

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

Commission on Public Schools



Commission on Public Schools

**Report of the Visiting Team for
Machias Memorial High School**

Machias, ME

05-01-2022 - 05-04-2022

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School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Schools and Community

Machias Memorial High School (MMHS) is a public high school consisting of a grade 9-12 configuration. MMHS is located in Machias which is the county seat of Washington County, Maine. MMHS makes up half of the Machias School Department. The Machias School Department is 1 of 11 school departments that belong to AOS 96.

The current student population of MMHS is 166. In the last 10 years, enrollment has been as low as 103, though there has been a steady increase in the past 7 years. The student body at MMHS is 96% White, 2% Hispanic, 1% African American/Black, and 1% Other.

Machias Memorial High School draws students from Machias, as well as from surrounding Washington County towns. 70 students, or 42.4%, of MMHS students are Machias residents. 95 students, or 57.6%, of MMHS students are tuitioned from towns who have school choice. Machias students attend school in Machias unless they are offered and accept a scholarship from Washington Academy (WA) or they choose to pay tuition. WA is an independent school, which is located 4 miles away in East Machias. School boards from the surrounding towns provide their residents a choice between high schools. This creates a competitive environment and renders it difficult to anticipate future enrollment.

For MMHS, the per pupil expenditure is \$10,534 for the fiscal year 2021. This is significantly lower than the 2021 state average of \$11,773.92. The local share to support education, through taxation, is 19% of the town budget.

Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology (CWCIT) is the Career and Technical Education (CTE) center and is located on multiple campuses serving Down East students. Currently, CWCIT has 9 programs. Building Trades and Culinary Arts are located on the Machias campus. Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement is located on the campus of Narraguagus Junior/Senior High School in Harrington, Maine. Aquaculture is located on the Jonesport-Beals campus in Jonesport, Maine. A new facility was renovated in Columbia, Maine to serve as the central campus for CWCIT with its own teachers and administration. The programs located in Columbia include Automotive Technology, Diesel Mechanics, Early Childhood Education, Welding Technology, and Health Occupations/CNA. A Commercial Driver's License program will be added for next year. 37 MMHS students currently participate in CWCIT programs. This represents 22% of our population.

The Machias School Department also has an Alternative Education Program. Students who are at risk of not graduating with their peers can apply for acceptance into this program. Students who require an alternative schedule to best meet their needs have been included in this program as well. As part of the Alternative Education Program, students are required to enroll in a CTE Program or secure employment. This develops employability skills and habits. 11 MMHS students are currently enrolled in Alternative Education. This represents 6.7% of our population.

The population of Machias has declined over the last decade. In 2017, the population was 2,071 and as of 2020, the population has dropped to 1,457.

The 2020 median household income was \$23,261. This was an approximately \$5000 decrease from 2017 and a staggering \$11,000 decline from figures only as far back as 2012. Of current 2022 students at MMHS, 43.3% receive free lunch and 13.4% qualify for reduced lunch. These figures are based on those who complete and submit a Free and Reduced Lunch Household Application annually. With free lunch for all Maine students this year, fewer applications were received. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the rate of eligible students is higher than reported.

The US Census Bureau reported in 2020 that 28.1% of the population in Machias, Maine lives below the poverty level and 24.8% of the population of school aged children lives in poverty. The poverty rate of people aged 18-64 is 35%. Out of 586 households in Machias, over 55% have income plus benefits less than \$25,000 per year.

(<https://data.census.gov>)

Student Statistics (last 4 years)

Drop Out Rate

20/21 - Data Unavailable (3 students dropped out from this cohort)

19/20 - Data Unavailable (2 students dropped out from this cohort)

18/19 - 6.87%

17/18 - 30.23% (out of the original cohort of 43 students, 13 dropped out)

Graduation Rate

20/21 - 100%

19/20 - 91.3%

18/19 - 94%

17/18 - 79%

Percentage of students who attend 4-year colleges

20/21 - 35%

19/20 - 43%

18/19 - 30%

17/18 - 31%

Percentage of students who attend 2-year colleges

20/21 - 22%

19/20 - 31%

18/19 - 26%

17/18 - 31%

Percentage of students who enter directly into the workforce

20/21 - 30%

19/20 - 22%

18/19 - 30%

17/18 - 34%

Percentage of students who enter the military

20/21 - 9%

19/20 - 2%

18/19 - 4%

17/18 - 0%

Student and Teacher Attendance

From the fall of 2014 to the spring of 2019, the daily attendance rate of students has ranged from a low of 85% to a high of 90%. The average over those years was 88%. The Covid-19 pandemic made tracking difficult in the 2019-2020 school year. We left school on March 13, 2020 and utilized remote learning for the remainder of the year. Attendance protocols were developed and adhered to, and Power School data reports an attendance rate of 91%, however it is difficult to say whether this is an accurate representation of academic engagement for all students. 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 brought another significant disruption to regular attendance. Required quarantines were implemented frequently, and there is no doubt that these occurrences have impacted our data. For 2020-2021, teachers had access to a remote student code in PowerSchool, which indicated that the student was working from home. The 2020-2021 attendance rate was 92%. The attendance rate for 2021-2022 to date is 89%, however we have stopped using the remote student present code unless a student is full-time remote or the entire student body is working remotely, as in the case of a storm day.

In the 2018-2019 school year, teachers missed a total of 140.5 days due to sickness. In the same time period, teachers took a total of 40.5 personal days. This works out to a 96% total attendance rate with 3% of days missed for sickness or medical appointments and 1% missed for personal reasons. Again, recent years have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Interestingly enough, in 2019-2020 (remote learning end to the year), teachers had a 97% attendance rate (excluding Covid time for quarantine). In the 2020-2021 school year, teachers had a 96% attendance rate (excluding Covid time for quarantine). To date, in the current school year, teachers have a 97% attendance rate excluding Covid time for quarantine). The number of days teachers lost to quarantine was not calculated.

Partnerships

The University of Maine at Machias is a local post-secondary organization offering educational opportunities for our students. MMHS and UMM have a long-standing relationship and have been partnering to provide post-secondary opportunities for MMHS students for many years. MMHS students are able to take UMM courses in person through the school day. Via the Explore EC website, MMHS students are able to register for on-line early college classes within the UMaine System and the Maine Community College System. Some students take advantage of programs through UpWard Bound and Bridge Academy, a CTE opportunity.

Numerous school/business partnerships exist. Machias Savings Bank, Bar Harbor Bank & Trust, Hannaford, Expressions, and Advanced Auto Parts are several examples of businesses that frequently support our schools financially and with programming like internships, job shadow experiences, etc. Recently, MMHS launched a campaign to raise funds for our town/school softball field. Within ten days of putting out a plea, over \$12,000 was donated by area businesses and individuals.

Several community based organizations are also frequent partners. MMHS works closely with the Downeast Salmon Federation, Healthy Acadia, Downeast Community Partners, Maine SeaCoast Mission, and Maine Wild Blueberry Museum and Heritage Center.

Student Recognition

Students at MMHS are recognized for academic, athletic, and civic accomplishments. Seniors are recognized at graduation for “Top Ten” and through specific scholarships for academic performance. We celebrate students who earn honor roll status. Our recent schedule changes have resulted in PowerSchool configuration issues on our end, so for the 2021-2022 school year, all honor roll students for each semester will be recognized at academic awards at the end of the school year. Last year (2020-2021) our academic awards were done via a slide show. Athletic awards have been done after each season in the past. Last year, we shifted to an end of the year celebration including athletes from each season. This was a nice opportunity for more students to share in each other's successes. We will do the same this year.

Student of the quarter awards have been given in the past. Going forward, we will honor student of the semester, and student of the year. Selection criteria include personal characteristics such as attitude, teachability, good citizenship, helpfulness, completion of assignments, kindness, and tolerance of others, as well as academic standing.

Our PAWS program has not been practiced as widely in the past two years, but we still have a board up and one of our staff members did a presentation at a staff meeting earlier this year. We intend to roll this out again in the new school year after we make some modifications to connect it more with our mission, vision, and core values. PAWS is part of our PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) program. Students are recognized for their positive behaviors. Whenever a teacher or staff member observes a student doing something positive, it is reinforced by awarding a PAW to that student. PAWS are stickers that are posted on a board in the cafeteria. After a certain target is reached a school-wide reward is given. Past rewards have included ice cream sundaes, bonfires, and pizza parties.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

Machias Memorial High School Core Values and Beliefs

We believe

- in respect for self, others, and environment.
- it is important to honor personal choices.
- education should be tailored to post-graduation goals.

Machias Memorial High School Mission Statement

We respect our students as individuals, as members of our Downeast community, and as citizens of the world. We ready students to engage in all aspects of their education and to pursue individual pathways customized with applicable knowledge and skills. In a safe and supportive environment, enhanced by healthy relationships and communication, we prepare students to advance in life.

Machias Memorial High School Vision

MMHS ~ Keeping it REAL

Machias Memorial High School graduates are READY and ENGAGED to ADVANCE in LIFE.

LEARNING CULTURE

Learning Culture

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

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

STUDENT LEARNING

Student Learning

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

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

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Professional Practices

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

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

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support

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

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

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning Resources

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

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

Introduction

Introduction

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is the oldest of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States. Since its inception in 1885, the Association has awarded membership and accreditation to those educational institutions in the six-state New England region who seek voluntary affiliation.

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees, which supervises the work of three Commissions: the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS); the Commission on Public Schools (CPS), which is comprised of the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools (CPEMHS), and the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI); and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit

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

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of four members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Decennial Accreditation visit to Machias Memorial High School in Machias, Maine. The visiting team members spent four days conducting an in-person visit to the school; reviewed the self-reflection, Collaborative Conference report, and Decennial Summary Report documents; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents; and visited classes to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee on Public Secondary Schools' and Public Elementary and Middle Schools' Standards for Accreditation and the degree to which the school is making progress toward their identified priority areas for

growth as indicated in the school's improvement/growth plan.

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

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

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.1a

MMHS provides a physically safe environment for students and adults. Classrooms are locked during the day. Exterior windows have functioning blinds, and the school is researching shades for interior windows. Doors have been replaced in the gymnasium and furnace room, and the malfunctioning East wing door has been fixed. Classroom doors remain locked throughout the school day. Machias Public Schools have developed a positive working relationship with area law enforcement, and a school resource officer is at MMHS one day per week. The principal serves on a campus-wide safety committee, a school safety committee has been formed, and a campus Threat Assessment Team has been formed. MMHS staff is working collaboratively with Rose M. Gaffney staff, area law enforcement agencies (town, county, and state), the fire department, industry (concerning possible chemical disasters), and the Washington County Emergency Management Agency in order to update and revise the safety plan.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.2a

MMHS has a written document that includes its Core Values, Beliefs & Vision of the Graduate, however, it does not clearly identify specific and measurable skills, knowledge, and dispositions of a graduate of the school. During the 2022-23 school year, the school plans to use newly developed Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to flesh out the skills, knowledge, and dispositions of the MMHS graduate. This will drive the work on curriculum alignment.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Foundational Element 2.2a

Most of the school's departments have written curricula for each course which are in a consistent format. While individual teachers have created units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, this practice is not universal across the curriculum. Additionally, instructional strategies and assessment practices vary from department to department and from teacher to teacher. It was noted at the Collaborative Conference visit that the school needs to develop a written curriculum that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. The school has identified its next steps, including forming PLCs to collaboratively work on reviewing and writing curriculum that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; instructional strategies; and assessment practices, and integrates the school's vision of the graduate

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Foundational Element 3.1a

Following the Collaborative Conference Visit in November of 2019, the school created a highly detailed School Improvement/Growth Plan based upon the recommendations of the Visiting Committee's report and the school's identified Priority Areas for Growth. The original plan was recently revised and updated to ensure that it is relevant as it is used to inform decision-making in the school.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Elements 4.1a - Learning Support

Foundational Elements 4.1a

MMHS provides some timely, directed and coordinated interventions for students. These interventions include counseling services, daily academic interventions, health services, and an alternative education program. Class sizes are small, which allows teachers to provide academic interventions and some differentiation within the classroom. As the school reimagines its schedule and operations following the pandemic, they are considering the return of their "Bulldog Block" to provide more opportunities for student intervention. MMHS offers credit recovery for students who have failed to pass courses from the previous semester, where students can complete missing work or access reteaching opportunities.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Foundational Element 5.1a

The MMHS buildings and plant adequately support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services. While some facility issues still exist, there are plans in place to remediate them, and federal pandemic school relief funding has been dedicated to addressing many of the issues. Several classrooms have been renovated, a dedicated nurse's office has been created, and custodial staff has been increased. MMHS has recently made several key network upgrades, including infrastructure upgrades and the installation of a VOIP phone system.

Several outdoor learning spaces have been created behind the school including an outdoor learning pavilion and an outdoor fitness area with numerous exercise stations, as well as a small network of trails. Currently, there are plans to add two classrooms to the campus, a commercial kitchen to facilitate food service in the building, and plans to update and upgrade various other key areas of the physical plant.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Elements Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

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

Priority Area 1

Priority Area

Establish School-Wide Professional Learning Communities

Action, Impact, and Growth

Establishing school-wide professional learning communities (PLCs) remains a priority in the Machias Memorial High School (MMHS) growth plan but has not yet been accomplished.

While there has been ongoing discussion and some history of collaborative work along the lines of a PLC, there is not currently a structure in place nor is there a common understanding of what PLCs are and the ways in which they can operate. The school has outlined clear steps to develop and implement them by the beginning of the 2022-23 school year. Through the implementation of PLCs, MMHS wishes to formalize a collaborative teaching environment and encourage teachers to participate in a continuous cycle of research, reflection, and improvement.

This goal was established prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the months immediately following the Collaborative Conference visit in 2019, Brian Leavitt (then Principal) made plans to set the stage for PLCs with a voluntary book study. During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, this "book club" met remotely. The book selected was *Taking Social Emotional Learning Schoolwide: The Formative Five Success Skills for Students and Staff*, by Thomas Hoerr. Participants used a text analysis protocol called "The Four A's" to guide their discussion. Staff report finding value in the activity, and as a result those who participated now work together to incorporate Social-Emotional Learning concepts in their classroom instructional strategies and into the school environment.

A change in administration coincided with the changing school dynamic during the pandemic. Teacher leaders with expertise in this concept have been identified and have helped write goals for establishing school-wide PLCs. The current principal is working to increase her knowledge of PLCs in order to effectively guide the process, as she wishes it to evolve organically from staff participation rather than being dictated top-down.

In its School Improvement/Growth Plan, the school has outlined key next steps to developing PLCs. They intend to engage in professional development in the spring of 2022 to ensure all staff members share an understanding of PLCs, their operations, and goals. This will serve as a launchpad for collaborative discussion to develop the PLCs for the 2022-23 school year.

The principal and the faculty expect that PLCs will help facilitate the accomplishment of key tasks, including completion of the MMHS Vision of the Graduate, refining and aligning curriculum, improving and invigorating instruction, and encouraging consistency in teaching and assessment practices. Further, PLCs will allow MMHS to increase staff communication, provide mentorship opportunities to reduce the loss of institutional memory due to turnover, and create a protocol for the effective analysis of data relating to student learning.

While there are many characteristics of PLCs present in the work done by MMHS staff, including a desire to work collaboratively and a climate of inclusivity and shared decision making, there is a need for more formal structural underpinnings as well as dedicated time for staff to effectively create and engage in the valuable work of a PLC.

Recommended Next Steps

Next Steps:

- Complete professional development readings to create a unified understanding of PLC structure and goals
- Collaboratively plan staff meetings/professional development for the 2022-23 school year, focusing on using the PLC model to continue curriculum work
- Develop PLC model by the start of the school year 2022-23
- Dedicate sufficient formal time during the school day to allow for the PLCs to function effectively
- Develop and implement school-wide protocols and structures that will support effective practice in each PLC

Sources of Evidence

- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- school summary report
- teacher interview

Priority Area 2

Priority Area

Establish a Vision of the Graduate and a Viable and Guaranteed Curriculum

Action, Impact, and Growth

Machias Memorial High School (MMHS) has a written document that includes its Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate (VoG), however, it does not clearly identify the specific and measurable skills, knowledge, and dispositions that will be expected of a graduate of the school. During the 2022-23 school year, the school plans to use newly developed Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to identify the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that students will be expected to demonstrate prior to graduating from MMHS. This effort will drive future work on curriculum alignment to ensure that the appropriate skills, knowledge, and dispositions are taught and assessed in classrooms throughout the school.

Following the return to in-person instruction in the fall of the 2021-22 school year, MMHS worked on refocusing its Core Values, Beliefs & Vision of the Graduate and rebranding their school. This process was inclusive of the entire school community, engaging parents, community members, staff members, and students to ensure that the final product would reflect their beliefs. Stakeholders completed surveys that asked what they felt students should know and be able to do upon graduation.

Survey feedback reaffirmed their core belief that it is critical to allow MMHS students the room to customize their goals for the paths they choose in life. Staff met to discuss and develop a new VoG. They began the work in person and then transitioned to working on a collaborative digital document in order to better gather and refine ideas. The principal created a draft based on this work, and engaged staff in an iterative revision process until a final version was settled upon. This version of the Core Values, Beliefs, & Vision of the Graduate statement was left intentionally broad:

Machias Memorial High School Core Values and Beliefs

We believe in respect for self, others, and the environment. It is important to honor personal choices. Education should be tailored to post-graduation goals.

Machias Memorial High School Mission Statement

We respect our students as individuals, as members of our Downeast community, and as citizens of the world. We ready students to engage in all aspects of their education and to pursue individual pathways customized with applicable knowledge and skills. In a safe and supportive environment, enhanced by healthy relationships and communication, we prepare students to advance in life.

Machias Memorial High School Vision of the Graduate

MMHS ~ Keeping it REAL

Machias Memorial High School graduates are READY and ENGAGED to ADVANCE in LIFE.

The school plans to further develop the vision of the graduate statement by enumerating the transferable skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for the future success of their students. This work will be completed collaboratively in PLCs.

While the VoG is not currently complete and formally documented, the updated vision statement reflects the school's culture of supporting each student in achieving their goals. The principal and faculty expect that the fully completed VoG will have a positive impact on both teaching and learning. A unified VoG will provide guidance to align curriculum, update and adjust teaching practices to better meet the needs of all learners, and make it easier

for staff to support students. As students become familiar with the VoG, they will be better able to see the practical applications of their classes at MMHS and take ownership of their learning to achieve their post-secondary goals.

Students are already beginning to engage with the new mission and vision. Students in the Digital Marketing class have created new logos and branding for the school, as well as a new website, and are working on designing new banners with the school's vision to be displayed in public student spaces. They also produce a weekly newsletter that highlights 'R.E.A.L.' stories, providing examples of how coursework at MMHS is supporting students' post-secondary goals. The most recent issue had a brief story that focused on the authentic learning taking place in the Digital Marketing class.

The school does not currently have a formal process to assess and communicate an individual learner's progress towards achieving the school's VoG, nor a process to communicate whole-school progress towards learner achievement. In the past, students were assigned to a 'Home Base' teacher for their four years at MMHS where they kept portfolios of their work and presented their progress as learners during annual student-led conferences. This allowed students, parents, and teachers to regularly evaluate how a student's course choices and achievements aligned with their future goals. Home Base was suspended during COVID, and as the program is revived, it is intended to be a vehicle for assessing and providing feedback on each learner's progress.

Recommended Next Steps

Next Steps:

- Fully develop the vision of the graduate statement by enumerating the transferable skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to ensure the future success of all students
- Develop and implement a formal process to assess and communicate an individual learner's progress towards achieving the school's vision of the graduate
- Develop and implement a process to communicate annual whole-school progress toward learner achievement
- Ensure the completed vision of the graduate is embedded in the taught curriculum

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- priority area meetings
- school summary report
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Priority Area 3

Priority Area

Create and implement a plan for improved healthcare, mental health, and mindfulness for students.

Action, Impact, and Growth

Machias Memorial High School (MMHS) has taken several steps that directly relate to the goal of improving healthcare, mental health, and mindfulness for its students. The school now has a nurse located solely on the Machias campus, who alternates her time between the high school and the Rose Gaffney Elementary School which is located nearby on the same property. Additionally, the school has also created a dedicated health office that provides an opportunity for students to access the nurse in a confidential environment. The space has room for the storage of supplies, a place for the nurse to see students as needed, and an isolation room to ensure privacy and safety. The school also works collaboratively with local doctors to get students' annual physicals done when needed, and referrals for such things as psychiatrists and other mental health services.

Although the school has budgeted and advertised for a school social worker for several years, they have been unable to fill that position. The guidance counselor, in addition to all of her other responsibilities, currently provides some individual and group sessions for students who have mental health needs, both as a drop-in service and formally on a regular basis with some students. The school also offers time and space for Sunrise Opportunities to come to the school to provide individual counseling to students. They have also increased the guidance secretary position to full time.

MMHS has developed a "Wednesday Schedule" that provides "high interest, low-stress classes taught by interested staff that offer students and staff the opportunity to form relationships while engaging in active learning that uniquely embodies the essence of our mission, vision, and core values. Students take part in course offerings ranging from sewing to fire and glass, self-care, to nature writing, to Life 101." Students also have access to Credit Recovery and Advanced Placement (AP) classes during this time. One class that is offered during this time is Breakthrough Youth which is done in collaboration with Downeast Community Partners (DCP). This class teaches students about many aspects of transitioning into adult life, dealing with topics such as family and financial planning and needs, as well as decision making and consequences.

There were some programs that were eliminated due to Covid that are in the process of being updated with the intent to reinstate them into the schedule next year, including the intervention opportunity Bulldog Block and the Homebase program which functioned as an informal advisory period. Lastly, in the last year, the school has added both an interventionist and a person to work with students on credit recovery.

Several outdoor learning areas have been created over the last couple of years. They constructed a spacious pavilion where classes can be held and students can eat lunch. They also installed an outdoor gym with a wide variety of outdoor fitness equipment and created several beautiful walking trails on the property to encourage students to enjoy nature and the outdoors. The school also has three buildings located behind the school which provide a variety of educational opportunities for its students. The industrial arts building houses the CTE Building Trades class, a building that houses both Alternative Education classes and the Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG) program, and the gymnasium where all of the physical education classes take place.

Although the school purportedly has a Student Assistance Team, the referral process for interventions is done on an informal basis. The consensus is that due to the size of the school and the closeness of the community, teachers are very connected to the students, aware of their needs, and are able to identify when a student needs extra support. The students' needs are all met on an individual basis and the staff goes above and beyond to assist their students in many ways, including staying after school to help them with work, finding resources for clothes and food when needed, and making sure that all students have an adult in their life on whom they can rely.

Adding a full-time nurse to this campus and updating her facilities in this building has allowed for more consistent and reliable medical care for the students. Although the school has not been successful in hiring a social worker, they have been able to increase the guidance secretary from half time to full time in order to assist the guidance counselor who is doing both guidance and social work with students. Students are very enthusiastic when discussing their Wednesday classes and really seem to enjoy the flexibility and opportunities they have on that day. While some students use this time to do AP classes, take online college classes, or work in a school-related job experience, most students are taking electives that are of interest to them. The outdoor pavilion and walking trails are very popular, offering opportunities for teachers and students to be able to get up and go outside and get some fresh air. The students are also very excited about the addition of the JMG building and they spoke frequently about how they enjoyed the fundraising to build it and what a sense of accomplishment they felt after completing the process.

Recommended Next Steps

Next Steps:

- Reinststate Home Base and Bulldog Block as planned
- Fill the social worker position as intended or pursue alternative methods to help meet students' social-emotional needs
- Implement a formal referral and tracking process for interventions

Sources of Evidence

- facility tour
- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- school support staff
- school summary report
- students
- teachers

Priority Area 4

Priority Area

Create and Implement a Maintenance and Renovation Plan

Action, Impact, and Growth

As a result of the Collaborative Conference which was held in November 2019, Machias Memorial High School (MMHS) drafted the *Machias Public Schools Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plan*. The plan, which was drafted by the school's principal, delineates key building systems and their management, as well as care of the buildings and grounds with the mission of maintaining a healthy, comfortable, energy-efficient, and economical campus for educational and community use. The school's principal and part-time maintenance supervisor lead a committee and make modifications to the plan as needs arise and plan to have the committee regularly update and prioritize the plan every December.

The development and implementation of this plan resulted in improved communication and collaboration between administrators and those involved with school maintenance which is manifested in an improved campus. Unfortunately, the maintenance director is currently filled by an individual who also has several part-time job responsibilities in the school district. In the absence of a maintenance director who is able to devote more focused attention to the job, much of the responsibility for the plan's implementation falls on the principal, who is unable to devote full attention to the task due to the many other responsibilities she has to manage. Finding an alternative solution, such as a focused campus-wide maintenance director may add a significant level of consistency and efficiency to the process of maintaining the school buildings and grounds. Despite the difficulty of addressing maintenance issues at the school, students, staff, and community members are proud of the recent improvements made to their campus.

Since implementing the plan, the school updated its network last fall and, due to identified high lead levels, has plans to update its water pipes. There are also plans to upgrade the electrical system, add lighting to the added outdoor facilities, repave the roads and parking areas at the school, install new energy-efficient windows, and expand the number and coverage of its security cameras. Many of these things can be funded through Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) and the committee reports that the board is supportive of the upgrades and improvements that need to be done. There are also plans to add two classrooms to the campus to accommodate increasing enrollment, and the installation of a commercial kitchen to facilitate food service in the building to improve the student lunch program.

Recommended Next Steps

Next Steps:

- Ensure regular maintenance meetings to review and revise the Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plan to meet the needs of the school
- Complete work on the high school kitchen area to allow the school to have its own lunch program that is independent of the elementary school
- Restructure the supervision of the Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plan to ensure focused attention to the physical needs of the school
- Complete work on the kitchen area of the high school to allow the high school to have its own lunch program that is independent of the elementary school

Sources of Evidence

- facility tour
- priority area meetings
- school board
- school leadership
- school summary report

Priority Area 5

Priority Area

Write all curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; instructional strategies; and assessment practices, and integrates the school's vision of the graduate

Action, Impact, and Growth

Machias Memorial High School (MMHS) is the only high school in AOS 96. At the time of the collaborative conference most, if not all, departments had written curricula for each course however, they were not in a consistent format. While individual teachers have created units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, this practice is not universal across the curriculum. Additionally, instructional strategies and assessment practices vary from department to department and from teacher to teacher. It was noted at the Collaborative Conference visit that the school needs to develop a written curriculum that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices.

Since the Collaborative Conference visit, all existing curriculum documents have been organized into uniform Google Drive folders organized by content area. The majority of the curriculum has been recorded in a consistent form and includes units of study and content standards. There is a general consensus that the current version of their written curriculum is a representation of what is currently being taught. The school acknowledges that there is still a great deal of work to do to refine its curriculum documents and align them to the Standards for Accreditation. They address this need within their School Improvement Plan and anticipate starting the next phase of this work as part of their Professional Learning Community (PLC) work in the coming school year. Within their School Improvement Plan, there is a goal to begin to meet regularly at the start of the 2022-2023 school year with district-wide administration to discuss resources needed to complete the curriculum work. They have outlined a goal to complete the work around the completion of curriculum documents by the end of the 22-23 school year and plan to have the documents ready to publish by the start of the 23-24 school year. They plan to accomplish this goal by dedicating at least one early release day per month to work solely on the curriculum.

Even though the school has not yet met its goal of developing its curriculum in a consistent format throughout the school, they have been able to create a baseline to begin the additional curriculum work that they plan to start within the PLC. An additional impact is that teachers have begun to think about ways that they can begin to enhance their practices and identify ways to collaborate with other teachers. It is reported that this work already has led to the enhanced reflection of current practices. Additionally, their initial actions have established a foundation for the future curriculum work that MMHS plans to begin in the upcoming school year.

Recommended Next Steps

Next Steps:

- Establish PLC time for teachers to collaboratively work on reviewing and writing curriculum that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; instructional strategies; and assessment practices, and integrates the school's vision of the graduate
- Establish weekly/biweekly meeting schedule for central office staff and school administrator to coordinate and facilitate the development and revision of curriculum
- Prioritize professional development time to continue to create a unified curriculum
- Develop and implement common expectations for curriculum and curriculum documents

- Establish a system to review and revise curriculum documents
- Provide adequate time for staff to complete curriculum work

Sources of Evidence

- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- school support staff
- school summary report
- teachers

Priority Area 6

Priority Area

Develop a school improvement/growth plan that includes school-specific goals and informs decision-making in the school.

Action, Impact, and Growth

During the Collaborative Conference visit in November 2019, it was determined that Machias Memorial High School was not meeting Foundational Element 3.1a which states that “The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.” Despite having four Priority Areas for Growth which had been identified by the school through a comprehensive self-reflection process, another goal was added to ensure that the school would take action to meet this particular Foundational Element. Within weeks of the visit, a draft of a School Improvement/Growth Plan (SIGP) was created based on all of the Priority Areas for Growth that were included in the visiting committee's report. The draft plan was presented to the faculty with a request for feedback and on January 29, 2020, the plan was formally accepted by the faculty and the implementation process began.

The SIGP is very highly developed and includes specific categories such as Statement of Need, Goals/Objectives, Theory of Action, Alignment with the Standards for Accreditation, Measure of Success, and Specific Action Steps with a timeline, Person(s) responsible, Resources Needed, etc. Following its approval, one part of the plan that was initially implemented began the process to establish a Professional Learning Community (PLC) by creating a voluntary book study group to lay the foundation for collaborative professional work in the future. Unfortunately, further implementation of the SIGP was sidelined by the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic and the subsequent, unrelated departure of the principal. The plan was reinvigorated by the new principal in the 2021-22 school year who developed a revised plan which combined several goals but used the same detailed framework.

There has been very little impact as a result of the implementation of this priority area for growth due to the demands imposed by the school's response to the pandemic and its total focus on the social, emotional, and physical health and well-being of their students. However, as a result of the review and revision of the plan and a renewed effort to begin its implementation, teacher leaders have emerged who are energized and eager to participate in the improvement of teaching and learning at MMHS.

Similarly, there has been very little discernible growth as a result of this goal as it is only in its early stages of being implemented. However, the one definite positive sign of growth is that the school now has a very specific, viable improvement/growth plan that provides both structure and direction to the school and its staff in their attempt to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

The growth necessary to continue implementation includes: developing a viable PLC to address many of the specific goals embedded in the SIGP, and creating time for groups of teachers to work collaboratively and productively on the implementation of various aspects of the plan through their participation in a professional learning community.

Recommended Next Steps

Next Steps:

- Implement the elements of the School Improvement/Growth Plan

- Continually update and revise the School Improvement/Growth Plan so that it is always current and reflects significant priorities for change determined by the faculty through their work in PLCs
- Ensure that the School Improvement/Growth Plan informs decision-making in the school

Sources of Evidence

- priority area meetings
- school board
- school leadership
- school summary report
- teachers

Part 3 - Reflection on Student Learning

Reflection on Student Learning

At Machias Memorial High School, some instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student. These are practices that strategically differentiate, individualize and/or personalize learning based on student needs. Formative assessments are intended to be used to adjust instruction and provide support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom to provide structure and support to provide all learners with access to rigorous learning opportunities. Overall, instruction at the school is largely traditional and teacher-centered. However, the small class sizes do still allow for more traditional practices to target individual students and allow the students to have their learning needs met. For example, while doing a group reading activity out of the textbook and summarizing their own reading, the small groups allow for frequent check-ins with each student and give the teacher the ability to adjust instruction. The smaller class sizes at MMHS and the staff's commitment to forming positive relationships with their students provide an opportunity for teachers to personalize learning for each student and each class. Multiple examples of providing pathways that meet each individual student's needs exist at MMHS. These include the Jobs for Maine Graduates program (JMG), different math pathways for each student, access to early college and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and vocational and pre-vocational classes. MMHS also has built-in support for students with IEPs and has an Alternative Education program that meets the individual needs of students. MMHS provides numerous opportunities for internships and early college options as a way to increase choices for students. Many teachers prioritize creating hands-on or project-based alternatives for students who appear to struggle with traditional learning. Other teachers choose to adjust the scope and sequence of a unit or course depending on the students in the class while still meeting the same learning standards. MMHS has found creative ways to meet the learning needs of each student despite having a limited workforce. The school has found multiple instructors who are available to teach part-time to enable the school to increase the number of diverse course offerings as in the case of the Digital Marketing class. Teachers strive to design a curriculum that is easily differentiated to accommodate the diverse learning needs of each student. This allows them to ensure that the work is relevant for each of the current students.

Within the traditional academic classrooms, students occasionally have a variety of opportunities to be active learners in an environment that provides personalized, relevant, and authentic learning opportunities. However, these opportunities are not always purposeful and are not universally found in all classrooms. Personalized learning is practiced in a variety of different ways at MMHS, from having students participate in engineering challenges in applied physics to comparing lessons learned in anatomy to observations from a nursing experience. The Wednesday schedule provides many opportunities for students to choose enrichment activities that they find interesting and partner with an educator who shares their interests. Students can complete AP work, engage in creating Manga, sewing, 3D printing, Nature writing, or any choice of any of the variety of topics covered over the course of the day. Students are also provided with the option of independent study to pursue personalized and relevant learning opportunities and receive academic credit for those experiences. Internships and work-study opportunities also exist for students. One student received credit for working on a lobster boat as part of his school day. The most significant example of student-led learning is the Senior Exhibition project. Seniors are able to work with a faculty member to choose a topic and design a semester-long research project with a variety of different learning outcomes that are designed by the students in collaboration with the supervising faculty member. Topics can range from Mental Health, Natural Medicine Practices, The Health Benefits of Plants, Chess topics, and VTubers. In other subject areas, there is an effort to provide a general theme for students, but they provide numerous opportunities for students to choose how they will meet their learning objectives or may choose a specific topic to meet their overall learning objectives. Students report that the assignments that are most meaningful to them are those with which they have a personal connection. Overall, teachers are working to provide students with the ability to lead some part of their own learning.

Learners benefit from engaging in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills that consist of questioning, analysis, and understanding impacts that prioritize deep understanding and encourage critical and creative thinking skills in some of their courses. The most beneficial learning opportunities are deliberately designed and cognitively challenging. Students are engaged in a variety of different activities that engage them in higher-order thinking skills. In the applied physics class students are given an engineering challenge and need to

develop a solution to the challenge based on applying concepts learned from previous lessons. Teachers effectively use questioning to push students to explore topics and make connections. Senior exhibition projects engage students in long-term higher-order thinking and exploring as they research and develop their projects. MMHS also provides real-life examples of applying problem-solving and higher-order thinking. The industrial arts/building trades class has been building clam traps. The students are required to set up a system for assembly and adapt the design to make a better product. The real-world connection is also demonstrated in the digital marketing class. The class is making connections to the community as they develop and implement a plan to create a website and informational materials for the school. The Wednesday schedule provides students with many opportunities to engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills by exploring a variety of topics in more depth than they typically would be able to if they were part of a larger unit or course.

Learners are able to demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum in some of their classes. Effective practices consist of common assessments along with specific and measurable criteria for success provided to all learners. Common assessments that can be used in a variety of different settings can be effective ways to provide clear and consistent feedback to students. Educators at MMHS demonstrate effective use of questioning to provide a simple formative assessment of student learning. Teachers make frequent use of check-ins with students to gauge their understanding of the topic. Many teachers will provide multiple assessments to allow students to demonstrate mastery through an area of strength such as creating a poster instead of writing a report. Choice menus are utilized to provide base expectations and provide options for students to go above and beyond for additional credit. This allows students to engage in a challenge by choice within the courses and still provides the teachers with the essential information to gauge student learning. Teachers utilize Kahoots and exit slips as quick formative assessments to determine what concepts they may need to review. The small class sizes and relationships that teachers have built with their students allow for frequent adaptations to be made to meet the needs of their students. As a result of these relationships, there are many intuitive informal assessments of student learning happening in each class.

To enable their learning, multiple opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate their learning by receiving corrective feedback and using that feedback in meaningful ways in some courses. At this time there is no formal shared philosophy on student retakes and recovery among the faculty. The result of this is a variety of different strategies and approaches to providing feedback and allowing retakes and recovery. However, the feeling among the students at MMHS is that their teachers will work with them in any way that they can and that "there is not a teacher at MMHS that would let us fail". Teachers will reteach concepts when large groups of students in a class do not understand the material. Teachers work with students to try to identify the root of struggles before making another attempt and faculty will try to find multiple opportunities for students to practice skills prior to being assessed. MMHS does have a credit recovery system that allows students to complete coursework beyond the completion of a course. This allows students to demonstrate mastery and retain credits if they need more time than is traditionally provided for a course. Many courses such as JMG and Spanish provide students with real-world opportunities to apply skills, receive feedback and use that feedback in real-time. JMG students participate in a shopping challenge that provides them with a budget, timeframe, and a specific event to shop for and they must complete this challenge. If they go over, they have to adjust on the spot to complete the challenge. Spanish students will go to a local restaurant to order in Spanish and see if their dishes come back correctly. This allows them to adjust their application of language in real-time based on the feedback they are receiving from the staff. The senior exhibition project allows students to receive ongoing feedback around a large project and provides them an opportunity to revise and adapt their work based on those changes.

There are a variety of examples of learners being able to use technology in informed, effective and ethical ways to collaborate, personalize and engage in learning that extends beyond the school building and the school day. Students at MMHS use technology in a variety of different way; however, technology is primarily used as a substitute for other traditional classroom practices. They have a variety of courses that utilize technology such as Video Production and Broadcasting, Digital Marketing, Podcast and Radio Broadcast, and the use of a 3D printer in science classes. Seniors access a variety of online sources to complete their exhibition projects. In the Digital Marketing Class students are creating a new website for the school, as well as creating a weekly 'Bulldog Bulletin' and designing a new logo for the school. Students will also be creating new posters/visuals to share important information with students. Students and teachers utilize audiobooks to enhance access to the curriculum and support students. Teachers use technology such as an iPad to take notes and project them in real-time, provide access to online textbooks, and utilize the Apple TVs and projectors to provide quick access to multimedia resources that enhance student learning. Students have access to online courses through Early

College and virtual Advanced Placement classes. All teachers are expected to provide and maintain a Google classroom presence and also use Powerschool, the school's student information system. Students are able to access Google classroom and Powerschool on their school-provided devices or through an app on their phone to allow them to easily access information for their classes. A number of students do use their own personal devices and prefer not to use school-issued devices. Traditional uses of technology such as Google Docs and creating slide shows are also widely used.

Part 4 - Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization

Conceptual Understanding

The school's beliefs about learning as expressed in its Core Values and Beliefs statement are very simple and direct. Their focus is on respect, personal choice, and individualization. They state, "We ready students to engage in all aspects of their education and to pursue individual pathways customized with applicable knowledge and skills. In a safe and supportive environment, enhanced by healthy relationships and communication, we prepare students to advance in life." While the school has created the overarching theme of their Vision of the Graduate by espousing "MMHS ~ Keeping it REAL. Machias Memorial High School graduates are READY and ENGAGED to ADVANCE in LIFE," substantial work still needs to be done to collaboratively identify the transferable skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for future success. Closely connected to that work is the need to come to a consensus as to what effective learning looks like in a school. While there are some within the school community who have a conceptual understanding of the components necessary for optimal learning, that understanding is not yet universal throughout the school.

The school leadership and staff have a strong understanding of the key aspects embedded in their Priority Areas for Growth which have been incorporated into their School Improvement/Growth Plan (SIGP). While the original plan was developed by the previous principal and feedback from the staff was sought and received prior to approval, the recently revised plan was completed with greater input from the faculty resulting in much greater buy-in and support from them. There is a general understanding and agreement that the accomplishment of these goals will result in improved teaching and learning throughout the school. The lack of consensus as to what constitutes optimal learning among the faculty clearly hinders the school community's ability to develop a viable Vision of the Graduate (VoG). That consensus will be essential in identifying the transferrable skills and dispositions which will make up the VoG and in creating a way to measure student attainment of those expectations. Until that issue is fully discussed and addressed, the VoG will not be complete and, as such, will not have any appreciable influence on instructional practice at MMHS.

A critical goal included in the SIGP is to create Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at MMHS. Since the school has yet to define the key concepts in its Vision of the Graduate, it should be one of the first tasks for the PLCs to undertake once they become established. It is also an expectation that faculty will focus on connecting the Vision of the Graduate to the school's curriculum and embedding it into the learning opportunities across the curriculum.

One of the strongest aspects of the school's conceptual understanding can be seen in the fervent support by its principal and several faculty members for the development of a viable Professional Learning Community at MMHS. Their belief in the efficacy of PLCs to serve as a powerful vehicle for productive collaboration and support of school improvement has led to the expectation that many of the elements of the SIGP will be effectively and successfully accomplished by the faculty working in their collaborative groups. There is the hope that both the Vision of the Graduate and the goal to complete the curriculum can be accomplished collaboratively through PLCs. Therefore, the next logical step for the school will be to follow through on its intent to create PLCs at MMHS.

Commitment

There is general consensus that there are elements of the school community that have a shared vision of effective learning; however, it is not universal nor has there been an opportunity to have meaningful discussions around that topic. Teachers express a clear desire to have an opportunity to have an honest and candid discussion of what elements contribute to optimal learning and believe that the culture of the school and the promise of an effective vehicle such as a Professional Learning Community will be able to deliver that much-needed opportunity. Similarly, until the Vision of the Graduate is fully articulated so that it includes the transferable skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for future success, it is not yet possible to determine

the school community's understanding of and support for that important document. However, there is widespread support for the priority areas for growth and the accomplishment of the goals that comprise the SIGP because there is universal agreement that when that occurs significant benefits will accrue to teachers, students, and the community, especially in terms of a general understanding of what students need to know and be able to do upon graduation from MMHS.

As mentioned above, until the school has established a shared vision of effective learning and a completed Vision of the Graduate that identifies all of the things the school community agrees upon are what they expect the students of MMHS to know and be able to do when they graduate, neither will have any appreciable influence on instructional practice. However, the school's continued commitment to focusing on the attainment of the priority areas for growth, specifically those involving establishing professional learning communities, completing the VoG, and embedding the VoG in the school's taught curriculum, will have a positive impact on what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning at the school.

While there is little evidence that there is a universal commitment to a growth mindset at MMHS, many teachers profess to believe in its efficacy. As educators, they take advantage of opportunities to enhance their own professional growth by taking courses, attending conferences, and by engaging in some non-traditional opportunities to expand their own learning. There is agreement among staff that there is a growing cultural shift in the school where teacher input is sought and valued, teachers feel empowered, and are also encouraged to experiment, allowed to fail, and thus learn from their experiences and grow professionally. More importantly, those who espouse the growth mindset and incorporate it in their instructional and assessment practice, not only encourage students to buy into the concept but also provide opportunities for students to grow and learn from their mistakes. They create a safe environment in their classrooms where students are encouraged to take risks, they provide students with timely corrective feedback to inform their learning, and they provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery by allowing them to resubmit their work. Institutionally, the creation of the Wednesday schedule with its many high-engagement, low-stakes learning opportunities offers students unique ways to expand their learning within an environment where they are able to fail without serious consequences, thus learning from their mistakes which leads to growth. However, while this commitment to the growth mindset is not universal throughout the school, if it is encouraged to expand, student learning will benefit immensely.

From the school board and administrators to the teachers in the classroom, there is an expressed commitment to ongoing school improvement at MMHS. Similarly, there is a commitment to the standards of accreditation and a belief that the process of better aligning the school to the standards will lead to improved teaching and learning at MMHS. Evidence of that commitment can be seen in the school's progress in addressing the Priority Areas for Change that they identified in their Self-Reflection report and which were supported by the Collaborative Conference report in 2019. While the school is still not yet meeting two of the Foundational Elements (1.2a and 2.2a a), they have made significant progress over the past two and one-half years and is now very close to meeting all six of the Foundational Elements identified by the Commission on Public Schools. Furthermore, according to the summary report, on five Principles of Effective Practice where they had rated themselves as Developing in 2019, they now rate themselves as Implementing and one where their rating went from Initiating to Implementing. A modest accomplishment made all the more significant given that much of the improvement took place during the pandemic when the school was either not engaged in in-person learning or had transitioned to a unique schedule and hybrid learning when admittedly their main focus was on the health, safety, and well-being of their students. There is a stated commitment at the school to the value of the accreditation process and a dedication to using the NEASC Decennial Report as a roadmap to guide and drive school improvement.

The strength of the school's commitment lies in the eager desire and strong commitment of the professionals in the school to accomplish the goals embedded in the SIGP to improve teaching and learning at Machias Memorial High School. They see the clear link between school improvement and ensuring the future success of their students. The school's continued association with the Commission on Public Schools and its commitment to the accreditation process is also a strength. Within weeks of the 2019 Collaborative Conference, the school used the priority areas from their self-reflection report to create a viable SIGP and begin the process of improving teaching and learning as well as the culture of the school. Though their effort was interrupted by the pandemic, the school has since revised the SIGP and is now poised to use the next steps provided by the decennial visit and its report to complete many of its goals and use the results to drive decision-making, planning, change, and improvement over the next several years.

Competency

Educators at MMHS have the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support effective learning, accomplish the school's Priority Areas, and implement the Vision of the Graduate to ensure that all students who graduate are equipped with the transferable skills, knowledge, and dispositions to be successful. Through the collaborative effort of the school community, the leadership, guidance, and commitment of the professional educators at MMHS, and the resources and support at their disposal, Machias Memorial High School has the potential to implement the change that is needed to improve teaching and learning for all.

Most educators at MMHS have the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to collaborate professionally and are fortunate to have dedicated time during the school year to meet with their colleagues to work together to improve curriculum and instruction, engage in professional discourse, or personal reflection around professional practice. In order to enhance that collaborative work, however, it will be necessary for the faculty to have additional dedicated time during the school day on a more regular basis. Additionally, the lack of formal structure and direction for professional collaboration during the time provided often inhibits any meaningful growth and potential improvement which might result from having that opportunity. To address this particular concern, the school has established a goal to create Professional Learning Communities where faculty can meet and collaborate in a supportive yet structured environment to develop a viable, relevant Vision of the Graduate, revise the curriculum, and initiate change and improvements.

The school community is well-suited to accomplish this task. The faculty is collaborative and willing to engage in the work that is required to improve their school. They have been invited to provide input in decision-making at the school and feel empowered. The principal has led this effort to engage the faculty through a distributive leadership model which she is hoping to expand. Coupled with the recommendations that will flow from this report, conditions at the school are optimal for the creation of positive results such as implementing effective learning, and making progress on the school's Priority Areas, especially the full development and implementation of the Vision of the Graduate.

There are a few requirements in order to develop Professional Learning Communities and initiate this cultural shift in the school. First, the staff will need training and the resources necessary to effectively create comfortable meeting protocols where risk-free collaboration can take place. Second, those involved in doing the work of a PLC will need regular, dedicated time in order to meet, collaborate, and accomplish significant results. Lastly, the risk-free, trusting, and empowering environment that has recently been established needs to expand to engage the whole faculty in the beneficial work of making MMHS a better place to work and learn.

Capacity

Time is often the most critical resource needed to develop and implement improvements in teaching and learning. At MMHS, There is support for creating time for staff to work collaboratively to make progress on Priority Areas, including developing the VoG and continuing curriculum work. Currently, the district provides for five full-day professional development (PD) workshops over the course of the school year, as well as 12 early release or half-day workshops during the 2021-22 school year. While the content of some of these days is

dictated by district needs and priorities, the school is able to use many of these workshop days to work towards addressing their Priority Areas. Additionally, the principal feels there is support from the Central Office and the School's Board of Directors (Board) if she needs to request additional release time connected to meeting school improvement goals.

Teachers feel that they have plenty of support to enhance their professional growth. Through the local budget and through grants, the school has set aside about \$12,000 for professional development to bring in outside PD, purchase texts and materials on essential topics related to school improvement goals, cover the costs for teachers to attend conferences or virtual PD, and enable staff to pursue professional credits and coursework. The superintendent and the Board support the work of the school, including advocating as needed for reasonable and modest budget increases when they go before the towns.

The school demonstrates a strong culture of caring for students' mental health and wellbeing, as well as improving teaching and learning in order to support students to achieve their personal post-secondary goals. This strength will serve the school well as staff work on developing their vision of the graduate, provided that the school ensures staff has dedicated and protected time to work collaboratively. The next logical steps include determining a PD schedule that ensures collaboration time and securing the resources to support work on the Priority Areas.

Additional Information

Additional Information

Standard 1 Principle 2

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: *Developing*

School's rating in the Summary Report: *Implementing*

Explanation from the School*

MMHS has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. Additionally, MMHS has revised its mission statement to reflect this updated language. The documents were written based on input from MMHS students, staff, and community members. They reflect our current practices and encourage us to do even better. We are implementing at this point because we have developed the guiding documents and are now beginning to refine and design learning opportunities to align with them. Additionally, the new document justifies much of what we already do.

Standard 2 Principle 1

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: *Developing*

School's rating in the Summary Report: *Implementing*

Explanation from the School*

The school has a vision statement. The attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success are embedded within the language. Creating tools for providing feedback is a priority in a growth/improvement plan. The new vision of the graduate is a powerful statement that reflects what MMHS is known for already, and it is flexible enough to accommodate the changes we hope to implement.

The team has found that while the school has created a general statement of vision, it does not yet meet the standard for a Vision of the Graduate. The document does not include the transferrable skills, knowledge, understandings, or dispositions that students will be able to demonstrate upon graduation. The team feels that the rating should remain as *developing* until this has been completely addressed.

Standard 2 Principle 2

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: *Developing*

School's rating in the Summary Report: *Implementing*

Explanation from the School*

There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school. We have completed the task of documenting our current curriculum. We are now prepared to begin to analyze and revise that curriculum in light of our mission, vision, and core beliefs. We need to analyze it from multiple perspectives, looking at the continuum of learning within departments, school-wide, and as the educational component that spans elementary school and each student's path upon graduation.

The team has found that while the school has done a substantial amount of work on its curriculum, it does not yet have a curriculum written in a consistent format for all courses in all departments. The team feels that this rating

should remain as *developing* until this task is completed.

Standard 3 Principle 1

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: *Developing*

School's rating in the Summary Report: *Implementing*

Explanation from the School*

MMHS has a school improvement/growth plan that includes school-specific goals that inform decision-making in the school. Our original plan was written in response to the NEASC Collaborative Conference Visit. It has since been updated, with input from all stakeholders, to reflect current conditions.

Standard 4 Principle 1

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: *Transforming*

School's rating in the Summary Report: *Implementing*

Explanation from the School*

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, MMHS was well known for meeting the individual needs of our students and our willingness to go above and beyond to do so. This quality is still a cornerstone of who we are, but we are in a rebuilding phase. Changes in schedule and pandemic guidelines caused us to scale back for a bit. We have gone two years without Bulldog Block or HomeBase, and our PAWS program has been scaled back. We found ways to compensate during the pandemic, and as we emerge into a "new normal" we are adapting those programs to reimplement.

Standard 4 Principle 4

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: *Initiating*

School's rating in the Summary Report: *Transforming*

Explanation from the School*

MMHS now benefits from increased school nurse services. Our school nurse is now on campus at all times, sharing her time between MMHS and RMG. She has regular times at MMHS in the morning and at lunchtime. At other times, she is only a short walk away. MMHS now has a dedicated office space and isolation room for the school nurse.

Standard 5 Principle 4

School's rating in the Self-Reflection report: *Developing*

School's rating in the Summary Report: *Implementing*

Explanation from the School*

Machias Public Schools Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plan is a newly created document that has a mission of maintaining a healthy, comfortable, energy-efficient, and economical campus for educational and community use. Within this document are short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of the building and facilities. Pandemic funding has been useful in terms of accomplishing several high-priority goals. The Superintendent and School Board have been supportive of budgeting for repairs and improvements in the local budget.

Commendations

Commendation

The efforts of the staff who work collaboratively and engage in shared decision making with the principal

The commitment to creating a formal collaborative structure for effective improvement of teaching and learning

The Digital Marketing class that has created a new website, school logo, and weekly bulletin highlighting the rebranding of the school

Commendation

The deep caring and concern of the faculty for the students that supports student learning and strives to ensure students are prepared for their post-secondary goals

The efforts of the staff to go above and beyond to build relationships with students, support struggling learners, and provide flexibility and accommodations to ensure all students succeed

The provision of increased student support staff to better meet students' needs

Commendation

The development of the *Machias Public Schools Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plan* to ensure that the school facility is safe and conducive to learning

The creation of a system to regularly review and revise the Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plan

The creation of outdoor learning facilities to extend learning beyond the classroom walls

Commendation

The use of Google Classroom to formally document the school's curriculum in a standardized format

The inclusion of active links to the school's curriculum in its Program of Studies

The willingness of the faculty to continue to improve and evolve their curriculum

Commendation

The creation of a highly detailed School Improvement/Growth Plan based on identified priorities

The commitment to regularly review and revise the SIGP so that it continues to be relevant and reflective of the effort to improve teaching and learning at MMHS

The small class sizes which allow for a variety of positive instructional practices to occur naturally

Commendation

The CTE culinary arts and building trades programs for providing career-oriented real-life experiences for students

The Wednesday schedule that provides an opportunity for students to engage in authentic learning opportunities

The senior exhibition project that allows students to engage in higher-level thinking while participating in a student-led learning task

Commendation

The Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG) for engaging students in authentic learning

The students' strong connection to their school and its staff

Commendation

The degree to which the faculty is committed to collaboration to improve teaching and learning at MMHS

The adequate support provided for faculty professional development

Commendation

The school's commitment to school improvement through the accreditation process

The specific, highly detailed School Improvement/Growth Plan

Commendation

The focus on ensuring that the Vision of the Graduate emphasizes authentic learning

The principal's advocacy of and leadership in the effort to create Professional Learning Communities at MMHS

Additional Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure that all students regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills across the curriculum

Recommendation

Ensure that all students receive corrective feedback and have the opportunity to use it in meaningful ways to demonstrate mastery and support their learning

Recommendation

Expand learners' use of technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning

Recommendation

Ensure the use of a variety of instructional strategies that allow for meeting the learning needs of all students

Recommendation

Create professional development opportunities for teachers to identify, discuss, and share best practices

Recommendation

Develop among all members of the school community a shared vision of what optimal learning looks like

Recommendation

Clarify the faculty's understanding of the growth mindset and embed it in the culture of learning at the school

Recommendation

Provide support and dedicated time for professional development in order to facilitate the creation of professional learning communities

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This Initial/Decennial Accreditation Report of the Visiting Team reflects the findings of the school's Summary Report and those of the visiting team. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administrators, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administrators yearly of progress made in aligning with the Standards for Accreditation.

A school's initial/continued Accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing the school's improvement/growth plan based on the Priority Areas validated by the visiting team and recommendations identified by the Commission as it monitors the school's progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle.

To monitor the school's progress, the Commission requires that the principal submit a First Report of Progress and Planning and routine Three- and Six-Year Reports of Progress and Planning describing the school's progress implementing the Priority Areas as well as submitting an updated improvement/growth plan. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards or Priority Areas for Growth are not being met in a satisfactory manner, if additional information is needed on matters relating to the school's alignment with the Standards for Accreditation, or substantive changes occur in the school.

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Substantive Change Policy requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days of occurrence any substantive change which impacts the school's alignment with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Report of Substantive Change must describe the change itself and detail the impacts the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included on the next page. All other substantive changes should be included in the Reports on Progress and Planning and/or the Annual Information Report (AIR) which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed a Self-Reflection that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need, hosted a Collaborative Conference, developed an improvement/growth plan, and completed a Summary Report. The time and effort dedicated to the Accreditation process, school improvement/growth, the Summary Report, and the preparation for the visit ensured a successful Initial/Decennial Accreditation visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Schools

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has an impact on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Report of Substantive Change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact on the school's ability to meet the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding - cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- grade level responsibilities of the principal
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services
- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees
- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

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

Assistant Chair: Ms. Kelly Tobin - Dexter Regional High School

Team Members

Mr. Jesse Bartke - Oceanside High School

Susan Capwell - Searsport District Middle/High School