplinary learning.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: A half day professional development session was provided to the entire faculty in August 2011 by Peggy Neil from the Capitol Region Education Council to support differentiated instruction at RHHS. There has been no formal professional development offered explicitly by the district on interdisciplinary learning, but opportunities have been provided to RHHS staff to obtain this training. The district hosts a monthly “Dine and Discuss” dinner where teachers and administrators meet to discuss a variety of educational topics. The district also offers funding for teachers to attend any professional development opportunity of their choosing. Professional development resources, online training, and information on local conferences are posted on the Rocky Hill Teacher Resource Center website.

- 7. Ensure that the Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Plan is fully realized so that it meaningfully supports the improvement of instruction.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #11.

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Assessment of Student Learning

- 1. Implement the use of performance indicators to assess school-wide achievement of the civic and social expectations.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #3

- 2. Develop course-specific learning goals in every course across the curriculum.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: All courses at RHHS are assigned two school-wide academic expectations. These expectations are evaluated with a common rubric and are reported on a quarterly basis concurrently with the academic report card. The district will continue to allocate resources to fund the distribution of these additional report cards. The high school administration and teachers will continue the production and distribution of these reports.

As RHHS continues the implementation of A Balanced Curriculum©, all course-specific learning goals are being clearly defined. This requires the continued funding of professional development days and substitute teachers in order to give teachers the opportunity to collaborate and develop course framework. The Assistant Superintendent and building administrators will continue to oversee the use and development of A Balanced Curriculum©.

3. Expand the use of performance-based and authentic assessments throughout the curriculum and document them.

Classification: In Progress

Response: As the curriculum for each course is written in the balanced curriculum format, it will have documented performance-based and authentic significant tasks that are implemented consistently. This will require the continued funding of Professional Development days and substitute teachers in order to give teachers the opportunity to collaborate and develop the significant tasks and their assessments. The Assistant Superintendent and building administrators will continue to oversee the continued use and development of A Balanced Curriculum© and the performance-based and authentic significant tasks.

4. Use course-specific learning criteria to assess student work.

Classification: In Progress

Response: The continued use and development of A Balanced Curriculum©, common assessments, department/course-specific rubrics and data teams will facilitate the course-specific learning criteria necessary to assess student work. This will require the continued funding of professional development days and substitute teachers, and the continued practice of scheduling PLC. The supervisory positions at the district, school, and department levels will be responsible for the continued implementation of these programs.

5. Implement a formal procedure for examining student work and collecting and analyzing assessment data.

Classification: In Progress

Response: The continued use and development of A Balanced Curriculum, data teams in all departments, and the 9th grade teams will facilitate the implementation of a formal procedure for examining student work and collecting and analyzing assessment data. This will require the continued funding of professional development days and substitute teachers, and the continued practice of scheduling PLC and data teams. The Assistant Superintendent and the building administrators are responsible for the continued implementation of these programs.

- 6. Develop and implement a system for tracking and communicating the school's progress toward meeting all academic and social/ civic expectations.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #3.

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Leadership and Organization

- 1. Ensure that the principal has the authority and autonomy to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations.**

Classification: Rejected

Response: See highlighted recommendation #1.

- 2. Implement SRBI for students who are not meeting the school's academic expectations.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: There are many initiatives in practice that are designed to assist students who are not meeting the school's academic expectations. Teachers recommend students to the school's Targeted Intervention Program (TIP) team which determines appropriate services to address the needs of individual students. Tier I and Tier II reading classes, Tier II math classes, Tier II Biology study classes, a Tier II writing classes, and a structured study hall have been developed and implemented for students in all grade levels. Also, teachers of ninth-grade Tier II students have additional PLC time and meet weekly with guidance counselors, special education teachers and administration. The re-opening of the Alternate School has been recommended.

- 3. Implement formal attendance-tracking procedures immediately.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: The Alert Now message system was implemented in the 2011-2012 school year to notify parents of any class absence. PowerSchool attendance codes have been updated to include excused absences for visits to guidance counselors, the school nurse and field trips. Also, the parent portal in PowerSchool is accessible to parents and students to view daily attendance, and quarterly reports are mailed home to reflect absences and provide warnings for students who are in danger of exceeding absence limits. Furthermore, an IT specialist reviews and utilizes PowerSchool functionality regarding attendance reporting. Our future plan includes hiring an attendance clerk to track attendance on a daily basis.

- 4. Provide a schedule that will enable students to access required courses and electives, and eliminate conditions that cause classes to conflict with science labs.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: RHHS continues to work toward providing a schedule that will enable all students to access required courses and electives. Administration is reviewing the current schedule/credit system to accommodate aforementioned conflicts.

- 5. Further develop the advisory program so that its delivery is equitable.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: The Advisory Committee continues to work toward developing equitable delivery during advisory programs. An advisory group is classified as a homeroom to which 20-24 students are assigned at the beginning of their freshman year. Each homeroom has two staff members and students stay with this pairing throughout their high school career. The Advisory Committee provides teachers with specific themed activities and resources designed to allow for equitable delivery of each program.

- 6. Provide and monitor collaboration time for all certified staff.**

Classification: In Progress

Response: As previously mentioned, PLC and data teams have been established to provide collaboration time for all staff. Additionally, data teams report their annual findings to administration, and PLC members must complete a Google document template that summarizes how time was utilized after each PLC session.

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: School Resources for Learning

- 1. Acquire safe, secure, fireproof storage for all confidential student records.**

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14.

- 2. Install a dedicated, confidential fax machine in the nurse's office to meet HIPAA standards.**

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14.

3. Examine the need for a post-high school coordinator to meet the needs of all students.

Classification: In Progress

Response: Although there is not a post-high school coordinator in place to meet the needs of all students, RHHS has a Transition Coordinator for Special Education students. The Guidance Department is currently working on Student Success Plans per the state requirement as of July 1, 2012. This is a student driven plan that will help every student achieve postsecondary educational and career goals. Counselors have been using the Naviance program for the last few years to assist students with career and college planning. A specific Career Counselor would be a beneficial addition to the Guidance Department. The Career Counselor could focus on internship and job shadow opportunities as well as making connections with businesses in town.

4. Examine the need for a school social worker to meet the needs of all students.

Classification: Completed

Response: The need for a school social worker at RHHS has been examined and deemed impractical at this time due to space and budgetary constraints. Counselor /Student ratios are 1/190. This meets the ASCA standard. The counselor role at RHHS encompasses the role of a social worker. Counselors work very closely with administrators and the school psychologist on student mediations, bullying issues and all student crises. Counselors refer families to appropriate outside resources as needed and see students on their caseload for individual counseling as needed.

5. Ensure effective program support for at risk students.

Classification: In Progress

Response: The PBIS team continues to generate and analyze data to identify at risk students. Also, the TIP team identifies at- risk students who are having attendance, behavior and academic issues. The TIP team meets weekly and it implements interventions and strategies to assist students and teachers. Additionally, we have Tier I,II , and III interventions including a Structured Study Hall, Writing Skills class, Reading Support, Math Problem Solving Course and a Biology Study Skills course. Lastly, we are exploring behavioral interventions and the possible return of the Alternate School.

6. Establish remote access to the library media center's electronic catalog.

Classification: Completed

Response: Remote access to the library media center's electronic catalog has been established. The district has purchased the web-based software necessary to give our students remote access to the library/media center's electronic catalog.

7. Rectify all constraints affecting student and faculty access to the library media center, including space issues.

Classification: In Progress

Response: Steps have been taken to rectify constraints affecting student and faculty access to the library media center including space issues. LCD projectors have been installed in all classrooms and Smart Boards have been installed in all Science, Business and Family and Consumer Science classrooms, and some Foreign Language and art classrooms thus limiting the need to use the library media center for presentations. A laptop cart with twenty-two net books has also been purchased and can be signed out by teachers for computer use in the classroom. This diminishes the need to reserve library media space for computer use by classes. Media center sign up has been facilitated by an online calendar which enables teachers to reserve the laptop cart, the computer lab or the writing lab. The existing computer lab and library space were reconfigured to accommodate seven additional computers. Furthermore, the most recent referendum proposal approved by the Rocky Hill Board of Education includes a reorganization plan for the library media center space.

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Community Resources for Learning

1. Resolve fire code violations in the boiler room, mechanical rooms, and chemical storage areas immediately

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14

2. Rectify chemical storage safety issues throughout the school immediately.

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14

3. Identify and train a chemical hygiene officer as required by law.

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14

4. Create areas of refuge in each of the school's stairwells to facilitate rescue in the event of a fire emergency.

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14

5. Fully comply with ADA handicap access requirements throughout the school.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14

6. Resolve all problems concerning the HVAC system, including inconsistencies with heating and cooling throughout the building, air circulation and quality, and air intake and exhaust issues.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14

7. Develop and implement a plan for inventory of all equipment in the building.

Classification: In Progress

Response: At this time all equipment in the building is being inventoried. Each subject area supervisor is required to inventory all equipment used by their department, as are custodial and IT staff.

8. Connect and synchronize the clocks throughout the school.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14.

9. Increase funding for technology equipment and training.

Classification: In Progress

Response: As per the technology budget submitted May 10, 2012, monies have been allocated to technology related endeavors in the amount of:

- 2012-13: \$172,663
- 2013-14: \$268,400
- 2014-15: \$270,900

The proposal calls for additional new servers, wireless computing devices, LCDs, Smart Boards, and Thin Clients to be purchased and implemented annually. For more detailed information please refer to the aforementioned 2012-2015 technology plan.

10. Resolve the shortage of instructional and storage space.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14.

11. Rectify the issues concerning library media center space and layout.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14.

12. Engage in formal planning to address immediate and long-term facility needs.

Classification: In Progress

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14.

13. Adequately fund the school's capital projects.

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #14.

III. Core Values, Beliefs and 21st Century Learning Expectations



Mission Statement

Revised and accepted by certified staff 12/11/08

Through high expectations and a challenging curriculum, all students at Rocky Hill High School will become responsible citizens who embrace learning as a lifelong process in an ever-changing world.

Academic Expectations

Revised 12/11/08; 2/4/09

Approved and accepted by certified staff 2/4/09

All Rocky Hill High School students will:

- Communicate effectively in writing
- Communicate effectively while speaking
- Solves quantitative problems effectively
- Solves qualitative problems effectively
- Demonstrate effective reading skills
- Use research skills effectively
- Make connections between learning and life

Social/Civic Expectations

Revised 2/4/09; 4/7/10

Approved and accepted by certified staff 4/7/10

All Rocky Hill High School students will:

- Exhibit tolerance, respect and integrity
- Maintain physical, emotional, and social health
- Demonstrate global awareness and responsible citizenship

Approved and accepted by the Rocky Hill Board of Education on March 19, 2009.

IV. Substantive Changes – No substantive changes have occurred since the decennial evaluation.

V. List of User Fees – None

VI. Strengths/ Achievements

Teacher opportunities for collaboration have significantly increased over the last two years. The 9th grade team consists of eight general level teachers, three special education teachers, four guidance counselors, and one administrator. During weekly meetings, the team discusses ways to help individual students, collaborate on cross-curricular lessons, and determine instructional strategies to implement in the classroom. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have been expanded to provide teachers who teach the same course (i.e. all biology teachers), regular education and special education teachers who co-teach a single course, and co-curricular teachers (freshmen year general level Western Civilizations I and English teachers, Algebra I and Earth and Its Environment) an opportunity to collaborate. PLC teams meet once or twice a week during 43 minute periods. Approximately half of our staff are currently on one PLC team. The expansion of Data Teams now includes members of all departments and building administrators meeting monthly to evaluate student work for the purpose of improving student learning. Teams select a skill or concept they want to focus on during the school year. Data derived from student work is evaluated and strategies are developed to improve student performance. Other opportunities for teacher collaboration are addressed in detail within the two-year report.

VII. Restructuring or other Reform Initiatives

On June 5, 2012 the residents of Rocky Hill overwhelmingly approved a referendum allocating 45 million dollars for the renovation of the high school. To meet the educational needs of the students of Rocky Hill, the Board of Education is proposing to “renovate as new” and expand the high school by adding approximately 11,700 square feet. The renovations of the facility will address all code violations at the school and will result in securing the life safety and educational qualities expected by the residents of the Town of Rocky Hill. The final renovation design, as outlined in the Educational Specifications draft, will address all facilities concerns identified in the NEASC Visiting Committee report. A draft of the Educational Specifications can be found on the school’s external website at www.rockyhillps.com.

VIII. Follow-up Program at Rocky Hill High School

The follow-up program included all RHHS staff members. A Follow-Up Committee, created with representatives from various departments, met monthly throughout the 2011-2012 school year. The former NEASC Standards Committees reconvened with two members of the Follow-Up Committee serving as follow-up chairs. Evaluation report recommendations and highlighted recommendations were sorted and assigned to appropriate follow-up committees by the governing Follow-Up Committee. During the 2011-2012 school year nine hours of professional development time were provided for follow-up committees to work on their assigned recommendations. Subcommittees within each follow-up did the fact finding and wrote a rough draft addressing one or two recommendations. Subcommittees posted their results on the

high school's internal web site. A small group of six members of the follow-up committee assumed the task of coordinating, editing, and completing the two-year progress report. This group was compensated for time spent in the summer of 2012 for this process. The NEASC follow-up work was shared with the community through the principal's newsletter and during the Parent Advisory Committee meeting in September, 2012.

The members of the governing Follow-Up Committee are:

Mario Almeida, Principal
Teresa Aurigemma, English
Amy Carbutti, Guidance
Gregory Gomes, Business
Brian Graca, Mathematics
Kathleen Kennedy, Science
Kathleen Lessard, World Languages
Edward Malizia, Assistant Principal
Stephanie Malkin, School Psychologist
Mary Oberndorfer, Social Studies
Sharon Parker, Science
Laurel Richie, Social Studies
Amy Rosenberg, Social Studies
Douglas Russell, English
Sheryl Viola, Special Education
Debora Wolfe, Family and Consumer Science