

Greely High School
Special Progress Report
December 21, 2007

Recommendation 1

Classification: In Progress

Create school-wide rubrics with a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric for each of the schools' academic expectations.

In the spring of 2007, the Greely High School faculty explored ways in which our mission could be revised to include appropriate school-wide academic expectations that would be measurable for all students. The Steering Committee reexamined the Mission Statement and identified three school-wide expectations. Specifically, our revised mission now includes the following:

Students at GHS will:

- Think critically
- Write effectively
- Deliver effective oral presentations

The original academic expectations were categorized as departmental expectations so that content area teachers could revise and design appropriate assessments for their content area. During the summer planning session, a group of twenty-three staff members provided feedback on the professional development time and resources necessary to support the implementation of the revised mission including the three school-wide expectations. Additionally, a variety of rubrics were examined as ways to most effectively measure student performance in these three areas.

A new professional development committee was formed during the summer of 2007 and charged with facilitating the work on school-wide rubrics throughout the year. On August 29, 2007, the morning session of the professional development day was devoted to the instructional importance of school-wide rubrics with a focus on writing. The staff began to work with implementing school-wide writing rubric tailoring it to specific assignments, students and course work.

On October 26, the faculty formally adopted the revised mission and, in November, the professional development committee created a work plan for the remainder of the year. The faculty convened in appropriate groups to discuss and evaluate student work and is in the process of determining agreement on a targeted level of performance for writing. During professional development time, the faculty will begin to explore ways in which students' critical thinking can be measured and will review options for a practical school-wide rubric to measure critical thinking. In the 2008/2009 academic year, our professional development will reflect a similar process in order to measure student achievement on delivering effective oral presentations.

Recommendation 2

Classification: Completed

Complete the formal identification of indicators to be used to assess the school's progress in achieving the civic and social school-wide expectations.

The Dean of Students has been collecting data to measure our school's progress on the indicators designed to assess the achievement of our civic and social expectations. Presently, data is collected on the following:

1. Number of students participating in community service
2. Number of students participating in co-curricular activities
3. Number of students dropping out of school
4. Daily attendance
5. Suspensions
6. Friday Detentions
7. Number of students receiving D's or F's in coursework
8. Transition survey data

Each of these indicators has been calibrated to a specific civic and social expectation. For example, co-curricular student involvement is viewed as an indicator of our students "actively pursuing their intellectual and social growth." Data from these indicators were also presented to the faculty in June 2007. Faculty feedback served as the basis for summer planning goals, which included a focus on increasing student attendance and designing ways to ensure all students feel connected to school. Data from grade reports is now used as the criteria for more frequent and timely interventions such as staffings and parental meetings for students at risk of failure. In the fall of 2007, the indicators listed were reviewed by the Follow Up Committee to formally identify them as our instruments to measure progress in these areas. Future consideration will be given to include ways to measure academic integrity as part of our ongoing evaluation of the school's progress in meeting our civic and social expectations.

Recommendation 3

Classification: In Progress

Develop a plan and a timetable to ensure that all curriculum documents clearly prescribe content, integrate school-wide learning expectations, suggest instructional strategies and suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.

During the summer of 2007, the Follow Up Committee and the district curriculum coordinator examined this recommendation. Based on our priority to revise the school's mission and implement school-wide rubrics to support instruction and assessment, it was decided to begin to focus on this recommendation in 2008, once the school-wide rubrics are adopted and implemented. Professional development time will be devoted to writing curriculum documents, prescribing content and connecting them to the academic expectations. The schedule for this work will be determined during the 2008 summer planning sessions. Our current work in writing

curriculum for an International Baccalaureate application will provide a basis for school-wide curriculum work.

Recommendation 4

Classification: In Progress

Ensure that the curriculum in all areas appropriately emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.

In January and February of 2008, two consecutive professional development sessions will be devoted to discussing our curriculum as it relates to the topic of depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. A team of three teachers will be leading this work in both full and small group discussions. Based on these in-service workshops, recommendations for addressing the tension of depth over breadth will be incorporated into our overall plan for curriculum review and revision as described in Recommendation 3.

In addition to this effort, twelve faculty members participated in Theory of Knowledge training as part of our implementation of the International Baccalaureate program. This work, in conjunction with teacher IB training in content areas, will serve as the basis for our overall curriculum review to ensure sufficient emphasis on depth of understanding over breadth of coverage in our future curriculum design.

Recommendation 5

Classification: Completed

Ensure that the teacher evaluation plan is applied in an equitable manner in keeping with its stated guidelines and with a focus on improving instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

In September, the new assistant principal and principal discussed ways to improve the application and effectiveness of the teacher evaluation system. On October 1, 2007, a six-point administrative memo was distributed to all staff to address these recommendations. The following changes were made:

1. Action Plan Forms in accordance with the Teacher Evaluation System are required for those beginning the three-year evaluation cycle.
2. The link between a teacher's stated goal and student learning needs to be demonstrated.
3. Artifacts of student work from the direct observation of probationary staff are now included in post conferences. For non-probationary teachers, student work that demonstrated progress on stated goals is encouraged and discussed.
4. During conferences, attention is given to ensuring that goals were written in a meaningful and standardized way.

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5. Conferences with the principal or assistant principal are held for staff when they submit their final reports at the conclusion of the three-year cycle.
6. The principal and assistant principal regularly monitor adherence to all deadlines.

The expectations are that the evaluation system becomes a more meaningful aspect of the faculty's professional growth and addresses the need for equity and instructional improvement.

Recommendation 6

Classification: In Progress

Develop a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics.

The follow-up committee met in August and September 2007 to determine the best way to meet this recommendation. Additionally, Our School Based Planning Team analyzed this recommendation in its meeting on October 17, 2007. An initial plan was drafted to address this recommendation over the course of the next three years. The following steps outline our response.

1. On October 26, 2007, the faculty unanimously approved a revised mission identifying three school-wide academic expectations for measurement. Our focus will be on all students thinking critically, writing effectively and delivering effective oral presentations.
2. A revised school-wide writing rubric was adopted on October 26, 2007. During the 2007-2008 school year teachers are collaborating to determine an acceptable level of performance in writing based on student work.
3. The Professional Development Committee will facilitate work on a school-wide rubric on critical thinking with a target date for adoption to be determined in spring of 2009. A rubric on oral presentation will be developed in the 2008/2009 school year. The Professional Development Committee will plan work sessions to implement the use of school wide rubrics in critical thinking and oral presentations.
4. During the course of our School Based Planning Team meetings, in the spring of 2008 and fall of 2009, department heads will determine which content area has primary and secondary responsibility for each school-wide expectation.
5. A task force will be formed to determine how the results of the assessments on school-wide expectations will be recorded and reported to the community.
6. The School Based Planning Team and the Student Assistance Team will review the data generated to determine remediation, student support, trends, and communication to the greater school community at large.

Recommendation 7

Classification: Completed

Develop a plan and establish benchmarks to be used to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations.

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In the fall of 2007, the Follow Up Committee examined the data from the identified indicators used to measure our school-wide civic and social expectations. Based on an analysis of the data over the last two years, the group set benchmarks as a measure of our success in each of the following areas:

1. Community service: minimum acceptable hours - 5000;
Minimum number of volunteer groups – 13;
Minimum number of first semester senior privileges contingent upon a service project – 50;
Minimum acceptable enrollment (10 students) to run a service learning class one semester each school year.
2. Co-curricular involvement: Minimum number of participants – 650;
Minimum number of clubs – 22;
Minimum percentage of students participating in at least one athletic activity – 68%;
3. Maintain dropout rate between 0 and 2%;
4. Maintain an average daily attendance of no less than 96%;
5. Reduce total number of suspensions to less than 100, totaling no more than 250 days.
6. Reduce the number of Friday Detentions to no more than 150.

The Dean of Students and the Assistant Principal will actively monitor this data to ensure that our benchmarks are met yearly. The data derived from these indicators will also be reported to and reviewed by all staff each year to generate feedback for future goal setting and interventions.

Recommendation 8

Classification: In Progress

Ensure that all teachers base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.

The plan to ensure that all teachers base classroom assessment of student learning on the school-wide rubrics is documented in our responses to Recommendation 1 and 6. Additionally, the professional development work on using school-wide rubrics as the basis for instruction has provided faculty ways to adapt rubrics as appropriate to meet specific course expectations for a variety of classes, content, and activities. As school-wide rubrics increasingly become a part of our instructional culture, administrators will incorporate their use as an aspect of formal classroom observation. Professional development will continue to be devoted to tailoring school-wide rubrics to measure departmental expectations and developing course specific learning rubrics that are linked to the academic expectations in the mission.

Recommendation 9

Classification: In Progress

Resolve the heating and ventilation issues that compromise the comfortable use of the library and the adjacent computer lab.

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As part of the ongoing building renovation project, new air handling units, ventilators, and an air conditioning system are being considered as an option to address the heating and ventilation issues in the library. Air conditioning will be installed in both computer labs. Controls for the library heating and ventilation system will also be updated and calibrated.

Recommendation 10

Classification: Completed

Verify the passage of the \$14 million bond issue and provide the timeline for the completion of the renovation/addition to the school and provide details regarding the anticipated improvements to the Greely High School facility.

The voters of Cumberland/North Yarmouth approved the \$14 million bond issue on November 7, 2006. A copy of the referendum result and bond is available in the office of Finance/Human Relations/Operations. Presently, construction is well under way. The anticipated completion date for the new connector that will link the old institute building and the main building is July 2008. The renovation to the main building began in June 2007. The science labs in the main building will be completely renovated by the fall of 2008. Additional projects for renovation include new exterior windows, roof insulation, and mechanical upgrades. The last phase of the renovation project will be in the pool and locker room areas. This will be completed by the spring of 2009. Overall, anticipated improvements include 65,000 square feet of renovated space in the main building and 32,000 new square feet in the connector. This construction project will feature twenty classrooms, a language lab, guidance and administrative office space, and a re-oriented entrance to the high school campus. Finally, the classrooms will be re-organized by department areas to enhance faculty collaboration and curriculum planning.

Recommendation 11

Classification: Completed

Verify that the physical plant currently meets all applicable federal and state laws and is compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations.

The physical plant currently meets all applicable federal and state laws and is in compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations. Documentation regarding compliance with ADA, fire department regulations, and State standards are available through the Director of Finance/Human Relations/Operations and the Facilities Supervisor. Our district's insurance provider, the Maine School Management Association, can confirm compliance with regulations.

Recommendation 12

Classification: In Progress

Verify the remediation of all cleanliness, bathroom plumbing, and drainage issues.

The Facilities Supervisor verified in the fall of 2007 that the work in the problem areas of bathroom plumbing has been completed. Additionally, all bathrooms will be required to meet

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current ADA regulations as part of the renovation project. A new lavatory will be installed in the senior wing of the main building, and any poorly functioning fixtures and drains will be replaced as part of the renovation. Work on overall building cleanliness remains ongoing. Part-time custodial support has been added during the school day. A student work program, monitored by our School Resource Officer, has been helpful in this regard and a review of lunch supervision practices is under way. Additionally, the Service Learning class is working on a plan to beautify the campus and raise awareness around the need for attention to cleanliness. A student initiated community service recycling project should be implemented second semester to address any litter from bottles and cans. Finally, the assistant principal and the maintenance director developed a communications protocol to more effectively address building cleanliness and safety issues.