

**New England Association of
Schools and Colleges**



**Commission on Public Schools
Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools**

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools

Plainville, Massachusetts

March 2-5, 2014

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

The Distribution, Use, and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report

The Commission on Public Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools to be an important document submitted to the school principal, the superintendent of schools, and the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Distribution of the report within the school community is the responsibility of the school principal. The final visiting committee report must be released in its entirety within sixty days (60) of its completion to the superintendent, school board, public library or town office, and the appropriate news media.

The prime concern of the visiting committee has been to assess the quality of educational programs at Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools on the basis of the school's own self-study and in terms of the school's stated Mission and Expectations and the Association's seven Standards for Accreditation for public schools. Neither the total report nor any of its subsections are to be considered an evaluation of any individual faculty member but rather a professional appraisal of the school as it appeared to the visiting committee.

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 four Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE); the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS); the Commission on Public Schools which is comprised of the Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS); and the Commission on American and International Schools Abroad (CAISA).

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Mission and Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of Student Learning

Support Standards

Leadership and Organization

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Committee's visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Committee in the follow-up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every 10 years and that the school shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The Schools' Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools, a committee of 7 members supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools extended over a period of 18 school months. The visiting committee was pleased to note that the document produced by the schools was clear, well-organized and reflective of the time and care that the district took in its creation.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's

mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools also sought input from parents, students, central office personnel and other constituencies associated with the school district throughout the self-study process to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 9 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools to evaluate the Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools. The Committee members spent four days in Plainville, MA, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public school teachers and administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools.

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

- a review of the school's self-study materials
- 23 hours shadowing students
- a total of approximately 14 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facilities
- individual meetings with numerous teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion in the report was agreed to by visiting committee consensus.

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

This report of the findings of the visiting committee will be forwarded to the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools.

School and Community Profile

Composition

Physical Setting of the Schools

The town of Plainville has a total area of 11.6 square miles, including land and water. Plainville borders the towns of Wrentham, Foxboro, Mansfield, North Attleboro, and Cumberland, Rhode Island. Plainville's northern border is at a juncture of Route 495 and it is crossed by Routes 1 and 1A. It is easily accessible to commuter rail stations and also serviced by GATRA bus service, all of which make it an easy commute to Boston or Providence.

The town supports many local farms. There are a large portion of single family homes as well as larger apartment housings that support many families and individuals of various income levels. A small town of 8,000, Plainville has maintained a rural charm. It has numerous public and private conservation areas and horse farms creating a pastoral setting.

It has a number of lakes and ponds that draw from the Ten Mile River, Taunton River, and Cumberland River Basins.

The town has supported the major rebuilding of Anna Ware Jackson Elementary School (Pre-K to Grade 3), as well as the new Beatrice Wood School (Grades 4-6). Students matriculate to the King Philip Regional School District, which has newly rebuilt middle and high schools. The community also has a private Montessori School and several private pre-schools.

The community has many recreation areas and is a great supporter of youth athletics via the Plainville Athletic League, Plainville Youth Soccer League, and town recreation leagues. The community has built a Field of Dreams complex that will further enhance recreation sports for the town. There is a local public swimming pool and a private pool club. The town also has two golf courses.

Plainville has a public library and a new senior center, both of which are activity hubs for the town.

Security, Accessibility and Proximity to Other Town/City services

The doors of both schools are locked at all times with staff needing security badges to access the facilities. Visitors must be buzzed in by the front office and the side doors are also kept locked and opened only by staff during pick-up times. All schools have crisis plans in place and procedures are practiced at various times throughout the school year. There is a partnership with the local police department, with an officer “assigned” to the schools for consultation. There is a local fire department nearby. The closest hospital is Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro, MA which is approximately six minutes away. Each school has a play area. Both areas are behind the school and out of the public eye. At the Jackson School, this area is also fenced off.

Socioeconomic profile

Based on the 2010 census, the average income information is as follows:

Plainville, MA INCOME OVERVIEW	
Income details	
Average Household Income	\$81,955
Average Household Size (people)	2.49
Per capita income	\$32,943

Median Disposable Income	\$58,526
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Previous information is similar.

- Estimated median household income in 2009: \$71,965; in 2000 it was \$57,155
- The estimated median household income for Massachusetts is \$64,081

Individuals below the poverty level in Plainville, MA

Individuals living below the poverty line in the Plainville community were 309, or 4%.

The percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch is below the state average. However, it has increased by approximately 2% during the past two years.

Title	% of school- Jackson	% of school- Wood	% of state	% of district
Low Income	16.5	21.9	35.2	18.7
Reduced Lunch	1.5	3.2	4.9	2.2
Free lunch	15.0	18.7	32.1	16.5

Significant economic changes in the community over the last ten years

There were no significant economic changes in Plainville over the last 10 years.

Significant population changes in the community over the past 10 years

The population in Plainville, MA has steadily increased since the 1950s. Although the trend seems to be slowing down, there is a large apartment complex being constructed at this time, which may raise the current population rate again in a more significant fashion.

	1990 population	2000 population	2010 population
Plainville	6871	7683	8624
Difference	+ 17.3%	+11.8%	+7.6%

Current unemployment rate in the community

In August of 2012, the unemployment rate in the town was 2 percentage points above the state average.

Plainville	8.4%
Massachusetts	6.4%

Important community characteristics which affect the school and its programs such as national origin and background of students and parents, nature of neighborhoods, cultural interests of residents

The town of Plainville is a suburban area which is located just 36 miles from Boston. This makes it an option for people working in the city so they can enjoy the quieter lifestyle and family-friendly setting while maintaining a close proximity to lucrative employment options. There are many families who transfer from countries such as India, making their homes in Plainville while working in the Boston area. This has increased the cultural diversity of the town in recent years.

Racial/ethnic composition of the community

Race	# People of this race
White	7,761
Black	92
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	12
Asian or Pacific Islander	254
Other	123
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0
Hispanic	160

Language spoken by students and families in addition to English

The percentage of students who speak another language in addition to English is below the state average. An ESL teacher has been hired in the district to meet the needs of students.

Title	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	10.6	17.3
Limited English Proficient	1.9	7.7

Title I Participation

In the 2012-2013 school year the number of students receiving Title I services for reading were as follows:

	Jackson (PreK-3)	Wood (4-6)
# receiving Title I	57	NA
% receiving Title I	11%	NA

For the 2013-2014 school year, Title I services are available at both the Jackson and the Wood schools.

Educational Levels

High School Graduate or higher

At the time of the last survey, 4,564 people in the community held a high school degree or 87.3% of the population compared to the national average of 80.40%.

Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Plainville, Massachusetts

At the time of the last survey, 1,479 people in Plainville held a Bachelor's degree or higher, which represents 28.3% of the total population compared to the national average of 24.40%.

Seventy-five percent of employed workers are considered white collar while the remaining 25% are considered blue collar workers.

Financial Resources

Per pupil expenditures for the district over the most recent three year period is as follows:

- 2011-2012 - \$12,283
- 2010-2011 - \$11,873
- 2009-2010 – \$11,305

The state average of per pupil expenditures over the same three-year period was:

- 2011-2012 - \$13, 638
- 2010-2011 - \$13, 354
- 2009-2010 - \$13,055

Percentage of local property allocated to schools over the same three-year period

Fiscal year	Real Estate Taxes Collected	Town Support of Schools	%
2011-2012	15,292,265	4,397,703	29%
2010-2011	14,679,880	4,173,945	28%
2009-2010	14,633,690	4,027,970	28%

Note: Source for Real Estate Taxes Collected –Town of Plainville Annual Report

Percentage of school funds from various sources: Local taxation, state resources, federal resources, grants resources, other resources

FY2012	Funds	%
Local taxation	4,397,703	56%
State revenues	2,519,174	32%
Federal resources	226,783	3%
Grant resources	348,246	4%
Other resources	<u>326,416</u>	4%
TOTAL	\$7,818,322	

Note: Federal Resource includes school lunch reimbursements and Education Jobs Grant. Other resources include all revolving accounts.

Income derived from school choice or tuition students (annual rate x# of students)

There was no income derived from school choice or tuition students.

Partnerships

Partnerships with other educational institutions

- Membership- Educational Collaborative-Bi-County Collaborative- inclusion opportunities, leadership trainings
- Membership - 7-12 King Philip Middle and High Schools
- Membership - Norfolk County Agricultural
- Membership - Tri County Regional Vocational Technical High School

Student teaching partnerships with local colleges and universities

- Bridgewater State University
- Wheaton College
- Lesley University

Business Partnerships

- EMC 2- STEM partnership through Junior Achievement
- Local Police and Firefighters
- Dentist visits
- Target- A+ School Rewards
- Stop & Shop- A+ School Rewards
- Science From Scientists
- Local Pediatricians

Partnerships or relationships with community groups

- Girl scouts
- Local YMCA sports
- CCD
- Church meetings
- Champions Before/After-School Care
- Plainville Recreational Dept.
- Senior Center readers
- Lion's Club
- Cribbage and Chess Club
- Homework Club

Enrollment Data

There are two schools in the Plainville Public School District. This is the list along with grade level configurations and enrollment information.

October 1 Enrollment figures for the last three years by school

School	October 2011	October 2012	October 2013
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary (PK-3)	489	491	459
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary (4-6)	338	313	310

Projected Enrollment information by school

School	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary (PK-3)	428	412	381
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary (4-6)	315	301	335

Average daily attendance

School	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary (PK-3)	95.9%	96.8%	97.3%
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary (4-6)	96.8%	96.7%	97.5%

Average daily tardiness rate

School	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary	1.5% (7)	1% (5)	2% (10)
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary	1% (3)	1% (3)	1% (3)

Average daily dismissal rate

School	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary	2% (9)	2% (10)	1.5% (7)
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary	2% (6)	1.5% (5)	2% (6)

Average daily teacher attendance rate district wide

School	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Teachers	96%	94.8%	94.8%

Number of students receiving Title I support in each of the most recent three years

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary	35	29	57
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary	NA	NA	NA

Number of students on an IEP in each of the most recent three years

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary	77	78	61
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary	51	55	54

School Performance Data

Percentage of student named to the honor roll during each quarter

The schools within the district do not participate in honor roll awards. This type of academic acknowledgment begins in the middle school grades at the regional level.

Percentage of students retained during the most recent three years

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary	1.5%	1.0%	1.27%
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary	0	0	0

Other recognition awards

- Monthly Student Recognition Assemblies to honor grade level
- Student of the Week for the Anna Ware Jackson School
- Student of the Month Awards for the Beatrice H. Wood School

Academic Awards offered by the school and the community

Anna Ware Jackson Elementary

- Math Mastery Awards
- RAH RAH (read at home) awards
- Math Stars recognition awards

Beatrice H. Wood School

- Most Improved Student
- Plainville Education Association Scholarship
- Art Awards- one for each grade
- Highest GPA Scholarship
- Band Awards
- Golden Sombrero Spanish Award
- Presidential Awards

Athletic Awards offered by the school and the community

All schools

- Golden Sneaker Award for class recognitions of teamwork and effort

- Outstanding Sportsmanship Awards- one boy and one girl

Other types of student or school awards

All schools

- A+ Effort Awards

Beatrice H. Wood School

- Citizenship awards
- Leadership Awards
- 6th Grade PEA Award

Number of suspensions over the most recent three years

	2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013	
	In school	Out of school	In school	Out of school	In school	Out of school
Anna Ware Jackson Elementary	0	2	0	0	0	3
Beatrice H. Wood Elementary	1	2	1	2	0	6

Number of non-suspension disciplinary referrals in each grade level over the last three years

	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
2010-11	0	5	18	21	37	10	3	3
2011-12	0	4	16	25	27	10	6	10
2012-13	0	12+*	23	29	22	4	7	2

*There were 2 children who required additional and intensive behavioral support through the school year for aggressive behavior.

Ethnic/Racial/Cultural Composition

Percentage of identifiable racial, ethnic, and cultural groups that comprise the student body in the most recent three years

Anna Ware Jackson	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White	Multi-race
2010-2011	1.5	4.8	4.2	87	2.3
2011-2012	0.6	4.5	5.3	87.6	1.8
2012-2013	1.0	5.7	5.9	84.3	2.7
Beatrice H. Wood	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White	Multi-race
2010-2011	1.2	4.0	4.0	88.7	2.1
2011-2012	1.2	3.6	3.3	89	2.7

2012-2013	1.9	2.6	5.1	88.5	1.6
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Significant Changes in the identifiable racial, ethnic and cultural groups that comprise the students body in the most recent three years

There has been a recent increase in the number of students who are considered multi-lingual or speaking a different language at home. This has increased the ELL population and resulted in the district hiring an ESL teacher to assist these students directly with instruction along with testing and assessment services.

Mobility

Number of years the highest grade level students has been in the school

The students at the Anna Ware Jackson School have been in their respective school for four years. If the students have also attended the integrated pre-school at the Jackson, they can add up to two additional years of attendance within the school. The students at the Beatrice H. Wood School have been in their respective school for three years. The students then move on to the regional middle and high schools.

Number of new registrations and withdrawals during the school year

	Jackson School		Wood School	
	Entered	Left	Entered	Left
2010-2011	15	7	12	7
2011-2012	4	8	7	8
2012-2013	17	15	8	8
3-Year Totals	36	30	27	23

Instructional Time

Average Class size

Anna Ware Jackson School	20.4
Beatrice H. Wood School	22.5

Amount of daily/weekly instructional time by subject

Both the Jackson School and the Wood School run on a six-day schedule. All core subject areas are taught daily within all grade levels. Pre-K classes vary by week, with some students attending as few as two mornings to as many as four afternoons. Because specials run on the six-day cycle, the amount of weekly time can vary.

	Grade(s)	Minutes/day	Minutes/week
Pre-reading skills	PK	45x1	
Handwriting skills	PK	15x1	
Math centers	PK	40x1	
Fine/gross motor	PK	45x1	
Reading	K	60x1	300
Math	K	60x1	300
Science	K		60x1
Social studies	K		60x1
Phonics	K	30x1	150
Spanish	K		20x1 per 6 day cycle
Reading	1-3	75x1	375
Math	1-3	60-75x1	300-375
Science	1-3		60x1
Social studies	1-3		60x1
Phonics	1-3	30x1	150
Library	K-5		40x1 per 6 day cycle
Art	K-5		40x1 per 6 day cycle
Music	K-5		40x1 per 6 day cycle
Physical Education	K-5		80x1 per 6 day cycle
Spanish	1-3		40x1 per 6 day cycle
Reading	4-6	90x1	450
Math	4-6	45x1	225
Science	4-6		45x4 per 6 day cycle

	Grade(s)	Minutes/day	Minutes/week
Social studies	4-6		45x4 per 6 day cycle
Computer	4-6		45x1 per 6 day cycle
Library/Media	4-6		45x1 per 6 day cycle
Art	4-6		45x1 per 6 day cycle
Music	4-6		45x1 per 6 day cycle
Physical Education	4-6		45x2 per 6 day cycle
Spanish	4-6		45x2 per 6 day cycle

Social Areas

Percentage of students in school activities by gender and grade for the most recent three years

There are many opportunities for student to engage in school activities outside the typical school day. These are some examples of the types of activities that are offered to the students and the number of children that take advantage of these offerings.

The *Curriculum Enrichment Program* offers classes to the students either before or after school. These classes are free of charge and taught by current school staff and some volunteers.

Year	K		1		2		3		4		5		6		TOTAL
	<u>B</u>	<u>G</u>													
2010-11	14	17	38	30	13	26	33	33	43	38	41	35	21	42	424
2011-12	20	28	35	18	47	40	23	36	36	34	43	46	34	43	486
2012-13	10	20	18	26	35	25	43	34	32	31	36	32	35	29	406

The *Summer Learning Academy* is an educational enrichment offering that allows students to engage in high-interest learning opportunities during the summer months. Much of it is project based and incorporates all subject areas while encouraging critical thinking skills. It is open to all students and is fee based.

Year	K		1		2		3		4		5		6		TOTAL
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
2010-11	-*	-*	5	4	6	1	1	3	1	3	0	4	0	0	28
2011-12	-*	-*	5	5	7	3	3	3	1	3	0	1	0	4	35
2012-13	3	2	4	6	3	0	5	4	1	0	2	3	1	0	34

*Kindergarten students were not eligible to participate during this time.

Walk to School Day is a bi-yearly (fall and spring) event that promotes physical activity and health awareness by encouraging a school wide event. This has been very popular with the students and their families as all are invited to attend. Staff members also volunteer to walk and chaperone students during this event. The students walk all together from a designated area (Lowe's). The most recent participation numbers are as follows:

Year	K		1		2		3		4		5		6		TOTAL
	<u>B</u>	<u>G</u>													
2012-13	14	13	23	18	16	18	15	20	12	13	6	8	14	5	195

Percentage of students in other co-curricular activities by gender and grade for the most recent three years (identify the co-curricular areas or programs)

Co-curricular activities for the Wood School

Band

71 girls

62 boys

Chorus

62 girls

16 boys

Cribbage Club

11 girls

16 boys

Opportunities for student leadership and decision-making in the school

- Bullying Focus Groups winter/spring
- Student surveys
- Enrichment ideas/suggestions box

Mission Statements

Mission Statement of the Anna Ware Jackson School

The mission of the Anna Ware Jackson School is to inspire every student to think, to learn, to achieve, and to care in a safe, child-centered learning environment.

Mission Statement of the Beatrice H. Wood School

The staff of the Beatrice H. Wood School will provide a quality education for all students that maximizes their academic achievement, promotes their physical, social, and emotional development, emphasizes family and community values, and develops their ability to succeed in a diverse and changing society. We will create an environment where students, staff, parents and community members work and grow together.

Mission Statement of the Plainville Public Schools

The mission of the Plainville Schools is to promote lifelong learning throughout the community and to prepare students to become responsible, contributing members of a changing society by providing a challenging, rigorous educational program.

Beliefs

In support of our mission, we are committed to the following beliefs:

- We promote excellence in instruction and student achievement in a creative and innovative atmosphere that fosters critical thinking.
- All students should acquire, and utilize, essential skills and content knowledge in an environment that promotes higher level thinking skills across the curriculum.
- In order to be prepared for a changing society it is essential that students become independent life-long learners to prepare them for a changing society.
- Each student possesses unique talents and gifts and should be encouraged to use them to reach their maximum individual potential.
- All students and staff should be encouraged to attain high standards of achievement.

- Parents, in partnership with schools, are an integral part of their child's learning.
- All students should be able to communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, the arts and technology.
- All students should develop a sense of self-discipline, self-respect, self-reliance and demonstrate social and civic responsibility.
- Student learning is promoted through a safe and orderly environment, free of prejudice, drugs, violence and harassment.
- Ongoing opportunities for the professional growth and development of staff are essential for continued school growth and improvement.
- Community involvement should be actively solicited, encouraged, and developed.
- All students should understand, respect and appreciate the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of our society and the democratic principles upon which this nation was built.

Vision

The Plainville Public Schools is an exemplary and dedicated educational organization committed to providing a supportive learning environment that fosters intellectual, physical, emotional and social development for all. This student-centered community of learners supports high expectations in settings that are flexible, interchangeable and technologically advanced.

Driven by the belief that all children can learn and succeed, we provide a full range of educational services that are both innovative and proactive. Aware of the challenges of an uncertain future, we seek to provide our students with the skills, knowledge, values and expertise to succeed in work and life.

We collaborate with, value, and appreciate a community long known for its extraordinary commitment to its children and schools.

Commission on Public Schools
Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools
Elementary School Teaching and Learning Standards

Mission and Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment

1 Mission and Expectations

The school has a mission statement, which describes what the school intends to achieve in its role as an educational institution and gives purpose and direction to all aspects of the educational process. The school has a set of academic and social expectations that generate high standards for student achievement and measure the success of the mission statement.

1. The school has a mission statement which flows from the educational community's beliefs about education, states the purpose of the school, and is reflective of the character of the school.
2. The school has a set of measurable academic and social expectations that are used to evaluate the success of the mission statement.
3. The school's staff and administration, with participation from parents, students, central office personnel, and other constituencies of the school, establish, accept and support the mission statement and expectations.
4. The mission statement and expectations are congruent with those of the district.
5. The mission statement and expectations guide the school's planning and decision-making about policies, procedures, and programs in support of the academic and social development of all students.
6. The staff and administration set a clearly defined cycle for the review and revision of the mission and expectations to adapt to the changing needs of students and present any revisions to the educational community.

Mission and Expectations

Conclusions

The schools have mission statements which flow from the educational community's beliefs about education, state the purposes of the schools, and are reflective of the character of the schools. The Plainville schools' three mission statements deliberately address the two schools' beliefs about teaching and learning as well as that of the district and reflect the character of each school, the unique development of the elementary school student, and the values of the community and its educators. The Plainville schools' student-parent handbook expresses the mission statement of each individual school as well as the district mission statement.

The district mission statement identifies a commitment to promote lifelong learning throughout the community with the intention to prepare students to become contributing members of a changing society by providing a rigorous educational model. The district's beliefs include what students should know and be able to do and the essential components to achieving the goals outlined. Essential components include an educational model that promotes critical thinking skills, independence, a safe learning environment, and an attendance to each student's unique talents and gifts. Community and parent partnerships are cited as an integral building block to the child's learning. The vision statement further explains the collective belief that the schools create a student-centered community with high expectations that are flexible and technologically advanced. The Plainville schools have been successful in creating and maintaining a positive climate as a means to enhance student engagement and to sustain the high level

of energy necessary for teachers to do their best. The schools' hallways and common areas are alive with student work integrated through all domains.

Themes that characterize the Anna Ware Jackson (AWJ) and Beatrice H. Wood (BHW) Elementary Schools are expressed through mottos that each school has created. At the Jackson School, the motto is "Be the Best You Can Be." Throughout each day, students are reminded to work hard and follow rules for behavior. Achievement is celebrated through the display of student work, recognition assemblies and the awarding of motivational stickers and certificates. This allows students to understand and connect to the principles expressed by the mission statement of the school. The Wood School describes itself through its motto as "The Bridge from Home to the World." Literature, art projects, music and school activities such as the community garden and world fair are designed to help students recognize their responsibility to their community and develop a world view. The mottos that have been created sufficiently establish the unique character of each individual school.

The Anna Ware Jackson mission statement expresses the intent to inspire every student to think, to achieve, and to care in a safe and child-centered learning environment. The school also has a vision statement that is written to identify the values required to create the professional learning community in order to support the achievement of the mission. The values include an emphasis on hands-on student learning, high student achievement, collaboration and trust, differentiated learning, and monitoring the academic and social progress of each individual student. The Jackson School also identifies collective commitments that the staff will uphold to provide an optimal learning environment. The collective commitments express the school's desire to

empower students to take responsibility for learning and contribute positively to the school and larger community. It further expresses the staff's commitment to providing exemplary models for learning. The mission statement, vision statements, and collective commitments reflect the unique character of this child-centered school. As a result, the intention of the school is made clear to all involved in the task of educating its students.

The Beatrice H. Wood mission statement asserts that the staff will provide a quality education for all students that maximizes academic achievement, promotes physical, social, and emotional development, emphasizes family and community values, and develops the student's ability to succeed in a diverse and changing society. The beliefs focus on high expectations for all students, honing in on each individual student's ability to learn and succeed at the student's own developmental rate. The beliefs also state that all school community members are both teachers and learners and that class size and staffing levels must be set to optimize student success. When a mission statement includes all stakeholders, shared responsibility is established. (self-study, committee meeting, student-parent handbook, and teacher interviews)

In part, the Plainville Schools have a set of measurable academic and social expectations that are used to evaluate the success of the mission statement. The student-parent handbook states the academic and social expectations for students. The expectations flow from the individual school mission statements as well as the district mission statement. Educators consistently work with English language arts (ELA) and math coaches to ensure that a rigorous and relevant curriculum is being taught and learned. The written curriculum articulates what students should know and be able to do. Social expectations that state criteria for student behavior and promote the habits of mind

necessary for students' social and personal growth are expressed in the PeaceBuilders program. As a part of the announced morning messages, the PeaceBuilders pledge is recited in both schools each day. Classrooms also establish individual expectations and/or rules or class contracts that align with the school mission.

The academic and social expectations for students are reflective of the schools' missions in several ways. The establishment of professional learning communities and use of common planning time serves as a model for lifelong learning for the community. The collective ownership of student learning is exemplified through the inclusion of parents, older students from regional schools, and community groups such as Science for Scientists as partners in learning which support student achievement and promote responsible citizenship. The involvement of senior citizens in providing support for teachers in and out of the classroom and for the guidance provided to students through after school enrichment activities is to be applauded. Another example of collective ownership is the student mentoring program that draws participants from all constituencies within the school community, including the superintendent and members of leadership team who also serve as mentors. The collective ownership for student learning that is consistently demonstrated enhances the likelihood that the missions of the schools will be realized.

A variety of formal and informal assessments, such as STAR Reading and STAR Math, Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and common grade level assessments are developed and used to measure the students' attainment of academic expectations. However, a grading policy has not been established nor has a standard reporting system been created for use.

Consequently, it is difficult to ensure fidelity in the assessment of students' academic achievement.

There are consistently low incidents of action taken for student discipline. On the contrary, the number of students recognized through A+ Attitudes, a program initiated by the superintendent to recognize outstanding student effort and achievement, is high. Additionally, the collegial atmosphere created by the respectful, supportive interactions among staff serves as a positive model for students. Conversations with students about behavioral expectations and the PeaceBuilder's pledge demonstrate that students are aware of proper school behaviors. However, specific, measurable behavioral expectations have not been articulated. Consequently, students may be unable to develop a clear understanding of what "proper" behavior looks like and teachers are left without objective criteria for measuring the attainment of behavioral expectations. When measurement tools are identified for explicit purposes, student learning outcomes can be strategically assessed and adjustments to practice can be made to ensure success.

The student-parent handbook, open houses, principals' coffee hours, the superintendent's monthly meeting, A+ Attitudes, the school website, the Facebook page, parent-teacher conferences, progress reports, and report cards are some of the vehicles used to promote communication among members of the educational community. The plethora of opportunities for communication has been successful in helping to inform key stakeholders about academic and social expectations. (student interviews, student shadowing, building leaders interview)

The vast majority of the school's staff and administration, with participation from parents, students, central office personnel, and other constituencies of the school,

establish, accept, and support the mission statement and expectations. With the help of a facilitator and a team, including the superintendent, two principals, two members of the steering committee, two teacher representatives from each building, parents, and other community members, a district mission statement was developed. The current district mission statement was approved by the school committee in February 2011.

The individual schools' mission statements, vision statements, beliefs, and collective commitments were originally written by the principal and staff of each school during the first New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation process in 2004. Although student needs were clearly the focus when the schools' missions and expectations were written, students were not directly involved in the process. The individual school mission statements and expressed expectations were separately created, thus the differences in components, content, format, and expression of shared responsibility. Once composed, the mission and expectations were shared with parents, central office personnel, and other members of the school community for comment and revision. The school committee then gave final approval of the work that had been done. The mission statements were reviewed during the current self-study process. Several staff meetings held in each school were used to discuss, process, and analyze each mission statement, vision statement, and set of beliefs. The schools determined that both mission statements would not be revised at this time, although future consideration was deemed necessary. In addition, a collaborative process to revise the statements, including parents, students, staff, community representatives and the school committee, has not been undertaken in many years. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the statements are reflective of the current beliefs of the

educational community. When all constituencies of the educational community express their collective voice through the written mission and expectations of the schools, a greater understanding of a common purpose will be established.

The mission statements of the two schools place the responsibility for achieving the missions on the adult staff. The responsibility of the students and the community-at-large for achieving the missions of the schools is not clearly articulated. Because the desire of the district is to shift the focus from teaching to learning, it would be best if the responsibility would be shared. When the mission statement and expectations of a school clearly articulate shared responsibility, a collective focus on goals is established.

Each school has a motto that accompanies the mission statements, “Be the Best You Can Be” and “The Bridge from Home to the World” that is written in child friendly language and displayed within the school. Consequently, these mottos help students integrate the principles of the mission into their daily lives. The mottos put the focus on students and capture the spirit of student ownership and engagement with the greater community. The faculty shares the responsibility of putting the mission statement into practice. During adoption of the Massachusetts Common Core State Standards, adjustments were made to the curriculum and assessments to increase the academic rigor for students and move the focus of instruction from “breadth to depth.” Coaches are used to deepen understanding of instructional practice techniques to meet the diverse needs of the learning population. Technological opportunities are investigated and implemented during professional learning times and instructional blocks. Physical education teachers engage students during recess to promote team-building and respect. The school psychologist implements lessons and scenarios focusing on bullying to support social

development. Before and after school activities are offered for students to develop unique talents and gifts. Community partnerships have enabled seniors to come into the buildings and run chess and cribbage clubs. At the end of third grade, students participate in a step up day where a video is shown to inform students of the rules and expectations in the upcoming transition to the upper school. This is a testament as to how the mission is integrated into the daily life of the schools. When the principles expressed in the mission and expectations of a school are practiced, learning is positively impacted. (self-study, team leader interviews, planning meetings, student shadowing)

The mission statements and expectations of the Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Schools, approved by the staff and school committee on February 15, 2011, are somewhat congruent with those of the district. Considering the mission statement, vision statement, beliefs, and collective commitments as a whole and the district mission statement and beliefs, the statements express a commitment to a rigorous educational model that incorporates high expectations and promotes collaboration within and among the community. The district has expressed its desire to increase collaboration between the two schools to promote unity and create seamless transitions for students. All statements recognize the importance of providing educational experiences for students that will inspire them to excel. The statements of the district and each of the two schools contain several separate components, such as mission statement, beliefs, vision statement, and collective commitments that are not common to all. In lieu of the fact that the entire district is made up only of the two schools, the extensive quantity of what is being expressed could result in confusion about the essential beliefs of the district. When school and district statements about mission and expectations are congruent and able to

be understood by all, a unified focus will be established. (school leadership interviews, teacher interviews, self-study)

The district mission statement and expectations informally guide the schools' planning and decision making about policies, procedures, and programs, in support of the academic and social development of the students. Three years ago, the district involved the union, teachers, school committee, and administrators in a complete update of all policies. The district mission statement is a summary of what the Plainville Public Schools' educational community truly believes. Therefore, it influences decision making regarding the policies, procedures, and programs of the schools.

The goals and objectives of the pre-school program directly align with the tenets of the Jackson School. All planning and decision making about policies, procedures, and programs support the academic and social development of students. The preschool emphasizes a child centered learning environment through the use of differentiated instruction and whole child learning practices that take into consideration the cognitive, physical, and social and emotional domains of learning for each child. The classroom schedules are built for student success with the emphasis on appropriate developmental instructional strategies for each child. For example, the pre-school teachers have implemented the Think Social! program to address early childhood appropriate social thinking skills.

The district's decision to accept responsibility for meeting the high expectations set by the Massachusetts Common Core State Standards and implementing programs, such as the PeaceBuilders, the Building Educational Student Support Team, and the before- and after-school enrichment activities characterize elements of the schools'

mission and expectations. The initiation of collaborative planning time, professional learning communities, Empowering Writers curriculum, and data meetings, while still in the early stages of implementation, are positive steps toward meeting the rigorous needs of the individual students and the core curriculum as a whole. During the decision making process, less emphasis is placed on challenging students who are already meeting academic expectations. When decisions about school policies and programs conform to the principles set forth in the mission, the needs of all learners are most effectively met. (facility tour, observations, teacher interviews, student shadowing)

While the acknowledgement of need is there, no established cycle for the review and revision of the school's mission and expectations is in place in order to give voice to all members of the academic community and in lieu of changing standards and student needs. The mission statement is publicized in every classroom and within school publications. Open houses, school publications, district websites, principal coffee hours, school council, and school committee meetings are used to inform parents, teachers, students, and community members of the missions of the schools. When communication is transparent and review cycles are established, the educational community can effectively work together to meet changing student needs. (school leadership interviews, teacher interviews, self-study)

Commendations

1. The collective ownership for student learning by the educational community
2. The child friendly mottos which clearly express the essential beliefs of the learning community
3. The school culture that promotes collegiality and respectful behavior
4. The mission and expectations that are integrated into the daily life of the school

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a process to assess social expectations
2. Engage all stakeholders in the review and revision of the schools' mission and expectations to create consistency, illustrate shared responsibility, and develop congruence with that of the district
3. Ensure fidelity in the assessment and reporting of student achievement
4. Establish a schedule for the review and revision of the mission statements

2 Curriculum

The curriculum is the framework of knowledge and skills that articulates the school's expectations for student learning. It aligns with district, state, and national standards. The curriculum links expectations for student learning to instructional and assessment practices. The strength and effectiveness of the curriculum are dependent upon the commitment of the school and district to a continuous process of implementation, review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum.

1. The written curriculum is aligned with the school's stated expectations for students' academic and social and developmental needs.
2. Each curriculum learning area clearly articulates learning standards which support the school's stated expectations.
3. The curriculum is intellectually challenging, developmentally appropriate and allows for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
4. Effective curriculum coordination and articulation takes place within the school as well as with all receiving and sending district schools.
5. The curriculum incorporates classroom and school-wide technological and library/media resources.
6. There is a systematic and ongoing process for curriculum development, review, evaluation and revision.
7. The school provides professional development opportunities, time, fiscal resources and staffing to assist in the development, understanding and implementation of the written curriculum.

Curriculum

Conclusions

By design, the written curriculum is aligned with the school's stated expectations for students' academic, social, and developmental needs. It serves as the foundation for classroom instruction. One goal of the schools' mission statements is to set high expectations for the academic achievement of students. The curricula for English language arts (ELA) and math are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which articulate rigorous learning standards. Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results from the spring of 2012 revealed that Plainville's third through sixth graders scored above the state average in 78% of the applicable categories. In the last three years, the student retention rate at the Beatrice H. Wood School was zero and it was less than 2% at the Anna Ware Jackson School. This data is evidence that the schools are meeting the academic needs of students. While some curriculum documents contain essential questions and suggestions for how objectives can be addressed to meet the needs of both advanced and struggling learners, others are less developed. However, the process of full curriculum documentation has not been completed in order to more closely align with the schools' stated desire to set high expectations for academic achievement.

Expressed in the stated beliefs of the Plainville school district is the intention to help students develop self-discipline, self-reliance, and self-respect. A social development program called PeaceBuilders is used throughout the district to foster positive behaviors, to build independence, and to enable students to develop respect for themselves and tolerance and appreciation for others. The posting of essential questions

and “I Can” statements in some classrooms fosters student responsibility. For example, in a second grade classroom, a teacher prompted students to use the statement, “I can draw shapes and divide them into fractional parts” as well as “I can ask questions before during and after reading.” This strategy for prompting empowers students by helping them to recognize the role they play in learning. Classrooms have posted behavioral and social expectations in the form of classroom rules and motivational charts that encourage students to do their personal best. In addition to classrooms, behavioral expectations from the PeaceBuilders program can be seen posted in hallways in both buildings. As a constant reminder of the social expectations expressed in the mission statements of the schools, the PeaceBuilder’s pledge is recited each morning. Preschool students are provided with social skills instruction utilizing the Think Social! program. Students are able to use posters and anchor charts supporting social thinking strategies in the classroom. There are many opportunities throughout the preschool schedule for students to practice social skills with peers and adults. By encouraging the social growth of students throughout the school day, the district is fulfilling its intent to support the development of family and community values as expressed in the mission statements.

The written curriculum is designed to allow teachers to modify the timeline of delivery to meet the diverse developmental needs of students. Ongoing assessments allow teachers to challenge students and scaffold learning. For example, during reading instruction, some teachers worked to support students in small groups using below-level text while other students were able to self-select text at their level, allowing them to progress at their own pace. Some students receive instruction through tutor support either in or out of the classroom setting. There are two Individualized Learning Centers (ILCs)

for students with needs identified to be two or more grade levels below stated expectations for that grade. The Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC) services children in the first through fourth grades in need of a substantially separate, specialized program. Some teachers use standards from previous grade levels in their instruction. For example, a fourth grade lesson incorporated a review of third grade math standards. The written curriculum links expectations for student learning to instructional and assessment practices. It is developmentally appropriate and supports the academic and social growth of students. Consequently, through the implementation of the written curriculum, the mission of the district can be achieved. (mission statements, curriculum documents, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

Curriculum in most learning areas clearly articulates learning standards which support the school's stated expectations. Curriculum revision in the Plainville schools is an ongoing process in all subject areas. The schools are invested in the continued implementation, review and revision of the curriculum. All curriculum documents are considered to be fluid and under revision on a continual basis involving various members of the teaching and administration staffs which include the principals, classroom teachers, and instructional coaches. The status of the written curriculum for each subject area varies.

For English language arts (ELA), teams were created in 2012 to align the curriculum with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core State Standards. Although this task is done, curriculum documentation with essential questions, suggestions for instructional strategies, and units of instruction are not completed. This year, teachers have placed the focus on developing curriculum maps.

Teachers and the ELA instructional coach are working hard to minimize disparity and inconsistencies in what is taught and how it is taught in each classroom. This work will need to continue in order to achieve the district's belief that, "All students should acquire, and utilize, essential skills and content knowledge in an environment that promotes higher level thinking skills across the curriculum."

In 2011-2012, the current math curriculum was aligned to the Massachusetts State Frameworks for Mathematics and the Common Core State Standards. Consequently, the math curriculum has a set of learning standards. There is inconsistency among teachers with the selection of materials and resources to deliver the current curriculum. For example, teachers in fourth grade are using model units from the state to create their own mini-units. Some third grade teachers are incorporating Harcourt materials into classroom instruction and members of the grade level team use additional resources from websites such as *Teachers Pay Teachers*. Although using a variety of materials to implement a curriculum can enhance instruction, bringing uniformity to those used within each grade level or throughout the school, if appropriate, would result in the selection of resources that would be most effective in accomplishing curriculum objectives

The science curriculum revision took place in 2006. The district is currently awaiting the state's release of the Next Generation Science Standards to begin the revision of the science curriculum. Science kits, reference books, and artifacts are used to implement the curriculum. Teachers design lessons, gather materials, and develop assessments to satisfy the objectives of the curriculum. Science lessons vary from class to class within each grade level. Teachers expressed that finding dedicated science time

during the week is a challenge. There is a need to unify instruction in this area and ensure that all students are engaged in optimum learning experiences.

The social studies curriculum was revised in 2007 and since that time, social studies Curriculum Frameworks have not changed. In social studies, teachers are working to incorporate ELA standards into their social studies units. For example, in a fourth grade classroom, students read materials, conducted research and wrote reports about Native Americans. In a grade 6 classroom, learning standards for social studies were integrated with writing an opinion piece about climbing the Himalayas or swimming in the Dead Sea.

The world language program follows the methods approved by the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association and the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language. The world language teachers started the ongoing process of updating and mapping their curriculum in 2013. The visual arts and music curricula were revised in 2002. There is currently no formal English as a second language (ESL) curriculum. Instead, the ESL teacher works closely with classroom teachers and curriculum coordinators to align ESL instruction to other subject areas such as ELA. Creation of written curricula for both physical education and music has begun but is currently incomplete. The preschool curriculum consists of teacher created curriculum maps based on the state Curriculum Frameworks. The curriculum maps are thematic and take into consideration the literacy, math, social and emotional, and physical development of preschool students.

The Plainville Public Schools are committed to effectively aligning and integrating learning standards which support the school's expectations in each learning

area. In doing so, each curricular area will meet the needs of individual students and ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve. A variety of instructional strategies are used to implement the learning standards in the classrooms. These include, but are not limited to, flexible grouping models for both large and small groups, use of manipulatives, graphic organizers, technology integration and reference materials hung in classrooms.

Professional learning community (PLC) meetings may be used to discuss sample lessons and their alignment to the curriculum along with plans for modifications. Support is given to students as needed through Response to Intervention (RtI) models, services such as Title I and through tutoring. Embedded in the learning standards are opportunities to challenge students to analyze, synthesize, and work with others to reach common understandings. Higher order questioning and lessons that require students to use critical thinking skills present those opportunities. During a lesson in the library media center, sixth grade students were asked to apply their knowledge of what constitutes reliable information when planning for a research report. Students were required to list resources that could be used and explain their criteria for evaluating those resources.

Strategies for lesson implementation are not articulated in most curriculum documents. As a result, teachers may address learning standards using the method of their choice. Some are more successful than others, resulting in a lack of fidelity. The inclusion of instructional strategies in curriculum documents and the provision of professional development to enhance teacher understanding of best practices could provide greater support to teachers in executing lessons, enhancing the likelihood that the

schools' stated expectations for students will be met. (PLC meeting, classroom observations, curriculum documents)

Collectively, the written curriculum is intellectually challenging, developmentally appropriate, and allows for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. Ongoing assessments allow teachers to both challenge students and scaffold their learning. The ELA and math curricula are intellectually challenging in that both have been updated and aligned to the Massachusetts Frameworks and Common Core State Standards. The ELA curriculum document contains benchmark tasks, benchmark assessments, and resources aligned with each learning standard. For example, a first grade ELA benchmark task asks students to use a variety of literature to identify basic similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic. There were many sixth grade math lessons which integrated ELA writing standards that support the use of a clear explanation, use of vocabulary, viable arguments with clear reasoning and the use of tools such as figures and diagrams. Deliberately, the Spanish, music, art and physical education teachers often incorporate units of study from ELA, math, science, and social studies into their curriculum. For example, students in music class are asked to write written responses and complete written tasks to demonstrate understanding. During preparation for the sixth grade World Fair, specialists in each discipline integrate social studies activities and concept into instruction. As a result of this cross-curricular learning, students are able to make connections and deepen their knowledge and understanding.

The content of the curriculum is developmentally appropriate and respectful of both individual and cultural diversity. Some teachers use leveled texts to support individual learning needs in the area of reading. Physical education teachers plan

instruction that is developmentally appropriate, recognizing the importance of differentiating instruction because not all students are capable of performing at the same level. During instruction, kinesthetic, auditory, and visual prompts are used to reach students with different learning styles. Through participation in physical education classes, students develop an understanding of the importance of staying fit and acquire the necessary skills to work cooperatively, resolve conflicts, and become productive members of a team. In music, Standard 7 requires students, by the end of grade 4, to describe the roles of artists, patrons, and cultural organizations and arts institutions in societies of the past and present. A fifth grade art lesson had students create clay pots using Native American symbols to tell a story.

The content of the curriculum does allow for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. The physical education program offers students many opportunities for the authentic application of skills that they will be able to use throughout their lives. In first grade, students worked with coins to “purchase” things. In fifth grade, students designed and created model bridges, tested their strength and analyzed the aspects of the design that contributed to the bridges’ viability. Through the Wellness Initiative, students learn what plants need to in order to grow. They plant gardens, tend them, and harvest the food which is consumed by them in the school cafeteria.

Curriculum documents, support derived from instructional coaches, information from faculty meetings, opportunities for planning and professional discussion through PLCs, and learning acquired through professional development are valuable resources that support teachers as they strive to provide the best possible instruction for all students.

However, in some classrooms, disparity exists between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum due to inequities in instruction. When curriculum is intellectually challenging, developmentally appropriate, and well-executed, students will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in our changing world. (classroom observation, teacher interviews, curriculum documents, instructional coaches interviews)

To some degree, curriculum coordination and articulation takes place within the school as well as with all receiving and sending district schools. Although a separate position for a curriculum coordinator does not exist, the principals of each school, with the support of the ELA and math coaches, serve in that capacity. Through faculty meetings, meetings with grade level teams and through in-service devoted to curriculum, curriculum leaders work hard to ensure that vertical and horizontal articulation takes place. However, with so many other priorities to accomplish, this task is difficult. The district does provide common planning time for grade levels in various forms. At times, substitutes may be secured so that teams can accomplish a specific task such as the common scoring of writing prompts. Classroom teachers are also given the option of using the time their students are engaged in Spanish instruction as PLC time. At the Wood School, there are blocked specials which enable grade level teams to work together. Special education teachers meet weekly to discuss student programs and needs. Despite the time allotted, teachers are not fully aware of the content and learning strategies known by the students they are receiving, nor are they fully cognizant of the content, methods, and resources students will be exposed to in the subsequent year. When curriculum is aligned and articulated, there will be continuity for students and more ease in transitions from grade-to-grade.

To facilitate the articulation and coordination of curriculum among classroom teachers and specialists, curriculum documents are present in classrooms and available to all staff members in the office and in some conference rooms. All teachers have access to curriculum documents through a shared drive on the school's network. ELA and math curriculum updates are shared with staff through a monthly newsletter, "Here's the Scoop!" distributed by the ELA and math instructional coaches.

Last year, teachers shared the task of aligning ELA and math curricula with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core State Standards. This occurred through vertical curriculum team meetings. The physical education PLC meetings occurred separately from the grade level staff. Currently, there are no vertical team meetings. However, the administration plans to develop a means to reinstate vertical team meetings. At the request of teachers, time previously dedicated to these meetings is now used for common planning time to work with their own teams. Professional learning communities are organized horizontally by grade level rather than vertically. A specialist representative serves on each grade level team. Special education teachers are not in attendance at all grade level team meetings so other avenues of communication with classroom teachers must be sought. Most communication about curriculum matters with these individuals takes place "on the fly" in informal settings. As a result, the integration of the curriculum across disciplines is made more difficult. Within grade levels, teams are currently working together to update and revise the curriculum and to create curriculum maps. In addition to this work, teachers use their PLC time to plan lessons and assessments, discuss student work, and share best practices. For example, during a kindergarten PLC meeting, teachers reviewed upcoming math

lessons to discuss their alignment and pacing with the current curriculum. The sixth grade team identified the need to focus on writing viable arguments with students because of their knowledge of it as a focus in middle school. It is inevitable that some valuable PLC time is spent on housekeeping discussions, such as the planning of field trips and discussions of PTO meetings, as there is no other time to discuss this particular information.

Care is taken to facilitate the smooth transition of students from grade to grade. Portfolios containing student work are used at all grade levels and are passed along at the end of each year to the teacher receiving that student. Teachers often meet informally with each other to share information about student needs. The special education team, classroom teacher, and principal meet to discuss the placement of students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Tutors and other support staff are not included in these meetings so their insights about strategies that have been complementary to the students' learning styles may be lost.

There is a process in place to ensure the coordination of curriculum between receiving and sending schools within the district. There is an end-of-the-year transition team for students with IEPs who are moving from third to fourth grade. This team consists of classroom teachers, school psychologists, the special education team, and principals. Communication between grade levels prior to the move from third to fourth grade ensures that a student's classroom placement best supports his or her learning style. In addition, parents have some input into classroom placement of their child from year to year. There is also a process to transition students from the Wood School to the middle school, which involves a meeting between a King Phillip Middle School representative,

usually the school psychologist, and the sixth grade teachers. A rating sheet of student skills is also completed by the sixth grade teacher to be sent to the regional middle school. Sixth grade teachers reported that they seldom receive feedback from the middle school about the progress of students. However, the process in place for the transition of students between sending and receiving schools is adequate. (self-study, curriculum documents, parent meeting, curriculum coordinators interview)

The curriculum often incorporates classroom and school-wide technological and library media resources. Classrooms libraries are well equipped with a variety of age appropriate books that can be used for instruction or self-selected by students for use during sustained silent reading (SSR) and flex time. Students in both buildings have access to leveled text materials. These books are available through the Accelerated Reader (AR) program and some classroom libraries. Tumblebooks, an online collection of animated, talking picture books, is used in Jackson School classrooms. The STAR program is a diagnostic tool used with students throughout the year to assess reading and math. The Accelerated Math program is also used to provide practice to students to improve their skills. Using Discovery Education Science, students are able to engage in virtual labs, simulations and interactive activities. Using PowerPoint, students present information and projects to classmates. The majority of classrooms have liquid-crystal display (LCD) projectors, connected to computers, and the Ladibug system with a document camera and video recording features. In a fifth grade classroom, students were using the camera to share their work with the rest of the class. In a third grade classroom, the teacher used the document camera to display question and answer cards during a science lesson. In many cases, classroom technology was often used to display

information rather than being actively used by teachers and students as a tool to deepen understandings. In the library media center, the librarian used the camera to model effective ways to take notes from digital resources. Each classroom has two to four desktop computers for student use and a teacher computer. Laptops on carts can also be used in classrooms. In the library media center, student partners were using laptops to research information about the octopus using the Grolier Online resource. Some students with special needs use tablets to enhance their communication skills. AlphaSmarts may be used for students with graphomotor disabilities. Digital reference resources such as World Book Online and Grolier Online and Discovery Education Streaming are available for access by students and teachers. Students in grades 1-3 receive *Scholastic News*, grades 4 and 5 receive *National Geographic Explorer* and grade 6 reads *Junior Scholastic*. Through the use of these resources, various areas of the curricula are supported.

The library media specialist (LMS) is involved in curriculum planning and provides extensive support across the school and with individual grade levels. As a member of the ELA curriculum committee, the LMS is also involved in the development, review and revision of the curriculum. The LMS is part of the fifth grade PLC team. When curricular changes are made, the LMS researches materials that will support learning standards and directs budget resources toward securing those resources. For example, the LMS collaborated with the fifth grade teachers to review the science curriculum and ordered texts to support research on planets. The libraries at both schools are on a fixed/flexible schedule allowing classroom teachers to sign up for additional library time. This enables the LMS and paraprofessional the opportunity to assist

students with in-depth explorations of concepts presented in the curriculum or to support students as they complete special projects.

Technology personnel are not involved in curriculum planning but provide technology support across the schools or with the grade levels. Rather than directly instructing students, the role of the technology personnel is to support implementation of the curriculum by researching available technology which is shared during monthly technology team meetings. As new technologies become available, technology personnel work with teachers to assess the suitability for integration into subject area curricula and offer training to teachers in the use new hardware and software. When technology personnel are fully involved in curriculum planning, there is a greater probability that a curriculum will be developed that actively uses technology in its delivery to enhance student learning. (facility tour, LMS interview, classroom observation)

In practice, there is a systematic and ongoing process for curriculum development, review, evaluation, and revision. For the past two years, the core areas of ELA and math have been the focus. Administrators serve as co-curriculum coordinators with the help of the ELA and math coaches to guide the development, review, and revision of the curriculum in those areas across the district. As comprehensive reviews of other disciplines are undertaken, teams with representatives from the teaching staff and administration will be formed. A timeline has been established for the formal review of all curricula. Ongoing updates to all curriculum documents occur informally each year with input being considered from all constituencies and approval being sought from coaches, teacher leaders, and administrators. Specialists update curriculum in their areas as needed. The coaches and administrators work to keep the community informed of

curricular revisions and expectations. The school committee has been given presentations on the topics of English language arts and math curriculum and recent alignments to the Common Core State Standards.

Recently, student work and performance have greatly influenced curriculum planning and revision. Meetings for the purpose of reviewing student work and analyzing student assessment data have enabled administrators, teachers, and specialists to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and to identify areas in need of change. The emphasis on data driven curriculum is a focus of the leadership in the district. Members of the leadership team are attending a year-long professional development course on data, which they are utilizing to create effective large scale data meetings at each school. As a result of data analysis demonstrating lower scores on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments, a decision was made to implement the Wilson FUNdations reading program in K-2 classrooms. When assessments revealed that students were struggling in writing with attention to voice, word choice, and using rich language, the 6+1 Traits of Writing program was initiated. This has helped the district to shift the focus from teaching to learning, resulting in the creation of a curriculum that is more responsive to the needs of students.

The school district includes current research in the development, review, and revision of most curriculum areas. A movement toward establishing a balance literacy program is evident as teachers shift from whole group to smaller group instruction teaching active reading strategies using leveled readers, process writing, and student-led literature circles. The schools have incorporated the work of Beck, McKeown, and Allen and used the Frayer model to build students' word skills. A review of student math

scores and a decision to heed the research of Marilyn Burns led to greater emphasis being placed on teaching students to explain mathematical processes in writing. An increased use of the scientific method when conducting experiments has enabled students to hypothesize, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to develop conceptual understanding over procedural skills. A plan is in place to provide professional development for staff in practices of close reading and increasing rigor throughout the curriculum. The inclusion of current research in the development, review, and revision of the curriculum enables students to acquire the skills necessary to thrive in a competitive world.

The schools' academic and social expectations greatly affect the process for the development, review, and revision of the curriculum. Data from ongoing summative and formative assessments is used to inform decisions about curriculum changes. When MCAS results indicated a weakness in student performance in the area of inferential reading, instruction targeting this skill increased. To fill the gaps revealed by DIBELS scores, Wilson's FUNdations program was implemented. Coaches meet with grade level PLCs to discuss curriculum development and revision based upon student needs and performance. Building level principals conduct large scale data meetings three times per year to discuss the curricular implications for each grade level. Students requiring additional support to achieve curricular goals are provided with interventions that are research based, including small group and hands-on learning activities. Tutors work with students to scaffold classroom instruction and build the students' abilities to work independently. Developmentally appropriate programs, such as Empowering Writers, allow students to build skills in a natural progression that conforms to their level of

readiness. The expectation is that students will develop the skills necessary collaborate with others and work independently on their way to becoming responsible, contributing citizens. The ease with which students work together and the positive, congenial atmosphere that permeates both schools is testament to the success of the social development aspects of the curriculum clearly enhancing the school's ability to meet academic and social expectations. (curriculum binders, teacher interviews, administrator meetings, classroom observation)

The Plainville Public Schools provide sufficient professional development opportunities, time, fiscal resources, and staffing to assist in the development, understanding, and implementation of the written curriculum. There is a professional development planning team for the Plainville Public Schools. This team consists of the superintendent, the two principals, the technology director, math and ELA coaches, special education director, school business administrator, ELL teacher, and a second grade teacher who is currently serving as the teacher mentor coordinator. This team meets monthly or more frequently to create a professional development calendar for the year. The current calendar in the Plainville Public Schools allows for four full professional development days and an additional two half days for in-service professional development. Examples of recent professional development offerings include training for Empowering Writers and reciprocal teaching.

There are curriculum coaches in the areas of English language arts and math who serve as both coaches and co-curriculum coordinators with the principals of Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Schools. The coaches model lessons, work with teachers to build curriculum maps, and provide on-going professional development in their

respective areas of expertise. The “grass roots” professional development opportunities provided by the coordinators and coaches demonstrate a job imbedded approach. At this time, there is no formal process in place to solicit professional development requests from staff. Topics chosen are dependent upon both teacher need and the initiatives currently being worked on in the schools derived from the analysis of student learning. For example, the ELA coach serves as a provider for on-going professional development in a new writing program adopted by both schools, Empowering Writers. Also, the math coach helped to organize a vertical math team to continue the updating of curriculum documents. Implementation of the curriculum is greatly enhanced by the on-site availability of the coaches. A mentor coordinator meets monthly with mentees to provide training on a topic connected to the curriculum such as the development of formative assessments or differentiation. The superintendent, in concert with the principals, is also active in identifying professional development needs and planning retreats, professional development days and workshops to meet the needs of the schools. The majority of Plainville teachers feel strongly connected to the curriculum due to their involvement in the initial development and continuous review of it with their grade level teams and instructional coaches.

Professional learning time for individual classroom teachers and coaches varies based upon need of staff members. Some teachers are voluntarily piloting units of study and receive assistance from coaches with this initiative. There are some teachers that utilize a once per six school day period of time to meet with ELA or math coaches to work on individual professional development goals connected to curriculum objectives. This time allows for coaches to assist staff members in developing materials that support

learning standards. However, because teachers have the right to choose whether or not to participate in this professional development opportunity, time spent with the coaches is not equitable.

Fiscal resources are provided for teachers to attend conferences outside of the school district each year. The conferences are reimbursed with prior superintendent approval. In addition to conferences, teachers are guaranteed \$500 per year as reimbursement for graduate courses completed subject to the professional development account funding. These courses must be submitted to the superintendent for approval and staff must receive a grade of an A or B to receive reimbursement. The district has brought some graduate level courses to the campus, including “Thinking Math” and a variety of reading courses. The expense for these courses is absorbed by the district.

Shifts in the curriculum brought about by the new CCSS have necessitated some change in the resources needed to implement the curriculum. There has been an effort to acquire more leveled texts and fiction and nonfiction texts for close reading for reading instruction, more manipulatives for math, and different tools to evaluate student performance, such as STAR diagnostic assessments. Teachers are continuing to work with the administration and coaches to identify and obtain updated materials to effectively meet new standards. Teacher may request funds or new resources at the school or district level. The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) has been very generous in granting teacher requests for supplies or manpower to implement the curriculum. The abundant provision of funds, personnel, and programs by the district for professional development has a positive impact on the development and revision of curriculum. (teacher interviews, observations, evidence binders)

Commendations

1. The alignment of the ELA and math curricula with Common Core State Standards
2. The establishment of a positive, supportive environment for learning
3. The integration of curriculum across disciplines
4. The collaborative efforts of the faculty and administration for the development of the curriculum
5. The support for the social development of students
6. The shift in focus from teaching to learning
7. The opportunities presented to students for the authentic application of skills
8. The inclusion of current research in curriculum initiatives

Recommendations

1. Complete the process of full curriculum documentation for all disciplines
2. Design and implement effective strategies to increase curriculum articulation within and among grade levels
3. Create clear, consistent agendas at all PLC meetings which are focused on using data to support student learning
4. Create opportunities to involve technology personnel in curriculum planning

3 Instruction

Instruction is the means by which the curriculum is implemented and the stated expectations for student learning are realized. Instruction accommodates individual needs and learning differences and engages students in a variety of ways. Effective instruction is dependent upon self-reflection, professional collaboration and the implementation of exemplary practices.

1. Classroom instruction embodies the school's beliefs about teaching and learning, reflects current research on effective teaching strategies, and is designed to enable all students to meet the school's expectations for academic achievement.
2. Instruction addresses the individual needs of students, enables all students to have successful experiences, and promotes independent life-long learning.
3. Appropriate instructional materials and services are available for all programs including those for students identified with special needs and students whose abilities present unique needs.
4. Teaching facilitates learning by including practices that are exploratory, individualized, self-directed, authentically-based, and integrated across the disciplines.
5. Instruction promotes the development and application of higher order thinking skills and problem solving techniques.
6. Instruction fosters appropriate behavioral standards, responsible citizenship, and an appreciation of diversity.
7. Technology supports instruction and assists student learning.
8. The school provides professional development opportunities to improve instructional practices, resulting in increased student achievement.
9. Supervision of instructional practices is focused on the improvement of student learning.
10. The discussion of instructional practice is a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
11. The school allocates sufficient instructional time, fiscal resources, and staffing to support effective student learning.

Instruction

Conclusions

In most classrooms, instruction at Plainville Public Schools collectively embodies the school's beliefs about teaching and learning, reflects current research on effective teaching strategies, and is designed to enable all students to meet the school's expectations for academic achievement. Essentially, the beliefs expressed by the district are that all students will attain high standards and develop self-discipline, self-respect, and self-reliance in a creative atmosphere that fosters critical thinking.

Students in grade 1 have to problem solve when given the task to create a snowman without using any tools, fostering critical thinking. Students in some grade levels self-select reading books, aware of their "just right" books during the Daily 5 literacy time in the classroom. Students take responsibility for reading at their own level and realize their own strengths and weaknesses. This promotes self-discipline and helps students acquire essential skills. Grade 4 students are challenged to go beyond their own level during Response to Intervention (RtI) focusing on answering open response questions. However, instruction focused on higher order thinking skills across the curriculum is inconsistent. As a result, not all students have an equal opportunity to develop these essential skills.

Current research on effective teaching strategies is reflected in a variety of ways. Coaches attend workshops and do research to share best practices with teachers within the professional learning community (PLC) and professional learning time (PLT) groups. The math coach is aware that revision of the math curriculum needs to continue and is working with grade levels vertically to finish developing math units.

Teachers are also invited to share at faculty or grade level meetings and are encouraged to take courses. Under the professional development model, staff is asked for three areas to work on and two ideas to share with other staff after attending a workshop or taking a class. Administration also shares research on effective instruction, recently resulting in the adoption of a new writing program. For example, the teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade adopted the Empowering Writers program, which has improved student writing. Grade 2 students had 7% of students at the highest level on the writing rubric, improving to 32% on the last assessment. Students at the lower part of the rubric decreased from 19% to 6% on the last writing assessment. Because of the many professional opportunities available to the staff, embedded training and professional dialogue linked to current research is increasing. As a result, teachers are becoming more reflective about instructional practices. Consequently, more effective instructional strategies are being implemented. (classroom observations, teacher interviews, team meetings)

Some classroom instruction across the schools addresses the individual needs of students, enables all students to have successful experiences, and promotes independent life-long learning. Many groupings are made according to instructional strategies. For example, grade 4 RtI groups were created for students focusing on answers to open response questions. Students were working on the ANSWER strategy for open response questions (analyze, note plan, skim, read, select, write, edit, and revise). Students whose performance was below grade level worked in smaller groups on building confidence, think aloud strategies, and finding the main ideas and relevant details supporting the main idea. Students meeting and exceeding expectations were

working in larger groups on ways to advance their learning. Exemplars were given for students to analyze quality responses. Grade 6 students worked in small, cooperative groups to answer two different math questions involving area and perimeter. They worked together, using their own academic and social strengths to solve the problems, enabling all students to have successful experiences. Some teachers adapt questioning in the classroom to the appropriate needs of the students. In grade 1, the teacher was using direct questioning for some students, while using more inferential questioning for others. These best practices were effective in promoting student learning.

However, there were inconsistencies in the quality of instruction. In some classrooms, the use of worksheets was prevalent. Students were not told the purpose of the work to be done, nor were they given sufficient time to complete the task. As soon as all worksheets were collected, another was placed in front of them. In one classroom, a teacher instructing students in writing compound sentences presented misinformation when the students were told to always place a comma before the conjunction. In another, a teacher presenting a lesson on adverbs was clearly confused and unable to provide an example of how an adverb could be used in a sentence. In some classrooms, higher order questioning was seldom used, students had little opportunity to engage in academic conversation, and most activities were teacher directed. It is essential to ensure that all students have equal learning opportunities, no matter what their classroom assignment. When best practices are utilized in every classroom, learning will take place.

The instruction in the preschool classrooms in the Plainville Public Schools sufficiently addressed the individual needs of students and enabled all students to have

successful experiences while promoting independence. Preschool students were given opportunities to work in whole group, small group, and individual environments. Students participated in morning circle time, story time, center time, table time, and dramatic play. Circle time provided preschool students with whole group instruction in calendar skills, weather graphing, and enjoyable song activities. Center time was structured to allow students to work at their own pace in adult-supported center activities. Students were able to move between centers when tasks were completed, with the exception of the day when related service providers such as the occupational therapist (OT), the physical therapist (PT), and/or speech and language therapist were involved in centers and specific times had to be adhered to. When a variety of instructional strategies is used in all classrooms to meet individual student needs, all students will have successful experiences. (classroom observation, instructional coaches interviews, student interviews)

The vast majority of programs are using appropriate instructional materials and services to meet student needs, including those for students identified with special needs. Students needing modifications in kindergarten were using different writing tools for journal writing. Some students were using portable word walls, some students were using letter charts, and some students were working independently on writing two sentences. One student was using a slant board during writing. Students in various grade levels were seen using headphones to block out sound, seat pads, different sized pencils, and visual schedules. Services available to students with special needs include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, and resource room reading, math, and tutoring. Therapists and

paraprofessionals work closely with teachers to carry out instruction. Tutors plan instruction based on the student's individual needs. Students in the resource room worked on onset and rimes to create rhyming words in small groups. Students achieving beyond grade level expectations were able to work at their level in some but not all classrooms. In grade 1, some students were given individualized spelling lists according to their performance on a pre-test. A grade 4 inclusion classroom used movement and music to address vocabulary, singing a song about latitude and longitude. During a grade 6 math assessment, modifications were made for students, including two different versions of the assessment and the use of calculators. Students had a wide variety of materials to work with and services needed for learning. Although some classrooms used Accelerated Reading and Math for "fast finishers," there is a lack of other enrichment opportunities in the classroom. (teacher interviews, observations, student shadowing)

In many classrooms, teaching facilitates learning by including practices that are exploratory, individualized, self-directed, authentically-based, and integrated across the curriculum. An example of this is the wellness initiative. The Wellness Committee focused on providing healthy choices during lunch time in the Plainville schools; grade 3 students focused on locating nutritional information on labeled foods; and physical education teachers promoted a month-long challenge to encourage healthy living. The initiative also led to the creation of a school garden which enhances the instruction on seeds and planting, as well as supplementing the school lunches by using the products grown in the garden. Teaching that facilitates individualized, self-directed, and integrated learning takes place during the grade 6

World Fair. Teachers plan instruction for assignments based on meeting the needs of students, making modifications for all students to meet the common expectations. Teachers also stretch assignments for enrichment opportunities, while scaffolding for students in the Individual Learning Center (ILC). Kindergarten students explored geometric concepts in small groups using pattern blocks. Grade 4 students worked in small groups to experiment with a battery and a light bulb. The groups worked collaboratively to get the light bulb working. By emphasizing authentic learning opportunities across the curriculum, Plainville Public Schools provide students with engaging and meaningful instruction. (interviews, observation, teacher meeting)

Instruction in some classrooms promotes the development and application of higher order thinking skills and problem solving techniques. In a grade 3 math lesson, students were given answer cards and had to decide if they had the correct answer. Students who believed they had the right answer, justified the reasoning and were able to eliminate the incorrect answers. In grade 5, students were having a discussion about the history of taxation in Britain. Students started by filling in a cause and effect chart, while turning and talking about responses. In addition, students were giving reasons why they believed the situation to be fair or unfair and backing responses up with evidence. This promoted student-to-student discourse and created a rich discussion in which students commented on classmates' points of view.

In some classrooms most work was paper and pencil, without immediate feedback. In some classrooms, all students were working on the same assignment without evident differentiation. The focus was reading and answering questions without allowing students the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions among

classmates. While some students had opportunities to engage in rich discourse and problem solving activities, others were not exposed to the same rigor. Consequently, consistent opportunities for the development of higher order skills were not provided. When instruction is rigorous and engaging for all students, learning is maximized. (student shadowing, observations, student work)

Instruction in the Plainville Public Schools sufficiently fosters appropriate behavioral standards, responsible citizenship, and an appreciation of diversity. Students at both the Anna Ware Jackson School and at Beatrice H. Wood Schools are invested in the PeaceBuilders program. Students start each day by reciting the PeaceBuilders pledge which encourages them to “be the best they can be.” The PeaceBuilders pledge is explicitly taught to students by classroom teachers and enforced continuously by all staff members. Students can be rewarded with Good Citizens Awards and A+ Student Awards by administrators in the district at school-wide assemblies. The continuation of the PeaceBuilders program and emphasis on common behavioral language allows Plainville students to build developmentally appropriate skills in becoming responsible citizens.

Diversity is celebrated and encouraged in many classrooms and environments in the Plainville Public Schools. Spanish instruction begins at the kindergarten level and continues through grade 6. Students are able to build Spanish speaking skills while simultaneously learning about Spanish speaking cultures. Interactive and hands-on experiences were available for students to develop an understanding of the language and celebrate other cultures in the Spanish classroom. Sixth grade students at Beatrice H. Wood School participate in the annual World Fair activity which is celebrated by

the community of Plainville. Students spend time researching and collecting information on different countries, prepare reports and present information in an engaging and informative night with peers, parents, and community members. Students in Plainville also are provided with learning experiences in the art curriculum that celebrate diversity. For example, students created pottery pieces that incorporated the stories and symbols of Native American communities. As a result, the commitment to the awareness and celebration of diversity is evident in classroom instruction. (meetings, observation, student interviews, student work)

Technology supports instruction and assists student learning in a variety of ways. Teachers used the Ladibug document camera to demonstrate activities and/or expectations. The art teacher at Jackson school used the document camera to show the steps to make a birch tree using painter's tape and water colors. After modeling, the teacher displayed the expectations for success. A grade 6 teacher used the Inspiration software in the computer lab to chart character traits for The Great Gilly Hopkins. A student in a grade 1 classroom used a typing program to type his spelling words out during a pre-assessment. Teachers used sites such as United Streaming, Board Builder, and World Book to support instruction and student learning. A grade 4 classroom used Board Builder to research three types of rocks. The students created a digital poster that could incorporate videos and upload a PowerPoint. A before-school program is available to students in grades 4 through 6 called Students Will Advance Technology (SWAT). The students have a chance to do programming and video editing that is tied to the curriculum. Students created trailers to go along with books they read. At times, the library media specialist and technology systems administrator

create lessons to enhance instruction for some grade levels. At this time, there are few opportunities for students in whole group, small group, or independently to use tactile, highly visual, interactive devices or for teachers to use interactive technology to link lessons, curriculum, multiple intelligences, and student engagement, and set a foundation for future integration. Some teachers are more skilled at integrating technology into instruction. Consequently, they can share their ideas with colleagues and use technology on a regular basis. When teachers can discuss, explore, and practice the most effective ways to utilize the technologies available in the district, technology can better support instruction. (teacher interviews, observation, self study)

The school provides an ample amount of professional development to improve instructional practices, resulting in increased student achievement. Professional development was given on a new writing program to improve student writing. A workshop was held on how rubrics could be used to inform instruction. Coaches provide modeling of lessons for teachers to improve instruction. For example, the literacy coach modeled using a mentor text to improve student writing. The students analyzed the text for quality writing. The coach then met with the teacher for follow-up. Principals share best practices and allow for teachers to observe a colleague using that practice. For example, the principal provided coverage for a new grade 4 teacher to observe another grade 4 teacher instructing close reading. Staff is encouraged to take part in professional development opportunities for best instructional practices. Because of the availability and knowledge of the coaches, embedded professional development often takes place. Therefore, there is a positive impact on fostering best practices for instruction. (interviews, observations, self-study)

Supervision of instructional practices is focused on the improvement of student learning. The superintendent and the principals are committed to supporting continued growth not only in areas in need of improvement, but also in areas where strong practice could be made excellent. Staff commented that the principals are exceptionally visible during meetings and in classrooms. Because students needed more of a focus in writing, the literacy coach and principal supported the staff in adopting the Empowering Writers program, in grades k through 5, which resulted in growth in grade 2 assessment scores. Coaches are guiding teachers in the RtI implementation in grades 4 through 6. The literacy coach attended a grade 5 meeting to share the grade 4 RtI model and will continue to meet with grade 5 to get the team up and running. At this time, the RtI model used is not consistent from school to school or, in some cases, from grade level to grade level. It would be beneficial for the schools to document the effectiveness of each of the models being used so that a uniform RtI dynamic could be adopted. The Jackson School principal provides staff with meaningful and specific feedback after visiting classrooms to encourage best practice. The principal at the Wood School sometimes works directly with the students to provide teachers with feedback from that perspective. As a result, strategies are developed for the teacher to implement during instruction. Although school leaders take an active role in monitoring classroom instruction, inconsistencies in the effectiveness of instruction from teacher to teacher exist. Consequently, there can be no assurance that students are being given an equal opportunity for learning. When best practices are executed in every classroom, learning is optimized.

(interviews, classroom observations, self-study)

The discussion of instructional practice is a significant part of the professional culture in some grade levels. A grade 5 PLC meeting included specific data focused on open response questions. The data was used to group children and inform instruction. Leadership shares professional books with staff at various meetings. During a scheduled block with teachers, the literacy coach met to discuss differentiation at that grade level, where colleagues analyzed student work and discussed how to organize instruction for all students. Common planning time is available to teachers at Wood School due to the scheduling of specials. Additional PLT is offered at both schools for discussions of instructional practice. While this is voluntary, the participation is up from last year, involving many teachers.

Some grade levels utilize PLC time to share assessments, data, and instructional practice. However, other grade levels were more focused on grade level details including ordering supplies, discussing field trips, and sharing worksheets rather than sharing assessments, data, and best practices to improve student learning. When there is a focused agenda for PLC meetings, the discussion of instructional practice will become a more significant part of the culture of the school. (interviews, observation, self-study)

The school explicitly allocates sufficient instructional time, fiscal resources, and staffing to support effective student learning. The schedules at each of the schools provide sufficient instructional time for learning for students. However, there is a lack of dedicated time for science instruction. Consequently, teachers individually choose the topics they wish to explore within a given timeframe, resulting in a loss of fidelity in science learning. Before- and after-school activities are offered to students.

However, while these activities do expand the curriculum, they are not easily accessible to students whose parents cannot provide transportation to and from these programs, nor do they meet the needs of advanced learners who require greater challenge within the school day than current instruction provides. When instructional time is effectively appropriated, the educational program will meet the needs of all learners.

The teachers in the Plainville district are enthusiastic about teaching and student learning. They possess a positive attitude and dedication. Often, their work on behalf of students begins long before and ends long after the school day. There are many professionals working together to ensure that every child receives a quality education. The administration, special education teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language therapists, classroom teachers, specialists, paraprofessionals, English language learner (ELL) teachers, Title I teachers, reading and math tutors, reading specialists, and school psychologists work together to support student learning. Paraprofessionals are placed in inclusion classrooms at appropriate grade levels. Tutors work with small groups outside of the classroom on instructional areas identified for intervention. Literacy and math coaches support teachers through modeling and meetings. Student to teacher ratios are appropriate, as are class sizes.

Fiscal resources are adequate and wisely used to secure the programs, personnel, and materials necessary for instruction. In addition, the extremely active and supportive Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) at Plainville funds a wide variety of programs to support learning. For example, students participated in a dance residency funded by the PTO. Thus, the appropriate allocation of instructional time, staff, and

funds currently supports effective learning of Plainville students. (school committee interview, student shadowing, support staff interview, self-study)

Commendations

1. The embedded training and professional dialogue linked to current research
2. The plethora of professional development opportunities
3. The enthusiasm and dedication of the staff
4. The integrated learning experiences evident in many classrooms
5. The commitment of administrators to guide instruction to focus on student learning
6. The staffing and materials available to meet student needs
7. The active and supportive PTO, which provides a wide variety of programs to support student learning
8. The opportunities presented to students for the authentic application of skills

Recommendations

1. Ensure instruction includes consistent use of higher order thinking skills
2. Address the needs of students who require greater challenge than current instruction provides
3. Create clear, consistent agendas for PLC meetings to focus on supporting student learning
4. Ensure that best practices are used consistency in instruction
5. Create opportunities for teachers to discuss, explore, and practice the most effective ways to utilize the technologies available in the district
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of RtI models
7. Provide appropriate time for science instruction
8. Increase the use of differentiated instruction

4 Assessment

Assessment measures the progress of students toward achieving the school's stated expectations and standards. The analysis of assessment data guides the school in the review, evaluation, and revision of curriculum, and the modification and improvement of instructional practices. The school shares the results with its educational community.

1. The school utilizes an assessment system that embodies the mission statement and expectations for academic and social achievement and measures its progress in meeting those expectations.
2. An appropriate variety of classroom assessment strategies, reflective of current assessment research, is integrated with instructional practices.
3. The faculty and administration discusses and utilizes student assessment results in the review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, and the improvement of instructional strategies.
4. The identified learning standards for each curricular learning area are the basis for assessing each student's progress.
5. Students are active learners who reflect upon and assess their own learning.
6. The school uses a variety of reporting procedures to communicate the methods of student assessment and the results of individual student progress to parents.
7. The school provides professional development opportunities that foster effective assessment practice and strategies.
8. The school commits sufficient time, fiscal and material resources, technology, and staffing to support effective assessment procedures.
9. The school systematically interprets and reports its level of achievement of academic and social expectations for academic achievement to the parents and community.

Assessment

Conclusions

The Plainville Public Schools use a comprehensive assessment system that embodies the mission statement and expectations for academic and social achievement and measures progress in meeting most of those expectations. The methods and tools used to evaluate student academic growth and performance are aligned with the mission of the district in that they assess students' acquisition of essential skills and content knowledge. At this time, there is no formal or objective way of assessing students' habits of mind and social skills. This affective aspect of student growth is evaluated through the observation of student behavior, the interactions of students with peers, and the level of effort demonstrated.

To measure students' progress in meeting stated expectations for academic achievement, a wide variety of state mandated, commercially produced, and teacher-created assessments are used. Third through sixth grade students participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) during the months of March and May to assess English language arts (ELA) and math. The MCAS is used to assess student growth in science in fifth grade. School-wide, teachers use a commercially produced assessment tool from Renaissance Place referred to as STAR. This computer-based test is administered three times each year. The STAR Math and Reading assessments are used to determine student performance levels, track student achievement over time, plan remediation and guide instruction. The STAR assessments are the only ones used throughout the district. In grades K-2, only early literacy is measured using this instrument. The Plainville schools have other commercially developed assessment

tools available for classroom use including Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Monitoring Basic Skills Progress (MBSP), Prudential's Fitness Gram and Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS ELL). Assessments from programs such as FUNdations, Trophies, Sitton Spelling, Full Option Science System (FOSS), Discovery Works, and Nystrom are also used. Some common formative and summative assessments have been designated for use at each grade level. These common assessments have provided a level of fidelity when comparing data from student performance. Some teacher-constructed assessment tools vary widely in composition, quality, and use. Many grade level teams work together to create and administer assessments, analyze results, and plan for instruction based on the data gathered. However, there are scattered pockets of grade level teams within district that choose to use other assessments that are not common among classes, grade levels, or schools. The results of these assessments are factored into a student's grade. There currently is no grading policy in place. Consequently, common criteria for determining student grades are not always used. Therefore, although a comprehensive system of assessment is used, it is difficult to determine if assessment practices in the district accurately measure the schools' progress toward meeting stated expectations for academic achievement.

Plainville schools are in clear compliance with state assessment requirements. The 2012 MCAS results indicate that Plainville students scored above state averages in 78% of applicable categories. The performance of subgroups is analyzed, graphed, and shared in meetings of the faculty and administration. In 2012, 79% of high needs

students were progressing toward narrowing proficiency gaps, 4% higher than the state target.

Many vehicles are used to familiarize teachers and administrators with the implementation and use of assessments and the outcomes of assessment data. Mentoring, meetings of PLCs, test administration meetings, work with coaches and vertical end-of-year meetings between grade levels allow staff to develop common understandings of assessment. Outside trainers from STAR and the Association of Mathematics Teachers in Massachusetts have also been used. While the district has not established formal guidelines for utilizing the outcomes of the schools' assessment procedures, regular meetings devoted to discussing assessment results take place throughout the year. The superintendent reports MCAS results at the beginning of each year and teachers are encouraged to link their SMART goals to assessment data. When the Plainville schools have a fully developed, formal assessment system to monitor student achievement across the curriculum, then they will be able to accurately and authentically measure individual and school-wide progress towards stated learning objectives. (interviews, self-study, assessment data, observations)

In some classrooms, an appropriate variety of assessment strategies, reflective of current assessment research, is integrated with instructional practices. A goal of the district has been to understand the connection between assessment and instruction. This is an ongoing effort. As a result, assessment practices have become more strategic and instruction more responsive to student needs. In addition to state-mandated tests and whole-school assessments, teachers evaluate student achievement using reading and writing conferences, open response problems, student journals, teacher- or program-

constructed written tests, homework, observation, and project- and performance-based assessments. Several teams have created assessments and calibrated them to ensure fidelity and common scoring among classes at the grade level but this is not a consistent practice. For example, the fifth grade math team worked together after a recent common summative assessment focused on area and perimeter. The team used the results of their locally produced assessment to determine overall class performance and individual student strengths and weaknesses. Through this collaborative process, students in need of further remediation and/or tutoring were identified. Because the team identified specific concepts that were not mastered, teachers were able to adjust instruction, re-teach, and provide additional opportunities for students to master the objectives.

The principal of the Anna Ware Jackson School conducts data team meetings with grade level teams for 15 minutes once each week to discuss current assessments, instructional strategies, and interventions. During the February winter break, the principal collected all scored student writing prompts and reviewed them to identify patterns of strength and need. The principal and each teaching team discussed the results and identified strategies to help improve student performance. Data team meetings have been established at both schools and have the potential of becoming an instrument for effective analysis of student data. When a dedicated, established time for all teachers to collaborate on assessment practices is established, assessment will have a greater impact on student achievement. The use of rubrics to score student work and the provision of feedback to students is also reflective of current research. Rubrics have been developed and are used by many grade level teams to assess reading and math. For example, several grade teams use a common rubric that combines characteristics from the newly

introduced Empowering Writers with points from Six Traits writing to evaluate student narrative writing three times a year. The results of these assessments are used to measure student growth in writing. The writing prompts are double scored. Results are calculated, compared, recorded, and discussed within grade level teams and with the principals. Grades derived from these assessments are shared with students and their parents. This writing rubric is used district-wide. Consequently, the measure of student achievement on this assessment is valid and authentic. Other rubrics are often constructed by individual teachers or grade level teams. However, because they are not used by all, a large-scale comparison of data derived from student work scored with these rubrics is not possible. All grade level teams use assessment rubrics, but not all provide students with substantive feedback. Math assessments are administered with frequency and can therefore be used, to some extent, to monitor the progress of students between marking periods. The ongoing assessment of students in reading is less defined. Teachers monitor student reading to check fluency. Questioning, written response to reading, and comprehension quizzes are also used. Many students struggled during reading instruction, using texts that were clearly above their reading level. Although STAR reading is used periodically, teachers do not have a system in place to monitor ongoing student progress in acquiring decoding and comprehension strategies. Running records, Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs) and progress monitoring tools are not commonly used beyond second grade. When a comprehensive assessment system that defines what is to be commonly used is developed and implemented, the Plainville schools will become more aligned with current research practices and better able to inform instructional practice. (observations, interviews, rubrics)

The faculty and administration often discuss and utilize student assessment results in the review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, and the improvement of instructional strategies. When MCAS results revealed a weakness in writing, the *6+1 Traits of Writing Program* was added to the curriculum. Because the basal reading program and the Harcourt math program are not aligned with Massachusetts Common Core State Standards (MACCSS), they are quickly being eliminated from use. As a result, a more balanced literacy program is being adopted and a more student-centered, hands-on approach to math instruction is being used. A plan is in place for the staff to continue the work of revising the curriculum to ensure that it is inclusive of current standards.

A data team comprised of the administrators and grade level teachers conducts several reviews of student assessment data throughout the year in order to identify gaps or weaknesses in student learning. Through reflection, the team identified areas of the curriculum where teachers' instructional practices could be changed or strengthened to improve student learning. Consequently, English language arts (ELA) and math coaches were hired to provide systematic and ongoing professional development in areas of need. Also, a Response to Intervention (RtI) system was developed and tutors were hired to provide individual support to students in need. A greater effort toward integrating instruction across disciplines has also led to improved student learning.

The outcomes of state, school-wide standardized, and teacher-constructed student assessments are used in a holistic manner to determine a student's total individual progress. Throughout the year, teachers collect evidence from formal assessments and through observation to document each student's progress. Some common assessment

instruments have been identified and are used, in part, to calculate a student's grade in any given discipline. Usually, these instruments become part of the portfolio of student work that is collected and passed along to the teacher the student will have in the following year. The remainder of a student's grade is determined by the child's teacher and based on other assessment tools that may be unique to his/her particular class. At this time, there is no stated grading policy in place. As a result, the weight given to any specific assessment when grades are being calculated may differ from class to class, making practice inequitable. The Plainville schools have made many changes and adopted several new practices which are improving the ways in which assessment data is used to revise curriculum and improve instruction. (teacher interviews, administrative interviews, current data use documents)

In part, the identified learning standards for each curricular learning area are the basis for assessing each student's progress. The status of written curriculum documents varies across disciplines, with the ELA and math curricula being the most fully developed and up to date. Curriculum maps are being developed and refined in these areas and are used to plan instruction. These maps articulate learning standards and provide a scope and sequence that identifies what is to be taught and when it is to be taught. Written curriculum documents for other disciplines also identify standards and objectives that must be met. Teachers are currently working to create relevant, rigorous assessments to measure students' progress toward meeting the standards. As a result, the district has made significant progress in replacing program-driven assessments with more authentic measures that are aligned with identified learning standards.

There are many ways in which students and parents are made aware of the learning standards contained in the curriculum. At the beginning of new units of study, some teachers provide students with study guides which articulate the standards that will be taught. Some teachers post standards, learning expectations and essential questions in classrooms. The “I Can Statements” created by the district translate learning expectations into language that is easy for students to understand. Parents and students can become aware of the learning standards through the district website, school curriculum nights, brochures produced by the ELA and math coaches, parent/teacher conferences, and meetings of the school committee.

The report cards currently being used in the district are not standards-based and do not align to state assessment standards. Consequently, a valid measure of progress is not being reported to parents and students through this tool. While they do report on a student’s progress toward meeting many of the school’s expectations for academic achievement and social growth, grades are not regulated by a grading policy. While common formative and summative assessments are often used, they are not exclusively used when grades for students are determined. At this time, the schools do not have an established grading practice policy to provide guidelines for determining grades, nor are all grades based on articulated benchmarks. Consequently, grades may be subjective, resulting in a loss of fidelity. When identified learning standards are the basis for the measurement and reporting of student progress, reliability is increased. (teacher interviews, observations, student shadowing)

In many classrooms, students are active learners who reflect upon and assess their own learning. Small group instruction, choice in learning activities, lively student-to-

student discourse, and students actively using manipulatives when problem solving or demonstrating mathematical operations characterized classrooms with a high degree of student engagement. In these classrooms, teachers served as facilitators of learning, prompting students, providing feedback, and ensuring that transitions between group activities were efficient. These practices fostered the growth of active learners and enabled students to take responsibility for the improvement of their learning.

In some classrooms, students were not actively engaged in the assessment process. These classrooms were characterized by teacher-led whole group instruction, little student discourse, the overuse of worksheets, students seated at desks for relatively long periods of time, and fewer opportunities for collaboration. In these classrooms, direct questions soliciting short “right” or “wrong” answers dominated higher order questioning to assess student understanding. This resulted in the frequent interruption of instruction due to off-task behaviors. To ensure equal opportunity for students to be active learners, it would be beneficial for the schools to give direction and support to teachers in need of understanding best practices related to active learning. This would result in fidelity among classes.

PeaceBuilders, a program that articulates social expectations and sets high expectations for student behavior, is used throughout the district. Charts that designate levels of student adherence to desired behaviors are posted in some classrooms. With prompts from the teacher, students self-assess their behavior and use clothespins to “clip up” or “clip down” levels. Incentives are awarded to students who receive five ratings of “outstanding” during a six-day rotation. At times, in upper elementary classrooms, students rate their performance in small group activities and project-based tasks through

indicators such as individual effort, ability to cooperate, and extent of their contribution to the outcome using rubrics and checklists.

In math journals, students explain the processes used to solve problems and write reflections about their understanding of the concept being illustrated. In lower elementary classrooms, checklists that list criteria for what must be included when writing “super sentences” are taped to desks, enabling students to assess the quality and completion of their work. Math rubrics and anchor charts were displayed in classrooms with actual student work hung under the rating of each indicator 1, 2, 3, or 4 to serve as exemplars for that rating. This practice provides students with a clear understanding of how they can improve their work and consequently should result in improved products. Writing prompts are used in grades 1 through 6 as formative assessments three times each year. Teachers score the prompts using rubrics. Afterwards, during conferences with teachers, students are asked to reflect upon their performance and set goals for improvement. Often, authentic student work and anchor sets are presented as exemplars to enable students to understand expectations for the products they will produce. However, the practice of student self-assessment and reflection on learning within and among grade levels is inconsistent. When student self-assessment and the use of authentic exemplars are embedded into practice, students will be able to set clear and specific goals, enabling their learning to progress. (classroom observations, teacher interviews, student work samples, student interviews)

The schools use a limited variety of reporting procedures to communicate the methods of student assessment and the results of individual student progress to parents. The integrated preschool uses a variety of reporting procedures to communicate the

methods of student assessment and the results of individual student progress to parents. These methods include formal reports and progress notes as well as informal conversations and conferences. Progress is reported four times per year on students with Individual Education Programs in addition to the bi-annual teacher created report cards displaying summative assessment results. Formal standardized testing measures include The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, 4th Edition (DIAL-4) and The Battelle Developmental Inventory, 2nd Edition (BDI-2). The DIAL-4 is utilized as a tool for screening purposes and the BDI-2 is used as an assessment tool for those students in the referral process for special education services.

Although the primary instruments used in assessing student performance in English language arts and math in grades K-6 are articulated in the student handbook, some parents are unsure of the methods used to assess student progress. Some parents expressed the desire to learn more about assessment methods. In practice, teachers use various methods including, but not limited to, written test, quizzes, performance assessments, project-based assessments, journal responses, conferencing, and classroom observation. Discussions among teachers within each grade level lead to a determination of how the results of these methods of assessment will be used to determine the grades that are reported to parents.

The degree to which assessment results are shared with students varies from class to class and grade to grade. Some teachers provide specific, growth-producing feedback to students in order to inform them of what they need to do differently and how they can move forward toward meeting the expected outcome. In other classrooms, the feedback provided is not timely nor is it specific enough to guide students. Methods of reporting

assessment results to students, such as conferencing, responding in journals, guiding the student as his/her work is compared to an exemplar, or helping the student to interpret test scores are used inconsistently. Therefore, some students are not fully aware of their status toward reaching benchmarks. When common guidelines on providing assessment results to students are established, students will better understand their progress toward individualized and benchmark goals.

Parent-teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring. Student work, such as writing prompts and math journals, common formative assessments, and STAR Math and Reading test results are shared with parents during these conferences, and work habits and the student's progress toward meeting social expectations are discussed. Parents are informed of students needing support or additional practice through phone calls, e-mails, or through individualized homework that is sent home with their student. However, there are limited means by which parents can regularly access information about the interim progress made by their child. Students receiving special education services are formally re-evaluated once every three years. The results are reported to parents and discussed with them at annual Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings. These students also receive detailed progress reports four times each year. Report cards and interim progress reports are sent home throughout the year.

Each year, the superintendent and principals report the whole school Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) testing to the school committee. Results of the schools, as a whole, are also posted on the district website and displayed in the superintendent's office for the community to view. The results of Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English

Language Learners (ACCESS) testing are sent to the parents of English language learners and reported to the school committee by the superintendent. The results of special education testing are shared with the student's parents or sent home with the student for the parents' review. Through these methods, the parents, school committee and community-at-large are made aware of school test results. (report cards, teacher interviews, superintendent interview)

The schools provide multiple professional development opportunities that foster effective assessment practice and strategies. The Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Schools are the only two schools in the district. In the past, there was little effort made to collaborate among staff or to use common programs and assessments to enhance continuity. With the changes to school leadership that have occurred over the past 2.5 years, this paradigm has shifted. As a result, many professional development initiatives are shared between the two schools, enabling the methods and tools for assessment to become more aligned.

The district has established a professional development team consisting of the superintendent, the principals, the math and English language arts coaches, the technology systems director, the director of special services and a second grade teacher who is the teacher mentor coordinator. This team meets monthly, or more often if necessary, to review assessment data and school goals in order to select professional development activities that will enhance student learning. A plan for the year is developed and a calendar of professional development activities is published. The coaches convey professional development needs that have been expressed by the teachers for the team's consideration. This year, the need for training in the development and use

of constructive feedback has been identified. The schools intend to provide this training during the next school year. Teachers attending workshops, conferences, or courses outside of the district are required write a brief report that synthesizes content covered, to share their new learning with colleagues, and to incorporate new learning into practice. This fosters shared learning experiences for teachers.

Throughout the school year, there are both half days and full days dedicated to professional development practices that focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In addition to district initiatives, each school identifies areas in which teachers could benefit from professional development. Most of the time, this support and training can be provided by in-district personnel, such as the coaches or the teacher of ELL students. For example, the ELL teacher provided training to teachers who have inclusion classrooms. In recent years, Plainville teachers have had training in the administration and analysis of STAR Math and Reading assessments, Exam View, and in how to interpret and use the results of Accelerated Reader testing. In the summer of 2013, consultants were brought in to support the work of the professional learning communities (PLCs). Every grade level team from the Beatrice H. Wood School had representatives attending this two-day training. In the summer of 2014, the Anna Ware Jackson School team will be trained. A team of teachers from various grade levels throughout the district attended a workshop titled “Making Data and Classroom Assessments Work for You.” Training included the establishment of a common definition of data and how to identify the formative and summative assessments. How to select, develop and use quality classroom assessments was shared with colleagues. All classroom teachers, special educators, and specialists received training to understand the criteria for creating a formative assessment. Training

included identification of learning progressions for each teacher's specific subject area and understanding the role progressions play in developing useful formative assessments. As a result, common formative assessments were developed that are now being used to inform instruction. The use of these assessments and ongoing dialogue about how to use assessment data is becoming common practice. As a result, this fosters effective assessment practice and strategies which will result in improved student learning. (teacher interviews, Standard committee meeting, classroom observation, student shadowing)

For the most part, the school commits ample time, fiscal and material resources, technology, and staffing to support effective assessment procedures. The math and ELA coaches guide and support teachers as they implement effective assessment practice. These coaches often model best practices in assessment for teachers in classrooms and follow-up with co-teaching and coaching as the teacher acquires the skills necessary to operate independently. Reading specialists and tutors work with teachers to effectively administer and analyze reading assessments such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), STAR reading, STAR math, and the modified MCAS. Paraprofessionals administer the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS-r) to Applied Behavior Assessment (ABA) students. The ELL teacher administers state-mandated tests for English language learners. The ELL teacher helps teachers differentiate assessments to meet the needs of these students. The staff is sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to support effective assessment practices.

Curriculum development and revision in math and English language arts led to the creation of curriculum maps that articulate when assessments should be administered and what standards are to be tested. These are used as a valuable resource for teachers in lesson planning. Common formative assessments in math and English language arts are used at all grade levels. Some teachers use teacher-made assessments and tests from the Harcourt math series to assess student progress. Some grade levels have been very successful in developing assessment instruments that are differentiated. For example, the sixth grade team developed differentiated math assessments to measure student understanding of area and perimeter. Students worked in small groups, then traded their work so that it could be scored by their peers. Several teachers at AWJ use the website *Teachers Pay Teachers* to access worksheets that are used for student practice and assessment. In some classrooms, classroom instructional time is replaced by the overuse of this resource. Classroom computers are used to complete Accelerated Reader assessments.

The math and English language arts coaches, as well as the principals, meet with teachers to guide them in creating assessments that are aligned with stated standards. The principals and coaches may use one monthly grade level meeting to focus on the discussion of student work for assessment purposes. The principal of Anna Ware Jackson School has a weekly data team meeting with each grade level team to share and analyze student assessment results and plan strategies for student growth. During PLC meetings, assessment may be addressed. Common planning time is not provided for grade level teams at the Jackson school. Although some of the scheduled district professional development time has been dedicated to the development of sound

assessment practices, the schools have much work left to do to develop and complete a comprehensive assessment system for all disciplines. When this system is in place, and both time and fiscal resources are dedicated to this end, assessment practices and procedures will be fully supported. (professional development calendar, principal interviews, teacher interviews)

The schools systematically interpret and report their level of achievement of academic and social expectations to the parents and community. The administration works at both the building and district level to interpret the schools' success in the attainment of the expectations for academic achievement. Discussions and evaluations of aggregate data occur with central office administration, the school committee, and the teachers. Academic achievements are reported to both staff and parents throughout the year. The superintendent distributes a newsletter on a quarterly basis which reports standardized test scores and other indicators. This information is also published on the district website. The success of academic programs and standardized testing scores are formally presented at staff meetings, parent information nights, and at school committee meetings. Other assessments, including individual student assessments are reported through report cards, weekly grade level meetings, and parent teacher conferences. State assessments, such as MCAS results, are interpreted during staff meetings in both the fall and the spring and reported by the superintendent at school committee meetings.

Monthly assemblies are held to recognize student achievement and effort. "A+Attitude" is awarded to students in grades 1 through 6 by the superintendent to recognize students consistently receiving an exemplary rating in effort and making growth in academic achievement. Although the district uses the tenets of PeaceBuilders

to encourage positive behaviors, behavioral outcomes are not measurable. When expectations for achievement are clear and measurable, fidelity in assessment data will be realized and will assist students in becoming responsible, caring members of their community. (superintendent interview, self-study, student interviews)

Commendations

1. The implementation of data meetings to facilitate the use of data to drive instruction and revise curriculum
2. The creation of a selected analytic rubric for scoring writing prompts
3. The movement toward establishing a more balanced literacy program
4. The new practices implemented to improve instruction and revise curriculum
5. The embedded practice of using authentic exemplars in many classrooms
6. The practice of sharing knowledge gained from professional development activities
7. The creation and utilization of curriculum maps
8. The increased frequency of collaboration between schools in the district

Recommendations

1. Develop a formal, comprehensive assessment system for all disciplines
2. Establish a protocol for all professional staff in the use of assessment
3. Implement an assessment system to monitor progress
4. Establish a grading policy and use articulated benchmarks derived from learning standards to determine student grades
5. Give direction and support to teachers in understanding and implementing best practices for active learning and the provision of feedback to students
6. Create measurable criteria for assessing social expectations

Elementary School Support Standards

Leadership and Organization
School Resources for Learning
Community Resources for Learning

5 Leadership and Organization

Leadership is the collaborative responsibility of administration, faculty, and support staff to achieve the mission and expectations of the school. The manner in which a school organizes itself, makes decisions, and treats its members affects the atmosphere in which teaching and learning take place. The school climate fosters mutual respect, as well as opportunities for reflection and growth among students and staff, and welcomes the meaningful involvement of parents and community members.

1. The principal provides leadership, facilitates the development and maintenance of a vision, and establishes a focus on student learning and growth.
2. The school's administration, faculty, and support staff are sufficient in number, appropriately qualified and share the collegial responsibility for implementing the mission and expectations of the school and effectively meeting the needs of the students.
3. There is a program of professional development, both district-wide and building-based, which is collaboratively planned, supports the school's mission and expectations and enables the faculty to strive to improve teaching and learning.
4. The school has a planned orientation program for new administrators, faculty, and support staff.
5. The school climate is positive, respectful, safe and orderly and encourages pride, growth, renewal, and constructive risk-taking among students and staff.
6. There is evidence of mutual respect, common purpose, and support among all members of the school community.
7. The school regularly acknowledges, celebrates and displays the work, contributions, and achievements of students and school personnel.
8. The school establishes developmentally appropriate rules, expectations, and consequences for student behavior and school attendance, which are clearly articulated to the entire school community.
9. The school encourages and supports a process of clear, consistent, and meaningful communication within the building, within the district and throughout the community.
10. The school encourages ongoing and effective home-school communication and provides avenues to address parents' questions and concerns.
11. The school welcomes parents and involves them in meaningful and effective activities to support the academic achievement and the emotional and social growth of their children.

12. The school has a clearly defined process for the evaluation and supervision of faculty, staff, and administration which is utilized for continual improvement of the quality of the school programs.
13. The school has clearly defined crisis/emergency response plans, and all occupants of the building are familiar with these procedures.

Leadership and Organization

Conclusions

The principals provide leadership, facilitate the development and maintenance of a vision, and establish a focus on student learning and growth. The superintendent and principals of the Plainville schools are forward thinking, supportive leaders who are working together to facilitate the development and maintenance of an aligned vision and establish a focus on student learning and growth. They set a positive tone of mutual respect and collaborative decision-making that allows the district to accomplish the mission of the schools. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) self-study was completed under their joint supervision. Though somewhat different in words and emphasis, the schools' mission statements each reflect the core elements of the district mission statement, "To promote lifelong learning throughout the community and prepare students to become responsible, contributing members of a changing society by providing a challenging, rigorous educational program." Common elements include an emphasis on learning and achievement and fostering a sense of responsibility for the larger society. The principals guide the schools to enable students to embrace these tenets. At the Wood School, staff and other collaborative groups connected with the school participated in a value survey in which they were asked to express five ideas about learning. Common words and phrases that reflect the values of these groups were published in apple-shaped posters that hang in the main office as a reminder that everyone has a voice in the vision of the school. At the Jackson School, positive phrases about learning, effort, behavior, and teamwork are displayed throughout the school, accompanied by the writings and drawings of the students, which demonstrate

the school's commitment to establishing a vision that is inclusive of the beliefs of the school community. Both principals recognize the importance of maintaining community support for the work of the schools. Through newsletters, online notices, phone calls home, invitations to assemblies and monthly coffee hours, the principals have established strong lines of communication. Consequently, through these means, the principals have facilitated the creation of a collective vision of excellence.

To enable the schools to focus on student learning and growth, the principals take the responsibility for teacher supervision and curriculum development and coordination. The principals have earned the respect of the staff and quickly established themselves as the educational leaders of their schools. They encourage meaningful professional dialogue and are attentive listeners, open to the ideas of others. The principals are full participants in the activities of the district, ensuring that what is being offered to students is rigorous, authentic, and worthy of the time spent. Under the leadership of the principals, professional learning communities (PLCs) have become more purposeful with the expectation being set for the analysis of student assessment data and the development of plans to better address student needs. As a result, the leadership of the principals puts the focus in Plainville schools on student learning and growth.

It is the responsibility of the principals to provide leadership that sustains a culture driven by the schools' mission and expectations and focused on meaningful teaching and learning. Each of the principals has held their position for less than two years. In this short period of time, the principals have initiated several changes that are increasing the emphasis on meaningful teaching and learning. The principals are working with the superintendent to change the focus of the district from product to

process by leading the development of common assessments, curriculum revision to ensure rigorous programming, and increased professional development to improve standards-based instruction. Although this work is well underway, there is still much to be done to address inequities in the quality of curriculum documents and assessments being used, as well as significant differences in the effectiveness of instruction from teacher-to-teacher. Teaching and learning will be more meaningful when curriculum work is completed and best practices are implemented in all classrooms.

The principals are very supportive of school change and teacher growth. Under the leadership of the principals, faculty meetings now include a dedicated time for professional development and teachers attending outside workshops are required to share some of what they have learned with colleagues. The principals have secured resources aligned with current research such as Teach Like a Champion, The Daily 5, and Rigor Made Easy. The Walk-to-Learn program, although not frequently used, allows teachers to observe practices being used by colleagues. The principals encourage teachers to pilot new programs and share successes with colleagues. The targeted use of the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics coaches to support teachers as they grow and change will have a positive effect on instruction. Through these means, positive change is taking place.

To foster a culture that meets the needs of each child, the principals lead Building Educational Student Support Teams (BESST) team meetings and serve as section 504 coordinators to develop learning accommodations that allow students to better access the curriculum. At BESST meetings, the progress of individual students is discussed, assessment evidence examined, teaching strategies to strengthen instruction are

determined and a plan is put into place to monitor the continued growth of that student. Principals schedule time for tutoring and RtI for students. Both principals are involved in the direct instruction of students that they mentor. The principals continuously dialogue with classroom teachers and specialists to understand the challenges faced by their mentees and plan and execute support that is responsive to the needs of their students. The principals' direct involvement in student intervention demonstrates a strong commitment to the development of every child.

To foster a culture committed to empowering staff through communication and collaboration, the principals have an open-door policy which provides for the free flow of dialogue. The principals conduct on-going short observations with timely feedback to enhance teaching that may include reference to research based practices or articles. They conduct staff meetings that address issues in teaching and learning, inform of upcoming events, and provide a forum for teachers to contribute and ask questions. The principal of the Jackson School sends out a memo at the start of each week that includes an inspirational quote, recognition of staff achievements, and a list of important dates and times of upcoming events. The responsibility for setting the agenda for PLC meetings and leading the discussions at the meeting is shared on a rotating basis by members of each PLC, thus empowering all members to have an equal voice. Both principals review notes taken at PLC meetings and respond to the questions and comments made.

The principals communicate consistently with parents, through informative newsletters, blogs about student learning, and e-mails. To promote the connection between the schools and greater community, parents, guardians, and extended members of the students' families may participate in family movie nights, dances, student

recognition assemblies, Field Day, Parent Recognition Day, student project presentations, and other school events. The principals frequently communicate with town officials, local newspapers, veteran's groups, and the local senior center. They attend meetings of the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and the school council. In these and other ways, the principals help the staff, parents, and community remain connected with the school. (teacher interviews, classroom visits, school leadership interviews)

By design, the school's administration, faculty, and support staff are sufficient in number, appropriately qualified, and share the collegial responsibility for implementing the mission and expectations of the school and meeting the needs of the students. The administration and staff recognize that teamwork and a mutual commitment to all students is necessary to implement the mission of the district and effectively meet the needs of students. Although students are assigned to specific classrooms, everyone accepts joint responsibility for the growth of every student in order to ensure collective success. The ratio of students to teachers in the district has averaged less than 16 to 1 over the past three years. This allows for greater attention to students with varying learning styles and abilities. For example, the class size of the preschool program is sufficient to allow for teachers and support staff to provide attention to students' individual needs. It is evident that preschool students were provided with the opportunity for activity choice and social skills building with an appropriate level of adult support and prompting. Students were able to move freely between choice activities and were often guided by adults to strengthen social skills with peers and language skills with purposeful and engaging learning activities. Currently, 100% of teachers are licensed in their teaching assignment and appropriately qualified. The superintendent introduced the role

of teacher leader to the district. The Jackson and Wood Schools each have two grade level teachers who are accorded grade level teacher leader status. They meet with faculty by grade level once every six-day cycle to disseminate tasks and information from the administration in order to establish a better connection between administrative expectations and the faculty. The ELA and math coaches provide instructional leadership for teachers but they do not serve in an evaluative role.

The faculty is given many opportunities to volunteer to serve in the leadership of committees throughout the district. Some ongoing committees are the Professional Development Committee, Retention Committee, BESST team, Sunshine Committee, Technology Committee, and the school council. Other opportunities for leadership exist for teachers who become mentors or who wish to conduct before or after school enrichment programs. Because service on committees is usually voluntary, there are relatively few people who can devote the time and energy to committee membership. Consequently, the work is not equally shared among all members of the staff. When the entire staff of a school devotes an equal investment in the programs and operation of a school, the successes realized and challenges faced will be truly shared and the mission of the schools can be accomplished. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, team meetings, self-study)

There is an adequate program of professional development, both district-wide and building-based which is deliberately and collaboratively planned, supports the school's mission and expectations, and enables the faculty to strive to improve teaching and learning. The district develops an annual Professional Learn Plan (PLP) that is based on a needs assessment completed annually by a professional development team made up of

school leaders, the directors of special education and technology, coordinators and math and ELA coaches. The plan serves as a guide by which teachers develop specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART) goals for the following year. In recent years, a focus has been divided among the introduction of the new teacher evaluation system, preparing the NEASC self-study, curriculum mapping, and supporting teachers work in PLCs. This year, the plan includes continued work on aligning curriculum with the Massachusetts Common Core State Standards and creating curriculum maps and units of study. The near completion of the ELA and math curricula and the readiness of the schools for the onsite visit of the NEASC are evidence that the professional development plan has been effective.

The district has developed a culture of embedded professional development executed by in-house staff. Coaches in mathematics and ELA work directly with teachers to develop and execute formative assessments and join grade level meetings as requested to discuss strategies for lesson implementation. The coaches lead committees charged with curriculum mapping and alignment and work with teachers individually or in small groups to help them reach their SMART goals. The reading specialists have provided training to teachers for the implementation of the Wilson FUNdations program and in how to administer and evaluate reading assessments such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Technology specialists have provided help to teachers designing web pages and using the STAR computer programs. A train-the-trainer model is being used to enable principals, coaches, and teachers to share the knowledge gained from taking courses or attending workshops with colleagues. This is both an empowering model and an effective use of existing resources in the school district. When teachers

feel supported by administrators and empowered to lead, their investment in the school community is enhanced. Attendance at summer and before or after school workshops is optional. Therefore, not all teachers receive equal training. In addition, many different initiatives have been undertaken in a relatively short period of time. Consequently, the appropriation of time and effort necessary to complete initiatives has been splintered, leaving several undertakings only partially finished. When professional development initiatives are prioritized and training that will have the greatest impact on student learning is conducted during mandatory professional development sessions, both teachers and students benefit.

The professional development program is responsive to specific building needs as well. ELA and math coaches meet with teams during grade level meetings or as requested by individuals to assist in planning instruction and assessment that is responsive to student needs and aligned with curricular objectives. Outside providers have also been invited to the schools to provide information responsive to building needs. For example, the Massachusetts State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provided perspective on the new teacher evaluation system and Renaissance trainers were brought in to familiarize teachers with the administration and interpretation of STAR programs. The English as a second language (ESL) teacher has worked with teachers individually and in small groups to address building concerns about meeting the needs of English language learners (ELLs). The principals attend team meetings on a regular basis to determine building needs. The leadership team of the district meets monthly to discuss all aspects of teaching and learning at the schools and as common patterns related to the need for professional development are revealed, plans are put into place to address those

needs on the district level. For example, the lack of a common instrument for measuring student achievement in ELA and math led to the implementation of STAR assessments. Consequently, needs unique to a school or general throughout the district are addressed.

Professional development is assessed in-house through an evaluation form. Feedback received from participants is reviewed so that subsequent offerings can be improved upon. Measurement of the impact of professional development offerings on teaching and learning occurs in a number of ways. In concert with current research, professional development is deemed most effective when it is ongoing, allows for sufficient follow-up training, and is embedded into the everyday operation of teaching and learning. In shifting from an outside expert model of delivery to one that continually taps in-district resources, the schools have enabled faculty to receive constant support for new initiatives, collaborate and reflect with colleagues, and plan jointly. Consequently, the principals are able to better identify teachers in need of greater support and those who are ready to model their competency for others. Ultimately, the level of expertise in teaching will be enhanced and learning will be positively impacted. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, self-study, curriculum coordinator interviews, school leadership interviews, evidence binders)

In part, the schools have planned orientation programs for new administrators, faculty, and support staff that are followed by mechanisms designed to support the newly acquired roles. The school district's mission and expectations are discussed on orientation day and copies of the mission statement provided to all new teachers. Members of the administrative team make connections between the district's mission and the district learning plans as well as the work of the PLCs. These methods are effective

in helping new hires understand the mission of the schools. When there is a change in superintendent, the new superintendent is paired with a nearby superintendent for mentoring. The school committee also guides the new superintendent by providing information about the schools and copies of district policies. New principals are given mentors through the organization Teachers21 and are advised on a continual basis by the superintendent. Because the district consists of two schools that are located beside each other, the superintendent's office is housed in the Jackson school, giving ready access to the principals. At the beginning of each school year, an orientation for new faculty is held. It primarily covers the practical operation of the school and is not designed to be supportive of professional development initiatives. New hires are given the school handbook. There is little orientation for staff that is hired after the start of the school year. They are merely introduced to administrators and colleagues, given a tour of the school and provided with a mentor. The district has a mentoring coordinator and provides a state-mandated mentoring program for new faculty. This program is in place for the first three years of each teacher's tenure in Plainville. In the initial year, 25 hours of mentoring time is required. This takes the form of monthly meetings of mentors and mentees, and may include co-teaching, planning, and observation opportunities. The coordinator plans additional activities and conducts a yearly survey of mentors and mentees to determine what would be the most effective training and efficient use of time for the following year. ELA and math coaches also devote time to teachers new to the district through conferencing, planning, and modeling lessons. In grades 4 through 6, additional planning time is provided for discussing RtI strategies, unit development, and the creation of common assessments. The work of the PLCs provides additional time for

new teachers to learn about curriculum implementation. Support staff is required to attend two in-service days each year. While they are not mentored through a formal process, they are supervised by the principals and provided with informal, ongoing support from classroom teachers. With the exception of tutors, no plan for formal orientation of support staff is in place. When comprehensive orientation and support programs are effectively implemented, new staff becomes fully engaged in the schools to learn the working of the school and the program of instruction. (teacher interviews, curriculum coordinators interviews, school leadership interviews, evidence binders)

The Plainville schools' climate is overwhelmingly positive, respectful, safe, and orderly and encourages pride, growth, renewal, and constructive risk-taking among students and staff. A positive and respectful school climate is evidenced through the consistent display of student work and positive messages that promote student effort and responsibility that decorate classrooms and halls. Posters that express the tenets of the PeaceBuilders program are hung throughout the schools to identify the buildings as inclusive and peaceful learning environments. Teachers serve as role models in their respectful treatment of colleagues and students. The administrators and teachers address students by name and greet each collegially in passing throughout the day. The schools have established a culture that acknowledges the worth of individuals. Students' birthdays and praise notes that congratulate individuals on a job well done are read over the public address system. Student achievement in academics, work habits, sportsmanship and effort are recognized through the A+ Attitude program, RAH RAH (Read at Home, Read at Home) awards, Math Star recognition, and field day awards. The Plainville Education Association (PEA) recognizes one teacher and one service

provider each year for dedication to the school community. The PEA also acknowledges one outstanding sixth grader each year at student graduation. To personalize the acknowledgment of individual achievement and contribution, the superintendent and principals write and send notes of thanks and congratulations to members of the staff. Furthermore, the agendas of the school committee meetings contain a commendations section to recognize students and staff.

There is a sense of organization and direction in the daily routine of the school, beginning with an orderly and safe bus drop-off and entry into the schools' procedures. Teachers and administrators are positioned throughout the school to greet students and guide them safely to classrooms. Class activity schedules and daily agendas are often posted to set daily routines. A well-formulated crisis plan is in place for the district as are emergency protocols and drills. A security system includes buzzer and badge access to the buildings and cameras that enable the constant surveillance of inside and outside areas are mounted in choice locations and monitored by office staff. At the Wood School, the D.A.R.E. program is active. All students participated in an anti-bullying assembly titled "The Power of One" and through the effort of the school psychologists, strategies to deal with conflict resolution and bullying are actively discussed in classrooms.

The safe, nurturing environment that exists assures students and teachers that they will be supported rather than judged when learning. This encourages positive risk-taking. In the more student-centered classrooms, students work cooperatively, exchange lively discourse, engage in peer and self-assessment, and have choice in the activities in which they are engaged. This empowers students to be active learners who take responsibility

for their learning. In classrooms where the majority of instruction is teacher-directed, students may have less opportunity to develop those skills. When classroom instruction conforms to best practices, all students will have an equal chance to become competent advocates for their growth and learning and the mission of the district will be realized.

The Plainville school district sets high expectations and is a true center for learning and growth for both students and teachers. The staff are provided with multiple opportunities to grow through professional development activities and to be positive risk-takers through the piloting of new initiatives. As a Massachusetts “Race to the Top” school district, the schools are responsible for providing effective programs that will help all students close the achievement gap. A variety of before- and after-school enrichment club activities are offered and designed to broaden student knowledge and efficacy through activities that are not part of the regular curriculum. Other events to promote student learning include a geography bee, science day, world and state fairs, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities, and authors in residence studies. School pride is celebrated during themed spirit days and on pride days when district logo t-shirts and school colors are worn and the music of the school band, art work, and writing of students is showcased. Because the schools provide an organized, safe, and respectful environment in which to learn, student and staff growth and renewal is fostered. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing)

There is ample evidence of mutual respect, common purpose, and shared support among all members of the school community. The staff are well-supported by the administration and report that the superintendent and principals welcome and value input in decision-making. Forums such as the school council and open meetings of the school

committee and PTO allow all voices to be heard as the community works toward common goals. The morning recitation of the PeaceBuilders pledge sets a tone of mutual respect, personal responsibility, and recognition of the uniqueness of others. The entire district participates in the anti-bullying campaign and demonstrates support for students participating in the Special Olympics. Volunteers from the special education Parent Advisory Council (PAC) bring the I-Care program to the schools, sharing stories with students to promote disability awareness and tolerance. Students, staff, parents and members of the community work together on clothing and food drives. Considerable funds have been raised for Pennies for Patients which supports the work of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The schools have made a deliberate effort to acquire texts that promote respect for individual and cultural diversity. Lessons presented by the ELL and Spanish teachers, the world fair project, and a program presenting Native American perspectives are examples of ways students gain an understanding of diversity. Through participation in these programs, the school community demonstrates a commitment to common purpose.

Parents are active in the school and supportive of school activities. The contributions of time and effort demonstrate a commitment to working for a common purpose to help the schools reach their goals. Events such as the geography bee, Destination Imagination, Nature's Classroom and Walk to School Day are made possible because of the work of parents and community volunteers. The before- and after-school enrichment clubs are cooperatively run by staff, parents, and community members. Students who need emotional or academic support from a positive adult role model are supported through the student mentoring program executed through the joint efforts of

adult volunteers from all parts of the school community. A very active PTO funds projects and programs that greatly enhance educational initiatives. The PTO recently contributed \$10,000 to fund materials for the study of simple machines and robotics, learning carpets for math instruction, and audio equipment for the Jackson stage.

The parents of Plainville school students clearly demonstrate trust and conviction that the schools can meet or have met the learning needs of their children. In addition to volunteering in many capacities to support educational programs, parents regularly attend parent-teacher conferences and Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings. In 2011, a PAC survey and a district parent survey were conducted. Overall, 87.4% of responding parents felt that the schools sought their input and facilitated their involvement. A small sampling was returned by the parents of students with special needs. However, a few indications that these parents were unsure about progress made by their child in social growth areas led to a plan to revise the social skills curriculum. Some parents voiced concern about the quality of instruction being delivered at some grade levels emphasizing that there are inconsistencies in classroom instruction. However, overall, the level of mutual respect and shared support throughout the district is very high, enabling everyone to work together for a common purpose. Consequently, the collective effort of the school community supports and enhances student learning. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing, student interviews, school leadership interviews, evidence binders)

The Plainville Schools appropriately acknowledge, celebrate and displays work, contributions, and achievements of students and school personnel. Student recognition ceremonies honor children for their academic achievement, kindness and outreach to

others. Students are recognized as individuals for birthdays, students of the month, and A+ Attitude Program awards. During a literacy night at the Jackson school, student writing and related art work is displayed. The sixth grade World Fair and the fourth grade State Fair are the culminating events used to celebrate the extensive research and writing students completed for this interdisciplinary project. A wide variety of eclectic student work is prominently displayed throughout the schools. The personal and professional achievements of teachers are actively celebrated by their colleagues. The PTO also celebrates the contributions of all teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week with a special luncheon, treats, and the opportunity to win raffle items. The superintendent and principals write personal notes to members of the staff to acknowledge achievement and offer thanks for contributions made to the school community. Through these means, students and teachers gain recognition for their efforts. As a result, esteem and self-worth are raised and the school climate is improved. (classroom visits, self-study, student shadowing, teachers)

By design, the schools establish developmentally appropriate rules, expectations, and consequences for student behavior and school attendance, which are clearly articulated to the entire school community. Rules for student behavior are clear, developmentally appropriate, understandable, and articulated through the student-parent handbook which was compiled by the school council. It is reviewed annually. Any changes made to the handbook must be approved by the superintendent and school committee. For example, when a change was made to the dress code, discussions by the faculty, parents, and school council took place before seeking the approval of the superintendent. The handbook is written in English but parents may request a translation

into their native language. The Jackson school posts behavioral expectations on the walls in centrally located areas and in classrooms. The PeaceBuilders principles are also displayed in simple language. In some classrooms, teachers and students worked together to construct class constitutions. This collaborative exercise increased student investment in the rules created.

All staff members have a responsibility to maintain a level of safety throughout the school and monitor student behaviors at any given time, inside or outside of classrooms. Behavior protocols have been established and posted in the handbook. If an infraction occurs, the steps that must be followed are clearly articulated. Several staff members are Crisis Prevention Institute trained in the use of non-violent crisis prevention. If necessary, behavioral support plans are developed for students. Staff who have contact with that student are apprised of the plan. The rules and consequences for student behavior are very effective. Students in the buildings displayed self-control, kindness, and courtesy in dealing with adults and peers. Students were able to cite rules and expectations from their classrooms and unanimously reported they felt safe in buildings and buses. In establishing appropriate rules and consequences for student behavior and accepting a shared responsibility for enforcement, the district has created a safe, nurturing environment in which to learn that is aligned with the mission of the schools. (teacher interviews, classroom visits, student shadowing, student interviews, school leadership interviews, evidence binders)

The Plainville Schools regularly encourage and support a process of clear, consistent, and meaningful communication within the building, within the district and throughout the community. This occurs in a number of ways. Written communication

occurs electronically through email, orally through public address (PA) announcements, in writing through weekly agendas, and monthly through calendars that announce dates for events and assemblies. Tuesday morning meeting notes from PLCs are sent to the principals who provide quick responses to questions raised. These are effective means of communication within the schools. School web pages allow teachers to communicate with administrators and are used to inform staff of professional development opportunities. All administrators are highly visible in the schools so simple verbal communication is often the most expeditious kind.

To inform the community about the schools, the district website contains minutes of school committee and school council meetings, school performance data, and school budget information. Local newspapers are invited to significant events. Connect Ed technology is used to notify those in the community with computer access of closings and other significant information. The school council and PTO have Facebook pages. Though not exhaustive in scope, these communication links support meaningful communication within the school and throughout the district and community. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, self-study, school leadership interviews, evidence binders)

The school actively encourages ongoing and effective home-school communication and provides avenues to address parents' questions and concerns. This is accomplished through parent-teacher conferences, open house nights, parent visitation days, and informational meetings on selected topics. The principals are visible and approachable and make it clear to parents that they are always available to hear concerns. To demonstrate mutual support for students and parents, the superintendent and

principals host coffee hours where parents can come to learn about the activities of the schools and share ideas and concerns in a comfortable, informal setting. Participation in PTO and PAC meetings gives parents and staff extended opportunities to communicate. Teachers often use e-mail and phone calls to communicate with parents or post information on teacher web pages. Not all teachers are as good about maintaining communications with parents as others. When a protocol is developed for parent communication that ensures consistency of timely, high quality, two-way parent-teacher messaging, teachers, parents, and students will benefit. Periodically, notices are sent home with students from the nurse, superintendent, principals, ELA and math coaches, or specialists. Weekly notices are sent from central office.

The parents of students attending before- or after-school programs often have the opportunity to speak directly with teachers. An after school homework assistance program connects teachers and parents in the oversight of homework. When special events are held at the school, families of students are invited to attend. Parents who wish to become more involved in the work of the school are encouraged to become school volunteers. Parents feel welcome at the school and are confident that their voices are heard. As a result, the Plainville schools have established an effective means of home-school communication. (teacher interviews, self-study, parent interviews, school leadership interviews, evidence binders)

The schools welcome parents and frequently involve them in meaningful and effective activities to support the academic achievement and the emotional and social growth of their children. The schools induction procedures for welcoming new students vary by grade level. They are designed to help students and parents feel comfortable

about the change that will take place. The orientation processes are also used to build the students' excitement and anticipation about the coming school year. Kindergarten students and parents attend orientation in May, meet the teachers and tour classrooms. In June, they return for screening. The Jump Start to Kindergarten is offered to all students whose parents believe they could benefit from a gradual, two-week introduction to kindergarten activities. In grades 1 through 6, students moving into the district before the start of school can tour the building and meet the principal prior to the first day of school. Students who begin school after opening day are met by the teacher on the date of entry and the teacher is responsible for making the student feel prepared and welcome. For some students with special needs, the orientation program can be longer, even over several months as determined by teachers and parents. Step-up day is a day designed for students within the system who are moving up to the next grade. Prior to the close of the current school year, students receive new teacher assignments, visit the classroom that they will attend and meet classmates. Third grade students moving to the Wood School are invited to attend programs throughout the year and are provided with a building tour on step-up day. Students moving from sixth to seventh grade visit the King Phillip Middle School to meet the principal and talk with past graduates of Plainville schools. The processes in place are effective in both reducing the student anxiety that may come with change and in rallying enthusiasm for what lies ahead.

Plainville Public School parents participate in the governance of the school through two school councils and one PTO. School leaders, PTO members and parents, through school governance, created student activities such as gardening, mentoring, senior reading days, and chess club. The school councils assist the principals in creating

and revising school improvement plans that support the schools' missions and expectations. By design, parents and community members on the wellness committee assisted in creating a new policy for the lunch program and policy for food safety throughout the schools. Evidence of volunteerism is pervasive with parents working in the schools and donating their time to the Plainville community-at-large and for building projects such as the senior center.

All parents receive information about the volunteer programs of the schools. To increase parent involvement in the activities of the schools, the principal of Jackson school hosts a volunteer tea. The principal of Wood school offers a monthly breakfast for parents. Volunteer opportunities are advertised through newsletters and flyers. While volunteers play an active role in the workings of the schools, much of the work is done by the same small group of parents. Attendance at PTO meetings is low. When a significant number of volunteers that are representative of the wider student population participate, more could be accomplished. Groups designed to involve parents in the school include an active PTO, a school council, and a health and wellness committee. Parents and community members may have input into school-based decisions, both formal and informal, that affect children. Parents may speak at any of the public meetings of groups cited above or at meetings of the school committee. Each year parents may write letters describing their children's learning style and needs to be considered in the classroom placement. Parents of sixth grade students can advise on desired course placement for their child in grade 7.

For the Plainville Schools non-English speaking population, parents may or must ask to have documents translated. Bilingual family members are invited to attend

meetings to translate, and the district Spanish teacher is available to attend meetings for this purpose as well. Non-English speaking parents must self-advocate to access all that the school district has to offer, and this may create a barrier to equal access. When all families have equal opportunities to understand and participate in the activities of the schools in a meaningful way, academic achievement, and the social and emotional growth of children will be strengthened and supported. (teacher interviews, self-study, curriculum coordinator interviews, school leadership interviews, evidence binders)

By design, the schools have a clearly defined process for the evaluation and supervision of faculty, staff, and administration which is utilized for continual improvement of the quality of the school programs. Evaluation procedures align with state regulations. Teachers and administrators engage in goal-setting, self-assessment, reflection, and evaluation with feedback. Goals are tied to state-mandated district-determined measures (DDM). Teachers set personal professional practice SMART goals as well as student learning goals. The superintendent's evaluation plan is tied to crucial leadership practices including, but not limited to, the ability to cultivate a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus. Principals are evaluated on critical leadership requirements including, but not limited to, ensuring that instructional practice in all settings reflects high expectations regarding content and is personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles. A procedure is in place for the evaluation of support staff which is conducted by the principals. Consequently, the evaluation processes that are in place are adequate to support continued improvement of teaching and learning. (teacher interviews, self-study, evidence binders)

The schools have clearly defined crisis/emergency response plans, and all occupants of the building are familiar with these procedures. A multi-hazard emergency response plan was approved and put into place in November 2012. The emergency response plan was created by an emergency response protocol team composed of representatives from the surrounding communities of Plainville, Norfolk, and Wrentham, as well as representatives from the Plainville Public Schools and the director of the Bi-County Collaborative (BICO). All faculty and staff are familiar with the emergency response plan. The emergency plan is found in each classroom in a handbook. Each classroom has an evacuation route map posted at the exit to the room, indicating a primary and secondary route. Unannounced fire drills and lockdowns are practiced throughout the year. Therefore, the crisis/emergency plans are comprehensive and effective and ensure the safety of students and staff members. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, self-study, facility tour, student interviews, school leadership interviews, evidence binders)

Commendations

1. The collaboration of district and school leaders in the establishment of a collective vision of excellence for the schools
2. The embedded training and professional development linked to current research
3. The creation of a highly positive school climate
4. The direct involvement of principals in mentoring students
5. The extensive recognition of student work, effort, and achievement

Recommendations

1. Monitor instruction and ensure that best practices are implemented in all classrooms

2. Develop a means of involving more staff in the work of school committees
3. Prioritize professional development initiatives
4. Provide an orientation program for support staff
5. Develop and implement strategies to attract volunteers from a wider representation of the parent population
6. Develop and implement strategies to enable non-English speaking families to have greater access to the programs and activities of the schools
7. Ensure consistency of timely, high quality, two-way parent-teacher messaging

6 School Resources for Learning

The school provides an effective range of integrated resources, programs, and services designed to enable all students to participate in and benefit from their educational experiences. Collectively, school resources, programs, and services support the individual academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of all students.

1. Student support services are designed to enable each student to participate in and benefit from the educational programs within the school and to support the school's mission and expectations.
2. Student support services personnel interact and work cooperatively with other school staff and community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students and to enhance student learning opportunities.
3. The physical areas provided for student support services are appropriate to the particular service.
4. Parents are kept informed about the range of available student support services and are involved in the coordination of services as they pertain to their children.
5. Services are in place to ensure the health and well being of the students, and information pertinent to the learning process and/or essential for safety is communicated to the appropriate faculty and staff.
6. The school maintains all student, administrative and personnel records in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal, state, and local laws or regulations.
7. The school's library technology and media services program has an appropriate space to ensure the accessibility of its technology and materials by students and teachers and is staffed by qualified personnel who are trained and supervised by a certified library media specialist.
8. The school's library technology and media services program has a wide range of print, non-print, and electronic materials and equipment which is appropriate to an elementary school, supportive of the curriculum, accessible to students and teachers, and reflective of a global and multi-cultural society. Materials and equipment are adequately maintained, catalogued, and updated.
9. The school's library technology and media program has clearly defined expectations which ensure that student needs for research and learning are met.
10. The school's faculty, staff and administration are familiar with the expectations the school's library technology and media services program and are directly involved in the selection of materials, equipment, and resources to complement and improve teaching and learning.

11. The school has policies in place for the Internet and for the selection and removal of print and non-print multi-media materials.

School Resources for Student Learning

Conclusions

Student support services are deliberately designed to enable each student to participate in and benefit from the educational programs within the school and to extensively support the schools' mission and expectations. Regular and special student support services in the Plainville Public Schools seek to maximize access to and participation in all of its educational programs. There is a special education director and one special education secretary housed in the Jackson School building. The special education director oversees two school psychologists, one in each of the two buildings. The special education director plays many roles in the Plainville schools, some of which are technically unrelated to special education such as transportation and membership on the technology committee.

The schools have adopted the concept of having school psychologists in place, rather than school or guidance counselors. The psychologists and administrators believe this is a better arrangement as the psychologists are able to perform all of the functions of a school counselor, but can also perform many special education assessments. One of the many responsibilities of the school psychologists is the oversight and supervision of the special education processes of evaluation, identification, progress monitoring, and learning plan renewals. The two school psychologists have the authority to retain the services of district and private specialists such as speech and language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, and behavior and reading specialists for assessments and evaluations as well as the provision of remedial services. Both school psychologists teach social skills, pulling from a wide range of curriculum formats. Social skills or

social learning may take place in whole classroom, small group, and individual settings depending on the specific needs of the child. The psychologist at the Wood School also instructs a bullying unit. The school psychologists provide most counseling services in a one-on-one format for all students, identified and otherwise. Some counseling is long-term and some is short-term. Families are referred to community based providers for therapy when family dynamics are impacting the child. Both psychologists work to limit their counseling services to the goal of assuring students are cognitively, emotionally, and socially available for academic learning.

Many certified special education teachers are retained in both buildings in several tiers of programming. The schools offer a wide range of supports directly to students, and in consultation with teachers in properly applying Individual Education Programs (IEPs), and developing intervention strategies to assist their students. Many regular education teachers express a sense of good fortune to have so many student services available to their identified and non-identified students with special needs.

All teachers have regularly scheduled, and as needed, access to literacy and math coaching to improve their instructional strategies for specific struggling students as well as all students. The math and literacy coaches are regarded as both teachers and professional development resources. In a second grade team meeting, the math coach conducted a workshop debriefing on how to achieve greater depth of knowledge of mathematical concepts. Much of the presentation sought to align instruction with Common Core State Standards.

All kindergarten classes have one regular education paraprofessional in the classroom. Regular education tutors are also available to kindergartners in need of

remediation. Two of the kindergarten teachers have dual licensure for regular and special education. With these regular and special education supports in place, the needs of both identified and non-identified kindergarten students are being met in a highly inclusive kindergarten culture. It is rare for kindergarten students to be referred to the Building Educational Student Support Team (BESST) team for pre-referral or referral services, though many kindergartners have special services in place from Child Find and a range of local early intervention services.

The speech and language pathologist works with two certified assistants who hold bachelor's degrees. Speech and language consultation to teachers, as well as informal screenings and non-coded speech services for most simple articulation problems and some short-term language issues can be completed without going through a formal referral process. Occupational and physical therapies are also occasionally provided to non-identified students for short-term gap services. These interventions are effective for the remediation of small deficiencies and also work as pre-referral strategies.

Math and reading tutoring is available to students who do not have IEPs but have specific gaps in their learning. The tutors are certified teachers and are funded through the regular education budget. Their interventions are highly targeted with clear goals defining when to terminate services. Some students return for tutoring and some do not.

If tutoring proves ineffective or inappropriate for the specific needs of a particular child, teachers may make a referral to BESST, which may assist teachers with pre-referral brainstorming or support the development of formal assessments depending on the nature of the child's difficulties. The BESST meetings are chaired by the building principals with membership that includes special educators, classroom teachers, speech

and language pathologists, school psychologists, occupational and physical therapists, and the ELL teacher. At the Jackson School, the physical education teacher and reading specialist are also members.

A single district reading specialist is housed in the Jackson School and is responsible for early reading interventions for students in grades 1 through 3. The reading specialist also works with identified and non-identified students referred through the BESST team.

Resource rooms are available in both buildings. There is one resource room in the Jackson School for students in grades 1 through 3, and three in the Wood School, one each for grades 4, 5, and 6. Each room is staffed with one special education teacher. Students report to the resource room for brief, focused remediation in support of regular classroom activities as per the RtI model. While most students participating in the resource room programs have IEPs, some do not. These students work on the remediation of relatively small gaps in their skills acquisition. Students participating in resource room services are referred through the BESST.

Instructional Learning Centers (ILC) are housed in both buildings and are each staffed by one special education teacher and one paraprofessional. These programs support students who are two or more years behind grade level in multiple academic areas. While most of these students do not participate in core, regular education academics, they do participate in specials such as physical education, art, music, library, and occasional special core academics, as well as lunch and recess. Sometimes the ILC teacher or paraprofessional will accompany an ILC student to a class.

There is one Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC) housed in each of the two buildings. Each program is staffed by one special education teacher and one paraprofessional. These programs have a high staff to low student ratio of 2:1. Participating students have relatively profound developmental or autism spectrum and/or communication disorders which require intensive instructional strategies. TLC students are generally included in non-core regular academic activities with the assistance of the TLC staff.

The schools retain two full-time applied behavior analysis (ABA) paraprofessional therapists, based in a small classroom at the Jackson School. The room is partitioned into two areas. The behavior therapists work primarily in the lower grades, but do travel with students who are chronologically older, and so, are included in regular activities at the Wood School. The development of behavior plans is contracted out to a private behavior specialist who creates the plans with the school team. The two paraprofessionals are charged with the task of assuring the plans are implemented school-wide with fidelity. They also are partially responsible for training staff that have contact with students on behavior plans in the proper execution in both the regular and special education settings. The behavior therapists work with students 1:1 or 1:2 at a time and there are no limitations to the services being provided.

The schools retain one full-time English language learner (ELL) teacher who works in both schools, with offices in both buildings. Most services provided to ELL students are “push- ins,” but some are “pull-outs.” As students progress in their English language proficiency, they are increasingly included in regular education instruction as per the least restrictive standard. English language proficiency is assessed using the

Wecta Access Proficiency Test (WAPT). The ELL teacher has positive and effective working relationships with teachers, administrators, and grade level teams. There is a high turn over of English language learners in the district, many of whom may be matriculated for a few months, or even weeks.

Student support service professionals in this school system collectively provide calibrated and targeted instruction to meet the specific learning needs of students. As a result, all students are able to participate in and benefit from the educational programs of the schools. (interviews, self-study, parent interviews, school and classroom observations, evidence binder, student-parent handbook)

Student support services personnel interact and work cooperatively in some areas with other school staff and community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students and to enhance student learning opportunities. The goal of the special education director is that the district's culture reflects the belief that "these are all our kids." Teachers and paraprofessionals, whether working through the special or regular education programs, will ideally behave as if all students are the responsibility of all professional staff. Therefore, the Plainville schools seek to employ the best practice of shifting teacher roles in the classroom to prevent identified students from being regularly associated with special education staff. While this is a goal of the special education director, little evidence of teachers switching roles was evident and teachers could not cite evidence of role-sharing between special and regular education teachers. Although special education teachers often attend weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings, the simultaneous scheduling of BESST meetings sometimes occurs. Common planning between special education teachers and regular classroom

teachers is infrequent once scheduled services are in place. When adequate common planning time is provided, the sharing of effective strategies for working with identified students could take place, thus ensuring greater continuity in instruction.

The form and function of the BESST team demonstrates a genuine attempt to provide greater access and support to regular education teaching staff who may encounter instructional challenges with struggling students. Special education teachers are kept informed of upcoming special events in the regular education homeroom, aiding inclusion efforts.

Many identified students receive related services and academic supports in the integrated preschool program using both push-in and pull-out models. Service providers assist teachers in developing and implementing social curriculum and modifications to enable students to access curriculum and participate in learning.

Special education specialists provide some amount of short-term, non-coded services to students in need. Many regular education teachers work intensively with special needs students in the classroom during intervention and regular instructional periods. The school nurse is visited regularly by students with special needs. A trip to the nurse's office serves as a respite area for some students who need a break from the regular program. For some students, the opportunity to get a walking break, a little company, a chance to sit and relax, and maybe have a snack eases anxiety and allows them to return to the classroom refreshed. The reading specialist was observed working with a child with serious emotional difficulties. The bond between them was obvious and strong. These specialists provide a level of emotional support to students in need throughout the school day.

Community interaction by the student services department is primarily defined by regular contact with preschool providers as well as publicly funded early intervention programs like Head Start. Professionals from these community-based organizations serve on the school's readiness committee and assist with the transition of students into the preschool and kindergarten. Student services also contracts with a community-based independent behavioral specialist. Information for parents and the community explaining how to access special services in the district is presented comprehensively in the student-parent handbook.

Enrichment programs at the schools are a work in progress. The literacy and math tutors occasionally provide some enrichment services to gifted and talented students. At times, students reading beyond the level of their peers have been casually grouped together into very high level reading groups across grade levels. The schools run a before- and after-school "curriculum enrichment program." This is not a dedicated enrichment program, but rather, a collection of organized clubs available to all students, regardless of ability. Teachers can refer students demonstrating exceptional abilities who require greater challenge than the regular educational program provides to BESST. The BESST team would develop an educational plan targeting the student's need to be challenged. There is no formal enrichment programming through the student services department.

Many of Plainville's students benefit from competent networking among staff in the school setting and between the school's staff and community-based providers. All students are best served when regular and special education professionals are able to facilitate the best practices of collaborating, team-teaching, and switching roles. While

formal, well-structured remedial supports are clearly evident throughout both schools, formal and well-structured enrichment learning for gifted, talented, and highly motivated students is not built into the instructional program as remedial services are. Therefore, student support professionals in this school system collectively provide calibrated and targeted instruction to meet the specific learning needs of the great majority, but not all of its students. When programs are developed and targeted for students at all levels of learning, the needs of all students will be met. (interviews, self-study, classroom observations, evidence binder, student-parent handbook)

Most of the physical areas provided for student support services are appropriate to the particular service. Student services rooms are spacious, clean, neat, organized, child-centered, and comfortable, enabling staff and students to relax and focus on their various tasks. In general, students throughout the building feel safe and comfortable in the buildings. Physical plant problems that might limit learning were not noted in any of the special services arenas. However, some regular classrooms serving both identified and non-identified students were messy, disorganized, and cluttered. The Jackson school health office is a single room. Phone calls or conversations taking place in the office are overheard and students or teachers who are ill and seeking treatment can only be separated by a partial curtain. Consequently, there is a lack of privacy. When adequate space for health services is provided, there will be a greater assurance of confidentiality and support for student and staff health and safety. (interviews, self-study, facility observation and tour, evidence binder, student-parent handbook)

Parents are formally kept informed about the range of available student support services and are involved in the coordination of services as they pertain to their children.

The standard Individual Education Program (IEP) process is followed faithfully to the satisfaction of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The special education teams led by the school psychologists, that include parents and appropriate specialists from the various disciplines, are well able to create effective IEPs for Plainville students. The schools' student services director, as required by law, meets regularly with the local special education Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to establish a dialogue between those providing, and the advocates of those receiving special services. Parents characterized both the director of student services and the superintendent as responsive to parent concerns and student needs.

Regular IEP progress meeting and review schedules are maintained on a calendar by the school psychologist and the student services secretary. All team members, including parents, are given ample notification with time to prepare for upcoming meetings. Progress meetings may also be scheduled as needed to make adjustments. Special and regular education teachers working with identified students in the various formats maintain regular and ongoing communication with parents. However, inconsistency in parent communication is a parent concern. Parents commented that the level of communication tends to vary widely from teacher to teacher. When a consistent method to keep parents informed about services is established, the flow of communication systems maintained at the same levels by all teachers. (interviews, self-study, parent interviews, school observations, evidence binder)

Services have been consciously set in place to ensure that the health and well-being of the students and information pertinent to the learning process and/or essential for safety is frequently communicated to the appropriate faculty and staff. There is a full-

time nurse stationed in each of the two buildings. The nurses are available to all students and staff throughout the school day. The nurses cooperate with each other and may leave one building to support the other as needed. The nurses carry pagers to facilitate communication in case of emergency. The Plainville schools' health service providers perform a wide range of health screenings for students including postural, vision, dental, hearing, and body mass index (BMI). When students present with concerns in these areas, parents are contacted. EpiPens, inhalers and medications are stored in the nurses' offices. The nurses support varying numbers of students with diabetes coming for blood sugar checks and insulin throughout the day. The Jackson School nurse visits the kindergarten and first grade classrooms to teach the children about proper hygiene and effective hand-washing. The Wood School nurse visits students in grades 4, 5, and 6 to teach about the onset of puberty and human sexual development. The nurses provide EpiPen training for staff, and coordinate with the local fire department to provide first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to staff members. All of these trainings are voluntary for the staff. A monthly health newsletter is created by the nurses and sent home with students to inform parents and families about health issues and concerns.

The school nurses create, review, and securely store individual health plans (IHPs) designed to prevent and respond to student health emergencies. Many of these plans prescribe how staff should prevent and/or respond to allergic reactions. The nurses are responsible to ensure that staff who may be working with vulnerable students are aware and trained to manage the health concerns named in the plans. These plans are shared with staff on a need-to-know basis. Plans are secured in the nurse's office, with

copies in the possession of appropriate teachers. Student health information important to particular identified students may be documented in IEPs and Section 504 plans. The IEPs are in the control of the student services department and the principals' offices store the 504s. Like IHPs, these plans are released to members of the staff on a need-to-know basis. As a result of these efforts, the health services in the schools are run with both efficiency and care, providing outstanding service to all members of the school community. (interviews, self-study, facility observations, nurse's newsletter, school resources evidence binder, student-parent handbook)

The school adequately maintains all student, administrative, and personnel records in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal, state, and local law or regulation. Both Plainville schools ensure high levels of confidentiality and security of student, administrative, and personnel records, and are in deliberate compliance with federal, state, and local requirements. Student cumulative files are stored in the main offices of each school building. Special education files are held securely in the office of student services and personnel files are kept in the office of the superintendent. All files are locked in secure, steel cabinets and must remain in those offices at all times.

Authorized individuals may request that the file cabinets are unlocked by the secretary so that specific files may be retrieved. The person accessing the file must sign and date the folder holding the file. When finished, the file is returned to the steel cabinet and the cabinet is locked. This procedure is the same in all four offices where records are stored. The Plainville school community is well served with regard to the organization and storage of confidential records. As a result, the district is in compliance with all laws and

regulations for record storage and associated privacy regulations. (interviews, anonymous student cumulative file, facility observations, student-parent handbook)

The schools' library technology and media services program has an appropriate space which consistently ensures the accessibility of its technology and materials by students and teachers, and is staffed by well-qualified personnel who are trained and supervised by a certified library media specialist. Both school buildings house large libraries fitted with computers and book stacks. The carpeted floors and comfortable furnishings present safe, welcoming, and relaxing environments for students, staff, and community members. Students look forward to their weekly visits to the library. Appropriate placement of book stacks and technology allow for a wide range of simultaneous learning activities when classes arrive.

There is one full-time licensed library media specialist who is a licensed teacher, and one full-time assistant librarian staffing both libraries. The two rotate between the two buildings, spending three simultaneous days on the six-day schedule in each. This allows the media specialist the opportunity to teach technology integration and research skills in both locations. The media specialist's role is largely that of a technology integrator. The media specialist helps students utilize a wide range of software tools to support classroom learning activities, and to create projects and presentations. The library assistant assists teachers bringing students into the library to utilize print or technology resources. The assistant also reads to the younger children at the Jackson School and helps them choose and sign out books. All Plainville students have one scheduled library period per week but may access the library at other times when classes are not scheduled into the space.

The media specialist is in regular collaboration and consultation with the technology coordinator and technologist to continually learn about and expand the range of technology tools available to students and teachers in the libraries. The media specialist is a strong advocate and willing trainer for technology integration in the Plainville schools. Consequently, the media specialist seeks ways to encourage as many teachers as possible to utilize new technologies “seamlessly” in their classroom instruction. (interviews, self-study, facility observations)

The school’s library technology and media services program has a wide range of print, non-print, and electronic materials and equipment which is deliberately appropriate to an elementary school, frequently supportive of the curriculum, always accessible to students, and teachers, and in some areas, reflective of a global and multi-cultural society. Materials and equipment are well maintained, catalogued, and updated by the media specialist and the assistant librarian.

The library houses 14,000 books between the two buildings, a classroom-sized computer lab in the Jackson School, and eight desktop computers in the Wood School. The media specialist spends \$3,000.00 in budgeted funds per year on new book purchases and has led the schools’ entry into the Massachusetts Library Association SAILS program, which allows staff and students to search for and order books not housed in the schools’ collections as part of a statewide library consortium. Books generally arrive at the school two days after being ordered online by library staff. The school has also joined Tumblebook as part of the SAILS collaborative, which is a company that provides online access to interactive electronic books which students can access at school or at home as an individual or group learning activity. The media specialist seeks advice from

teachers, the math and literacy coaches, and students on books and programs to purchase. The media specialist works with teachers to align materials purchased with classroom curriculum. Each new school year the media specialist is able to help classroom teachers and academic coaches increase their utilization of library resources. To the extent that teachers seek out library resources for cultural awareness activities, the library is responsive. Library resources are heavily utilized for the sixth grade world's fair, which is focused on cultural diversity learning. In these ways, the libraries are a valuable resource that provides strong support for teaching and learning.

The media specialist and library assistant aggressively seek to provide properly calibrated materials to all Plainville students of all abilities and grade levels. The library, in partnership with the technology department, maintains an account with the Accelerated Reader (AR) program and has a growing collection of AR books on premises. These books are ordered strategically by the media specialist to accommodate for the full range of reading abilities of students. The library also houses sets of between six and eight books in plastic bags, targeting the full range of reading levels for small group reading instruction for levels K through 6. Teachers bring their classes into the library to utilize the computer lab and receive technology skills instruction. Students and teachers may order books through the SAILS library consortium. Teachers often do this in advance of specific units of study across the academic disciplines.

In partnership with the school's technology department, the libraries are embracing the trend of universal access and design and virtual materials and cloud storage. Rather than purchase videos and compact discs (CDs), subscriptions for science and social studies, eBooks and Bookshare resources are held. Some examples of other

programs available to teachers are: Discovery Education Streaming, Discovery Education Science, Discovery Education Board Builder, World Book Online, Grolier Online, Tumblebooks Library, Animation-ish, Typing Pals Online, Stationary Studio, Premier Assistive Technology, and Renaissance Learning, STAR Accelerated Reading and Math programs, and more. There is high and regular use of the book stacks, print materials, and the SAILS program. The media specialist is regularly engaged in teaching students how to utilize the various software options listed above in the computer labs. Although some classroom teachers occasionally incorporate the use of technologies into lessons, others do not possess the skills or interest necessary to do so. Consequently, the exposure of Plainville students to technology learning is highly dependent on teacher motivation and thus, is inconsistent from class-to-class and grade-to-grade. Although professional development has been offered to help teachers improve the skills necessary to effectively use technology in instruction, inconsistencies in the use of technology are evident. Currently, there are no school-wide technology standards and grade specific objectives that would require all teachers to learn and teach, and all students to learn increasingly complex technological skills as they progress through the grades.

The media specialist sits on the school's technology committee and is involved in assessing, searching for, and purchasing new technological tools for the school. The technology department maintains all hardware while the media specialist and library assistant care for the print collection and physical library space. As materials become worn or outdated, they are pulled from the collection.

Library, technology, and media services and resources support the mission and expectations of the schools as they seek to expand research and technological learning

and skills that would help students to become independent learners in “an ever changing world.” To further this end, students would benefit from the expanded use of technologies in the curriculum. When the world is changing so quickly, it is more important to learn how to learn than to acquire a fixed knowledge set. When students develop proficiency in the use of technology and are fully engaged in learning that is assisted by the use of the unlimited resources available online, the development of 21st century skills will be facilitated. (interviews, self-study, facility observations, student-parent handbook)

The schools’ library technology and media program has clearly defined expectations, which sometimes enable student needs for research and learning to be met. While the technology coordinator and the media specialist are well versed in a wide range of technological tools and highly motivated to integrate technological tools into the curriculum and instructional practices of the entire school, at this time, not all members of the staff possess that level of knowledge and enthusiasm, which prohibits the full and steady growth, district-wide, in learning through technology. The media specialist is currently helping kindergarten teachers instruct their students in the use of Microsoft Word for creating and managing documents. The belief is that if the youngest students are capable of technology learning, all students are.

Utilization of the various media center resources is inconsistent. Many, but not all, students regularly use the library for research in content areas. Teachers who demonstrate a deep commitment to helping students develop research and technology skills often bring students to the library during open periods. When there is establishment of learning expectations for the library media program and expectations for

all teachers to utilize the various available resources, the school's overall instruction will greatly benefit and student learning will be enhanced. (interviews, self-study, facility observations, technology department resource list)

The schools' faculty, staff, and administration are familiar with the expectations of the schools' library technology and media services program and are directly involved in the selection of materials, equipment, and resources to complement and improve teaching and learning. Teacher input is sought for identifying tools that can complement their instructional practices. Teachers frequently communicate with the media specialist and assistant librarian via e-mail or visits to the library with requests, or to search for specific resources. Teachers often need to borrow multiple books on specific subjects for upcoming classroom units. The media specialist learns, through repeated experience with teacher use, what types of resources are most in demand and makes acquisition decisions accordingly. A technology survey each year assists the media specialist and technology coordinator in better understanding the technology needs of the staff. As a result, the program can be responsive to the needs of students and staff. (interviews, self-study, facility observations)

The Plainville Public Schools have acceptable policies in place for the use of the Internet and for the selection and removal of print and non-print multi-media materials. The web publishing policy, Internet, network, and e-mail acceptable use policy for staff, and the Internet acceptable use policy for students are readily available on the district website. The acceptable use policy is also published in the student-parent handbook which is given to each student at the beginning of the year. Parents are required to read and sign the acceptable use policy at the start of the school year. In addition to the

student acceptable use policy, staff is given acceptable use policies for e-mail, Internet, and network use and required to sign it each year. The monitoring and updating of classroom websites varies. Teachers are individually responsible for updating and monitoring their web page. The material posted on the website is reflective of the web publishing policy, which requires permission from parents and guardians to post pictures of students on their websites. A list of students for whom the school does not have permission for their picture to be published on websites is distributed and shredded at the end of each school year. The selection and removal of print and non-print materials follows a policy in place which is supported by the library and media staff which continually re-evaluates materials and removes materials as warranted. As a result, the commitment of the schools to use policies for Internet use and print and non-print materials protects student safety and provides meaningful resources for their use. (student-parent handbook, teacher interviews, Standard committee meeting)

Commendations

1. The depth and breadth of student support services
2. The innovative use of school psychologists as counselors, evaluators, and managers of the special education process
3. The willingness of the district to support the use of speech and physical and occupational therapists for some non-coded services to students in need of assistance
4. The intervention process that reflects fidelity in least-to-most restrictive environments
5. The safe, welcoming work spaces provided for support services
6. The child-centered and efficient health services
7. The interface of the media center and the technology department working as one

8. The efforts to encourage the use of technology in classrooms

Recommendations

1. Increase opportunities for regular and special education teachers to dialogue and plan together
2. Address collaboration and instructional strategies between special and regular educators
3. Articulate learning expectations for the library media program
4. Ensure that teachers and students have the knowledge and opportunity necessary to effectively use technology
5. Ensure privacy in the physical space of the Jackson school health office

7 Community Resources for Learning

The community supports the school by providing consistent and sufficient funding for programs, services, personnel, and facilities. It sustains a learning environment that ensures the safety and well-being of all students. Active community and parent involvement is essential for the achievement of the school's mission and expectations.

1. The community, through its school board, provides educational leadership, sets, and disseminates policy, and ensures an adequate and reliable revenue source.
2. The community, through its school board, provides appropriate school programs, personnel, professional development programs, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.
3. The school and the school district have an ongoing planning process which addresses capital improvement needs as well as future program, technology, staffing, and facility needs.
4. The faculty and administration of the school are actively involved in the development of the school's budget which is supportive of the school's mission and expectations.
5. Relationships with the community-at-large foster partnerships, develop and strengthen communication, and encourage mutual cooperation and good citizenship.
6. The school building and grounds provide a setting for an appropriate, positive, and safe learning environment.
7. There is a planned, on-going program of building and site maintenance to ensure the health and safety of the occupants and proper documentation is on file to indicate the school's compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
8. If food services are provided, the area, menu, and equipment ensure that the well-being of students is a priority and is in compliance with state and federal regulations.
9. If transportation is provided, appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the students.

Community Resources for Student Learning

Conclusions

The community, through its school committee, collectively provides educational leadership, sets, and disseminates policy, and ensures an adequate and reliable revenue source. The Plainville community supports the schools by providing active community involvement and sufficient funding for programs, services, personnel, and facilities. The school committee is an essential part of the community that works collaboratively with the schools, parents, community members, and businesses to enrich the educational experience of Plainville students. It provides leadership for the district, establishes policies that are in the best interest of students and the community, and makes budget decisions that will support the mission and expectations of the schools. The Five-Year Strategic Plan was designed to articulate the needs of the district and outline plans that will enable the district to reach goals. The school committee is comprised of five members chosen through a staggered election process that lends continuity to the oversight of the schools. Members meet bi-monthly and also serve on subcommittees such as the communication committee that works to improve communication with parents and stakeholders through social media and an improved website. Committee members also serve as liaisons between staff members and administrators as issues are discussed and evaluated. The school committee provides support for the crisis plan, technology committee, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) program, staff appreciation, the mentoring program, and the curriculum enrichment program, to name a few. To show support for the schools and to keep well-informed, members regularly attend school-related functions, such as parent read-alouds and morning coffee with the

principal. On occasion, procedures are put into place before policies to regulate and guide actions are established. One example of this was the placement of cameras on buses prior to the development of a policy governing their use.

The community, through its school committee, does a dependable job of providing adequate revenue to fund capital improvements, personnel, school programs, professional development, and resources for student learning. Historically, community support for proposed school budgets has been high. The schools' revolving rental fee account, generated by renting out space within the buildings or charging fees for use of the buildings by outside organizations helps to alleviate some financial burden from the town. For example, minor roof repairs were paid for with this income. Voters collectively passed an override of Proposition 2 ½ to build Plainville schools.

The PTO is visible in the day-to-day activities of the school. Members of this organization help in classrooms, organize book exchanges, and provide special activities, such as the Seuss Day raffle. The PTO recently provided funds for the enhancement of the physical education program and the Wellness Garden. Parents run the school book fairs, chaperone field trips, assist with field day activities, and provide special treats for celebrations. Senior volunteers from the community read to students, serve as mentors, and facilitate some enrichment activities such as the chess and cribbage clubs. The community has established a culture of unified support for the Plainville schools, ensuring that the mission, beliefs, and visions of the district can be realized. As a result, the diligent commitment by an invested school committee ensures appropriate educational leadership, timely disseminated policy, and an adequate and reliable revenue

source. (classroom observations, Standard committee meetings, town official interview, school committee interview)

The community, through its school committee, generally provides appropriate school programs, personnel, professional development programs, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning. Some programs offered go beyond the parameters of those one would expect to find in most elementary schools. For example, the schools provide tutoring to students requiring additional support in all grade levels, Spanish in grades K through 6, an instrumental music program, counseling, and an extended school year program for students who qualify.

Teachers are adequate in number and appropriately qualified. A full-time English as a second language teacher (ESL), math and English language arts coaches, a full-time library media specialist, tutors, and paraprofessionals who are licensed teachers contribute to providing a strong educational program. The district has hired a part-time data management specialist whose primary function is to compile data and complete reports for the state. The administration would like to increase the position to full-time to allow for in-house data management to better inform instruction. At this time, the school psychologists and school nurses work with students who have intermittent or ongoing social or emotional issues. Limited time can be spent on this task as time must be dedicated to other duties. The district administration has voiced its desire to acquire a school adjustment counselor capable of doing functional behavioral analysis and working with students on positive behavior and coping methods

The professional development of staff is a priority in the district. Embedded professional development takes place often as teachers teach teachers, share knowledge

gained for coursework and workshops and work in professional learning communities (PLCs) on new initiatives. This contributes to the development of a culture that values lifelong learning. The principals and the math and ELA coaches work with individuals and groups to enhance the acquisition of skills. As a result, continuing to pursue in-house training through coaches is fiscally sound, grows leadership, and results in professional development that is responsive to the needs of the staff. In addition, partial funding is available for course reimbursement and out-of-district workshops.

The facilities were purposefully built and are in excellent condition. Adequate funding is in place for maintenance. The custodial and maintenance staff ensures that areas are safe and clean and that requests for needed clean-ups or repairs are addressed in a timely manner. There is ample space for all programs.

The budget supports a full-time technology systems administrator and a full-time information technologies technician. Some in-service has been provided to staff in the use of equipment and available software. The schools have desktop computers, some laptops, a few tablets, printers, servers, software, projectors, and other related equipment. Students requiring assistive technology are provided devices such as frequency modulation systems and personal tablets. The schools are not on a completely wireless system. Although some laptops and tablets are available, there is little evidence that their use is a widespread practice. The schools do not use interactive white boards in everyday instruction. However, technology is transitioning from lower bandwidth and paper and pencil testing to a fiber optic network and online testing. Future plans include moving from minimal laptops and minimally utilized interactive devices to individual student devices with interactive capabilities. The district has a sound plan for piloting the state's

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test online. Students currently taking STAR tests have more familiarity with online testing.

Plainville students have opportunities to analyze, build, and program technology. For example, students in kindergarten are involved in learning physics and measurement through building, adjusting, and launching vehicles. Both schools are invested in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) projects such as WeDo Robotics and Alpha Robotics. The extracurricular offering of robotics is a fine first step in generating excitement in students for technology. Most classrooms utilize overhead projectors to model student work, teacher revisions, and to play videos.

The purchase of programs requiring a significant expenditure are planned in advance and budgeted. Recent purchases include the Empowering Writers Program and STAR Reading and STAR Math. The school administration has identified the need to continue to develop a balanced literacy program to bring continuity to instruction and assessment in reading and to ensure that related professional development is offered. This will require expenditures for professional development, more big books, leveled texts, class sets of fiction and non-fiction reading materials, and the purchase of appropriate progress monitoring tools. There is also a desire to acquire more of the kits used to implement the science curriculum and to replenish the consumable materials used to implement the science curriculum. Teachers are allocated an appropriate amount of funds to order classroom supplies online. Teachers rarely need materials beyond what was ordered due to sharing with colleagues and supply availability within the buildings. At times, there is a shortage of ink for printers. As a cost saving device, the technology director is implementing a transition to centralized, copier printing. Printing through

copiers creates savings on ink through using toner, which is a part of lease agreements on copiers. Collectively, school programs, personnel, professional development, facilities, equipment, technological support and materials for learning are adequately supplied through the budget. As a result, teaching and learning is facilitated.

(town officials and teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing)

The school district has effective, ongoing planning that addresses capital improvement needs as well as future program, technology, staffing, and facility needs. The district administrative team, led by the superintendent, meets quarterly to continually update the four-year strategic plan in the areas of capital improvements, staffing, educational services, technology, and professional development. Serving with the superintendent on the team are the building principals, director of special education, technology systems administrator, school business administrator, and the facilities director. A proactive approach is taken in an effort to identify current and future needs. Expenditures for capital improvements, such as for the improvement of school buildings, purchase of furniture or equipment, and upkeep of grounds and security are itemized in the plan. In November, the needs of current and incoming students are analyzed and used to project staffing requirements. Addressing budget needs related to staffing is impacted by the principals' expectations for salary lane changes, shifting positions to acquire new staff, or an offset in funding from a retirement. If changes in staffing are required, the principals seek the approval of the superintendent and the budget subcommittee of the school committee. Principals plan and budget for class size and "bubble year" grades and also for connected programming. Site-based teams, which include the principals and faculty representatives, meet monthly to help with this process. The district has a three-

year technology plan that is currently being updated and is required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. A technology survey is sent to teachers each year to assess their skills, needs, and requests. The results are considered in planning for professional development and acquiring new materials. A technology systems administrator leads monthly meetings of the technology task force. This group includes a member of the school committee, the library media specialist, instructional coaches, and some members of the faculty. They plan for the purchase and implementation of new technology and oversee the related training of staff. Requests for purchases of new technologies and support materials are submitted to the school committee's budget subcommittee in December.

A special education administrator oversees educational services for students who are in-district and placed out-of-district. The administrator meets once each month with special education case managers to discuss programs, successes, and the needs of students receiving services. In consultation with the Building Educational Student Support Team (BESST) team, plans for programming are developed and shared with the special education parent advisory council and staff. The leadership council meets to review student work samples from serviced and regular education students and to discuss instructional practices, assessment data, and lesson and unit plans to make decisions about curriculum and professional development.

A professional development calendar is developed for the upcoming year. The professional development committee determines the funds and resources that will be needed. Outside training, presentations on site by guest speakers or experts, and in-house learning opportunities through the embedded work of coaches and PLCs are scheduled.

Innovative, enriched instruction has been culled from other districts and workshops and symposiums such as Massachusetts Computer Using Educators (MASSCUE). Ongoing review and evaluation of the effectiveness of these offerings, as well as newly identified teacher needs are used to create the most effective and meaningful professional development possible.

Long-range planning for the schools is a collaborative process led by the superintendent. Members of the administration, faculty, school committee, parents and community-at-large serve on various teams, councils, and task forces to help in the planning and decision making process. As a result, this collaboration has been very effective in guiding the schools as they educate students. (teacher interviews, PLC meeting observations, Standard committee meeting, town officials interviews, school committee interviews, principal interviews)

The faculty and administration of the schools are somewhat involved in the development of the schools' budgets, which is supportive of the schools' mission and expectations. Administration meets with staff preceding budget proposals to secure input about budgetary items that could enhance or impact student learning. The superintendent and the leadership team develop a budget that is submitted to the school committee. Meetings of this body present opportunities for public input. Including all stakeholders in the school budgeting process creates an appropriate, needs-based budget. As is true in many other districts, addressing student needs in the budget has shifted from providing funds to enhance instruction to increasingly providing access, intervention, and extension to instruction for varied learners. However, the district has constructed exemplary support services that impact all students including service by math and literacy coaches,

Title I teachers, an ELL teacher, occupational and physical therapists, special education teachers, speech and language pathologists, tutors, mentors for students, and school psychologists. Consequently, the budget that supports this level of service is fully aligned with the district's mission to provide excellence in education, to grow learners, and close achievement gaps. (teacher interviews, Standard committee meeting, school committee interviews, principal interviews)

Strong, positive relationships with the community-at-large foster partnerships, develop and strengthen communication, and encourage mutual cooperation and good citizenship. The ongoing support of the community is reflected in the magnitude of partnerships that have been established. For example, partnering with neighboring districts to enhance math curriculum, working with national and local companies to allow students opportunities to grow in science, math, and technology, providing locally grown, healthy food for student consumption, and partnering with local authors to support literacy curriculum, collectively, are a hallmark of the district. These rich partnerships target student learning needs, health needs, and extracurricular opportunities. For instance, a mentoring program run at the school promotes mutual cooperation between students and seniors, Junior Achievement volunteers work with students to enhance their knowledge of commerce and encourage good citizenship, volunteer staff members and members of the community run an extracurricular program to address students' interests, and the local police department provides drug awareness and the ability to make healthy choices through the D.A.R.E. program. These partnerships, as well as many more that have been forged with national businesses, local colleges and universities, civic organizations, churches, and area hospitals all contribute to the success of the schools.

An active PTO raises funds for the school through many activities such as the Fun Fair, Box Tops for Education, book fairs, and the Holiday Boutique. Their financial assistance supports educational assemblies and the purchase of educational materials not covered by the budget. The schools also endeavor to give back to the community through donations made by students and staff to the food pantry, senior center, and Pennies for Patients fundraising for the Leukemia society. Therefore, the mutually beneficial relationships developed and sustained by the schools and the community have greatly contributed to the ongoing academic, social, and emotional growth of students. (teacher interviews, food service staff interviews, principal interviews, town officials interviews, observations)

The school buildings and grounds provide an appropriate setting for a positive and safe learning environment. Both schools are comfortable in both temperature and aesthetics, lit sufficiently, and have ample space in hallways, bathrooms, meeting rooms, cafeterias, and gymnasiums. Sidewalks and parking lots were well maintained, appropriately lined, and in good condition. The preschool classroom environments are adequate to enable and support appropriate instruction. Preschool students have sufficient space and materials to engage in meaningful learning experiences. There is evidence of dramatic play stations, block stations, library space, and art supplies. There are also bathrooms available for the students to use within the classroom and adequate sink space for cleaning materials and supplies after use. The two integrated preschool classrooms are connected, which fosters increased collaboration among teachers and facilitates the sharing of resources and materials. Space for the libraries, art rooms, and music rooms is adequate for the associated equipment, implementation of instruction, and

the storage of supplies in both buildings. The nurses' offices in both buildings are well equipped. However, the Jackson School nurse's office lacks privacy. The Plainville Public Schools Security Policy and Procedures guide outlines the measures that have been taken to ensure staff and student safety. The double door entry system with a buzzer at the front door provides a first means of identifying and directing visitors to the main office where a name badge is provided. Security cameras throughout each building and on the school grounds are monitored at both the main offices and the business office. Automated external defibrillator (AED) devices are located within one minute of all areas of the building. A regular practice of fire drills and lockdown drills assist in improving safety. Practicing lockdowns and fire drills during less-structured times, such as lunch and recess, develops added preparedness. At this time, the current field trip policy does not require nurses to attend. However, if a student attending a field trip requires the assistance of a trained nurse, one is sent. EpiPen training, AED training, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training are offered to staff but are not mandatory.

Two-way radios are carried by staff during recess and at other times when students are outdoors. Playgrounds are adequate in size, contain developmentally appropriate equipment, and are safety checked. At the Wood School, safety fences do not fully enclose the play space. However, an adequate number of adults closely monitor students as they play. Due to inclement weather, outdoor recess was not observed. The play areas were in fine condition. Consequently, students are able to play safely. (teacher interviews, observation of the building and grounds, student shadowing)

As required by law, there is a planned, on-going program of building and site maintenance to ensure the health and safety of the occupants and proper documentation is

on file to indicate the schools' compliance with local, state, and federal law and regulations. The primary goal of the director of maintenance and custodial services and maintenance team is to keep the buildings clean and in good repair in order to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. All areas of the buildings were exceptionally clean, a task accomplished through three overlapping shifts of the custodial staff. Some jobs that cannot be accomplished by the in-house staff are contracted out. Funds for upkeep and repairs come from the school budget or from rental income derived from buildings usage fees such as those paid by the Bi-Bounty Educational Collaborative (BICO) for the use of classroom space and facilities. The schools provided up-to-date documentation to demonstrate compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and inspections for fire, elevator, health, and safety. Prioritizing and executing procedures optimizing the health and safety of school occupants requires on-going planning and building and site maintenance. Working together, the maintenance team has been highly successful in providing safe, clean buildings in which to learn and work. (teacher interviews, infrastructure tour, Standard committee meetings, building observations)

The area, menu, and equipment ensure that the well-being of students is a priority and that food services are in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Comprehensive food services are provided. The Plainville Public Schools are participants in the National School Lunch Program. A director of food services, who is also the president of the School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts, oversees the lunch program and its staff. Each kitchen has three staff members who are certified in food safety and sanitation. ServSafe certificates are currently good for five years. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and choking training is done every other year.

Food service staff is alerted on the computer of food allergies and medical concerns. Currently, the schools are without a means through which parents could identify their child's daily choice for school lunch. Last school year, approximately 65% of students participated in the school lunch program. Menus offer staff and students several popular choices. Procedures for service and clean-up of lunch are child-friendly. The director of food services serves on the Wellness Committee and stays informed of changes made by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). A strong example of innovative thinking involving student wellness is the "kale chips project." With assistance from community members, students and staff, kale was grown on school grounds and baked into chips. Data was collected through a taste test of the chips. Concluding that the chips were both well-liked and nutritious, kale chips became an item on the menu. The chips are now provided by a vendor. This project is one of many that demonstrate Plainville schools' commitment to students and community collaboration. Cooperative activities such as *Healthy Us* and *Farm-to-School* promote healthy eating habits for students and members of the community. Therefore, the child-centered approach of the food service staff and their collaboration with community and school initiatives for healthy eating greatly contributes to the well-being of students. (observation of the building, Standard committee meetings, food service personnel interviews)

The school district provides transportation for students with appropriate procedures in place to ensure the safety of the students during dismissal and arrival. The majority of students ride buses. Bus transportation is provided to all students in grades kindergarten through 3 and for students in grades 4 through 6 who live over one mile from the school. Approximately 30-40 students walk to and from the Wood School.

Preschool parents drop students off only after all buses have left the parking lot. No cars transporting students are allowed in the parking areas as buses unload students. A staff member ensures that no children walk between buses entering the parking lot. Special education students are transported by vans as needed. Bus drivers are adequately trained by the contracted company and receive additional training in such issues as bullying and bus evacuation through the special education department. Principals collaborate to enforce bus policies for students. Data is collected on bus behavior issues. The strengths of student drop-off and dismissal procedures include staggered student dismissal, staff presence, required signatures for car pick-ups, and an orderly movement of buses. As a result, dismissal and arrival procedures are safe, orderly, well managed by staff, and adhered to by parents and students. (teacher interviews, principal interviews, Standard committee meetings, observation of drop-off and dismissal)

Commendations

1. The involvement and support of the members of the school committee
2. The joint efforts of the administration, school committee, staff, parents, and community for long range planning
3. The consistent community support for the school budget
4. The abundance of school and extracurricular programs offered to students
5. The development of mutually beneficial partnerships
6. The maintenance of safe, exceptionally clean buildings
7. The collaboration of staff leading to embedded professional development
8. The creation of a child-centered food services program

Recommendations

1. Ensure that policies are in place prior to enacting procedures

2. Devise a means of improving data management to better inform instruction
3. Acquire and use interactive technologies in instruction
4. Improve and expand the balanced literacy program

Follow-up Responsibilities

This comprehensive evaluation report reflects the findings of the schools' self-study and those of the visiting committee. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administration, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students at Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools. The faculty, school committee, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

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

The schools' continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting committee and others identified by the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools as it monitors the schools' progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle. To monitor the schools' progress through the follow-up process, the Committee requires that the principals of Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Elementary Schools submit routine Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports documenting the current status of all evaluation report recommendations, with particular detail provided for any recommendation which may have been rejected or those items on which no action has been taken. In addition, responses must be detailed on all recommendations highlighted by the Committee in its notification letters to the school. School officials are expected to have completed or be in the final stages of completion of all valid visiting committee

recommendations by the time the Five-Year Progress Report is submitted. The Committee may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards are not being met in a satisfactory manner or if additional information is needed on matters relating to evaluation report recommendations or substantive changes in the school.

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

The Committee urges school officials to establish a formal follow-up program at once to review and implement all findings of the self-study and valid recommendations identified in the evaluation report. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at follow-up seminars offered by Committee staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting committee would like to thank the faculty and staff of Anna Ware Jackson and Beatrice H. Wood Schools for their collegial and open discussions, their

professionalism, and their willingness to contribute to our understanding of their school. We also want to thank the school committee, members of the community, the superintendent, the central office staff, and the students for the time that they dedicated to meeting with us to enrich this process. We sincerely appreciate the hospitality shown to us over our four-day on-site visit. You were responsive to all of our requests and treated us like welcomed guests.

The visiting committee would like to extend thanks to Superintendent David Raiche, Principal Kate Campbell, and Principal Robin Roberts-Pratt and their staff for making the visit both productive and efficient through their coordination and communication of our schedule, as well as filling our many requests for data, student work samples, and information. It is clear that the Plainville school district has a meaningful mission, a stimulating climate, and a passion for guiding students toward the achievement of excellence. We felt your passion and camaraderie, and we commend you for your efforts to provide the best programs for your students.

The visiting committee further wishes to commend all those that contributed time and energy toward the completion of the self-study, as well as toward the preparation and hosting of the visit. We enjoyed participating in this professional experience with you.

We hope that this visiting committee evaluation report, in conjunction with the strengths and needs determined during your self-study, will serve as rich resources for your short-and long-range planning and that they will assist you as you continue to strengthen education for your students.

Appendix

Plainville Public Schools

**Anna Ware Jackson School
Beatrice H. Wood School**

**NEASC Accreditation Visit
March 2-5, 2014**

Visiting Committee

<p>Robin Rosenfield, Chair Center School Litchfield, CT</p> <p>Donald Lavalette, Assistant Chair Maple Street Elementary School Claremont, NH</p> <p>Kathleen Murphy, Assistant Chair Memorial Elementary School Newton, NH</p> <p>Amber Bergeron Village Elementary School York, ME</p> <p>Rebecca Voisine Anna Reynolds Elementary School Newington, CT</p> <p>Shalem Livingston Freetown Elementary School Freetown, MA</p> <p>Glenn Stan Walpole Elementary School Walpole, MA</p> <p>Bart Lush George R. Martin Elementary School Seekonk, MA</p>	<p>Patricia Hurley Oak Ridge School East Sandwich, MA</p>
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Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

Mission and Expectations

Commendations

1. The collective ownership for student learning by the educational community
2. The child friendly mottos which clearly express the essential beliefs of the learning community
3. The school culture that promotes collegiality and respectful behavior
4. The mission and expectations that are integrated into the daily life of the school

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a process to assess social expectations
2. Engage all stakeholders in the review and revision of the schools' mission and expectations to create consistency, illustrate shared responsibility, and develop congruence with that of the district
3. Ensure fidelity in the assessment and reporting of student achievement
4. Establish a schedule for the review and revision of the mission statements

Curriculum

Commendations

1. The alignment of the ELA and math curricula with Common Core State Standards
2. The establishment of a positive, supportive environment for learning
3. The integration of curriculum across disciplines
4. The collaborative efforts of the faculty and administration for the development of the curriculum
5. The support for the social development of students
6. The shift in focus from teaching to learning
7. The opportunities presented to students for the authentic application of skills

8. The inclusion of current research in curriculum initiatives

Recommendations

1. Complete the process of full curriculum documentation for all disciplines
2. Design and implement effective strategies to increase curriculum articulation within and among grade levels
3. Create clear, consistent agendas at all PLC meetings which are focused on using data to support student learning
4. Create opportunities to involve technology personnel in curriculum planning

Instruction

Commendations

1. The embedded training and professional dialogue linked to current research
2. The plethora of professional development opportunities
3. The enthusiasm and dedication of the staff
4. The integrated learning experiences evident in many classrooms
5. The commitment of administrators to guide instruction to focus on student learning
6. The staffing and materials available to meet student needs
7. The active and supportive PTO, which provides a wide variety of programs to support student learning
8. The opportunities presented to students for the authentic application of skills

Recommendations

1. Ensure instruction includes consistent use of higher order thinking skills
2. Address the needs of students who require greater challenge than current instruction provides
3. Create clear, consistent agendas for PLC meetings to focus on supporting student learning
4. Ensure that best practices are used consistency in instruction

5. Create opportunities for teachers to discuss, explore, and practice the most effective ways to utilize the technologies available in the district
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of RtI models
7. Provide appropriate time for science instruction
8. Increase the use of differentiated instruction

Assessment of Learning

Commendations

1. The implementation of data meetings to facilitate the use of data to drive instruction and revise curriculum
2. The creation of a selected analytic rubric for scoring writing prompts
3. The movement toward establishing a more balanced literacy program
4. The new practices implemented to improve instruction and revise curriculum
5. The embedded practice of using authentic exemplars in many classrooms
6. The practice of sharing knowledge gained from professional development activities
7. The creation and utilization of curriculum maps
8. The increased frequency of collaboration between schools in the district

Recommendations

1. Develop a formal, comprehensive assessment system for all disciplines
2. Establish a protocol for all professional staff in the use of assessment
3. Implement an assessment system to monitor progress
4. Establish a grading policy and use articulated benchmarks derived from learning standards to determine student grades
5. Give direction and support to teachers in understanding and implementing best practices for active learning and the provision of feedback to students
6. Create measurable criteria for assessing social expectations

Leadership and Organization

Commendations

1. The collaboration of district and school leaders in the establishment of a collective vision of excellence for the schools
2. The embedded training and professional development linked to current research
3. The creation of a highly positive school climate
4. The direct involvement of principals in mentoring students
5. The extensive recognition of student work, effort, and achievement

Recommendations

1. Monitor instruction and ensure that best practices are implemented in all classrooms
2. Develop a means of involving more staff in the work of school committees
3. Prioritize professional development initiatives
4. Provide an orientation program for support staff
5. Develop and implement strategies to attract volunteers from a wider representation of the parent population
6. Develop and implement strategies to enable non-English speaking families to have greater access to the programs and activities of the schools
7. Ensure consistency of timely, high quality, two-way parent-teacher messaging

School Resources for Learning

Commendations

1. The depth and breadth of student support services
2. The innovative use of school psychologists as counselors, evaluators, and managers of the special education process
3. The willingness of the district to support the use of speech and physical and occupational therapists for some non-coded services to students in need of assistance

4. The intervention process that reflects fidelity in least-to-most restrictive environments
5. The safe, welcoming work spaces provided for support services
6. The child-centered and efficient health services
7. The interface of the media center and the technology department working as one
8. The efforts to encourage the use of technology in classrooms

Recommendations

1. Increase opportunities for regular and special education teachers to dialogue and plan together
2. Address collaboration and instructional strategies between special and regular educators
3. Articulate learning expectations for the library media program
4. Ensure that teachers and students have the knowledge and opportunity necessary to effectively use technology
5. Ensure privacy in the physical space of the Jackson school health office

Community Resources for Learning

Commendations

1. The involvement and support of the members of the school committee
2. The joint efforts of the administration, school committee, staff, parents, and community for long range planning
3. The consistent community support for the school budget
4. The abundance of school and extracurricular programs offered to students
5. The development of mutually beneficial partnerships
6. The maintenance of safe, exceptionally clean buildings
7. The collaboration of staff leading to embedded professional development
8. The creation of a child-centered food services program

Recommendations

1. Ensure that policies are in place prior to enacting procedures
2. Devise a means of improving data management to better inform instruction
3. Acquire and use interactive technologies in instruction
4. Improve and expand the balanced literacy program

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Principals of member schools must report to the Committee 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 Committee'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 students with limited English proficiency