

Special Progress Report

Rocky Hill High School

November 1, 2011

1. Provide adequate textbooks and instructional materials and supplies for all teachers to implement the curriculum and for all students to support their learning.

Classification: *Completed*

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. Additionally, copies of novels read in the English curriculum were purchased to support the timeline of the Balanced Curriculum. New textbooks were also purchased to enable differentiation in the Algebra II curriculum. As the process of curriculum revision continues for all courses, the need to purchase additional materials and new textbooks will be addressed.

2. Develop and begin to implement a plan to address space limitations and scheduling of classes which are impacting access to the library media center.

Classification: *In Progress.*

LCD projectors have been installed in all classrooms and Smart Boards have been installed in all Science, Business and Family and Consumer Science classrooms, thus limiting the need to use the library media center for presentations. A laptop cart with 22 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.

3. Immediately address the health and safety concerns identified above, including, but not limited to, fire code violations, unsafe storage of chemicals, temperature control, and HVAC exhaust issues.

Classification: *In Progress.*

All fire code violations have been addressed. Fire doors are held open by magnetic door holders which are part of the existing fire alarm system. These doors are not held open by any other means. All materials stored in the boiler room have been removed. 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. 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. Ventilation has always been present and operating. This was overlooked by the NEASC Committee in their walk-through inspection. The control switch is

by the exit door of the chemical storage room and there is a ceiling vent to the roof. The chemical ventilation system was inspected in May 21, 2011 by a certified HVAC serviceman and was found to be satisfactory.

Due to the age of the building the school is not mandated to comply with current ADA guidelines. However, the auditorium was renovated in 2000 and has handicap accessible seating. The remaining concerns regarding handicapped accessibility have been previously identified in several facility studies and addressed in several failed referenda. There is a project by the town of Rocky Hill to address the main entrance accessibility including installation of an elevator and redesign of the front steps which is anticipated for 2012. Furthermore, the most recent referendum proposal approved by the Rocky Hill Board of Education includes plans to comply with all ADA guidelines.

The HVAC system is original to the building. Although it functions properly, the design is inadequate. The most recent referendum proposal approved by the Rocky Hill Board of Education includes plans to replace the HVAC system. The renovation plan would also improve the air quality throughout the building.

4. Develop and submit a short-term plan, including a timeline and funding, to address all facilities concerns identified above.

Classification: *Planned to the future.*

On July 20, 2011 the Rocky Hill Board of Education unanimously approved a school facilities plan, including a recommendation to renovate and expand Rocky Hill High School. The plan included new science facilities, entire renovation of the building, code updates to meet ADA and fire code guidelines. The plan was forwarded to the Rocky Hill Town Council for recommendation.

The Rocky Hill Town Council held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2011 with the Rocky Hill Board of Education at which time a consensus was reached with regard to moving forward in working with the Board of Education to develop plans to meet the concerns raised in the NEASC report. The following resolution was approved by the Rocky Hill Town Council on October 17, 2011:

“BE IT RESOLVED that the Rocky Hill Town Council moves to work with the Board of Education in developing plans for the renovation of the Rocky Hill High School to address concerns cited in the NEASC report including ADA compliance, HVAC issues and core curricular issues with the intention of bringing it forward to the voters for approval.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rocky Hill Town Council will seek public input into the development of these plans.”

5. Ensure the Balanced Curriculum template includes, in addition to its other components, the integration of school-wide learning expectations, including use of the accompanying rubrics, suggested teaching strategies, assessment strategies, and essential questions

Classification: *Rejected.*

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.

6. Ensure that the principal has the authority and autonomy to lead the school in achieving the school-wide learning expectations.

Classification: *Rejected.*

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