

**New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
Two-Year Progress Report**

**Rockville High School  
70 Loveland Hill Road  
Vernon, Connecticut 06066**

**Submitted by October 1, 2005**

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## I. Highlighted Recommendations

1. **Develop a process and timetable that includes the review of data for reviewing the school's mission and expectations for student learning.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** The Mission Follow-Up Subcommittee has determined that the faculty needs to revisit the school's commitment to the Mission and Expectations for Student Learning.

As part of the mission review process, a survey was created and completed by faculty, staff, and students of Rockville High School in the fall of 2003; the results, however, have not yet been used to initiate a revision of the mission. As many new faculty and staff have been hired since the survey completion in 2003, the Mission Review Committee will redesign the survey and re-administer it to the faculty and staff of Rockville High School as well as take a random sampling of students, parents, and Vernon residents. Additionally, the task force will seek feedback about the mission revision from a variety of groups including the Rockville High School Parent Advisory Council, Rotary Club, department heads, and student organizations.

Beginning in 2005, the school will undertake an annual mission review by a task force including representatives from the original Mission and Expectations development committee, administration, faculty, students, parents, guidance, Board of Education, and community. The task force will gather data and analyze it against the current mission statement, elicit feedback from the above groups, and revise the statement as needed.

The mission review process will continue on an annual basis with the administration of a survey in the first quarter of each school year. If the survey results warrant a change, the task force will make the necessary revisions and present them to the faculty and staff of Rockville High School and to the Board of Education by the spring of that same school year. As mentioned in Highlighted Recommendation #1, the Rubric Committee will work in conjunction with the mission task force to ensure that student academic expectations are clear and measurable.

**2. Clarify the scoring rubrics for student achievement of the academic learning expectations in the mission so that faculty members are consistent in their implementation.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Prior to the arrival of the NEASC Visiting Committee, each department critiqued a draft of the school wide rubrics for the student academic expectations. Since the visitation, Elizabeth Sawyer in her capacity as vocational educational consultant and Rubric Committee co-chair revised the rubrics for clarity and presented them to the vocational education teachers at the November 2, 2004 professional development workshop. These revised rubrics have also been shared with the assistant superintendent of schools and the curriculum coordinators, however the faculty has not yet had the opportunity to review the revised draft.

Therefore, the current Rockville High School Mission and Expectations for Student Learning and accompanying rubrics have remained relatively unchanged since the NEASC visitation. As Rockville High School was one of the early schools to be evaluated under the revised NEASC standards, it should be noted that the Mission and Expectations and rubrics were developed without the benefit of the samples now available on the CPSS website; at that time the only available resource was the *NEASC Guide to Developing and Implementing the Mission*. As a result, although the Mission and Expectations has become a part of the culture of the school, the staff has found the mission statement a bit too overreaching, the student expectations difficult to measure, and the accompanying rubrics unwieldy and lacking in specificity. At a breakout session during a recent RHS staff development day, a group of faculty determined that to improve the rubrics, the mission statement and especially the student academic expectations must first be revised. With the information currently available on the CPSS website and with the leadership of a new principal who has renewed Rockville High School's commitment to continued improvement under the NEASC evaluation's recommendations, the school is prepared to move forward in this important task.

Rockville High School's plan will involve the review and revision of the current Mission and Expectations by the RHS Mission Review Committee, with members of the Rubric

Committee present to assist with revision of the student academic expectations. Following revision of the Mission and Expectations and its acceptance by all required constituencies among the school community, the full Rubric Committee will convene to revise the current rubrics to ensure that they are measurable and achievable. The committee will also determine how and where the rubrics will be used, how the information will be stored, and how student achievement of the academic expectations measured by the rubrics will be communicated to students, parents, and the community. Samples from the CPSS website will be heavily utilized throughout these processes, and if funds are available, the school will seek the assistance of a consultant in revising the rubrics.

3. **Provide evidence that courses taught at all ability levels have rigor and challenge (i.e., that they engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills, so as to ensure that all students will achieve at high levels).**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** As stated in the current mission statement, Rockville High School is committed to offering rigorous and meaningful academic programs for all students while requiring the development and application of critical thinking and problem solving skills. To that end, the school has worked to reduce the number of academic tracks in some disciplines. The move toward heterogeneity will be gradual in a community accustomed to multiple levels.

Other school and district wide initiatives that address this recommendation have been implemented, including the following:

- **Ninth Grade Smaller Learning Community (SLC)** - Combines approximately 125 college prep and general track ninth grade students in heterogeneous classes. The SLC includes teachers of English, mathematics, science, social studies, health, and business. All of the teachers have a common daily planning time to develop interdisciplinary units, and to discuss the individual needs of students on the team.

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- **Performance Standards for Graduation-**  
Beginning with the Class of 2006, all students must demonstrate the performance standards established by administration and faculty as required by Public Act No. 01-166 in order to graduate from Rockville High School. Students must complete all four sections of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and must demonstrate performance standards in mathematics, science, and reading/writing. Students may demonstrate the Performance Standards for Graduation in a variety of ways, including through the CAPT, District Performance Tasks, or Senior Performance Standard Courses.
- **Data Driven Decision Making (DDDM)-**  
The district has contracted with the Center for Performance Assessment to initiate data teams throughout the district. At Rockville High School, all teachers have been assigned to a data team and will be meeting monthly to look at student performance data. As a result of the work of the data teams, teachers will develop common teaching practices and assessments to enhance student learning and ensure greater student achievement.
- **On going Professional Development-**  
In conjunction with the Data Driven Decision Making initiative, the district will focus professional development on the Nine Effective Teaching Strategies as identified by the Center for Performance Assessment.

The following are planned for future consideration/implementation:

- School wide rubrics
- Increased graduation requirements
- Review of grading policy

4. **Provide necessary support for the guidance department to develop and implement a developmental guidance curriculum.**

**Classification: In Progress**

**Response:** The Rockville High School Guidance Department has developed and begun to implement a developmental guidance curriculum. The department developed this curriculum with the assistance of Pat Landers, a professor of guidance at Central Connecticut State University.

In the 2004-2005 school year, counselors met with grade 9 students on five occasions. In addition, counselors had numerous meetings with students in grades 10-12. During the 2005-2006 school year, the new director of guidance will focus on further implementation of the developmental guidance curriculum.

5. **Create and implement a plan to increase available computer hardware and software and provide professional development and technical support to increase the level of the integration of technology in teaching and learning.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** The Vernon Public Schools' Technology Plan 2004-2007 developed by Barry Grant, District Coordinator of Technology, outlines the steps to increase computer hardware and software over the next several years.

Department heads, coordinators, and the technology coordinator have continued to plan for and request additional equipment. Budget has affected this process each year to some extent. The school has purchased the SMART BOARD and several LCD projectors for use throughout the school. There is now at least one working computer in each classroom. Vernon Public School's Regional Adult Education program has created a new computer lab that is available for use by Rockville High School staff and students.

Professional development in technology use is ongoing and continues to be planned for the future. Recent professional development sessions have included the following:

- Use of SMART BOARD and LCD projectors
- Training in the use of school network resources
- Use of ATHENA, the electronic card catalog, accessible from a link on each computer at RHS
- Departmental initiatives such as training in PowerPoint, Excel, Word, Web Quests, and plagiarism searches

**6. Institute student grouping practices that are consistent with the school's mission and expectations regarding academic rigor, challenge, the celebration of diversity, and valuing all learners.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Rockville High School's response to this recommendation is to effect a reduction in the number of academic tracks or grouping patterns. Some work has been done in this area already. One minor change has been the common naming of courses across the disciplines. A second more significant change is the Board-approved piloting of a Grade 9 Small Learning Community. (See Highlighted Recommendation #3.)

**7. Develop and implement a plan to reduce the number of study halls in student schedules.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Rockville High School is investigating the distribution of study halls and considering the following options for reducing their number:

- Increasing the number of credits needed for graduation
- Instituting an open campus
- Increasing the number of elective courses
- Scheduling more juniors and seniors for classes in the morning so they can leave for work programs in the afternoon

This issue will be studied by the School Improvement Committee in the near future.

8. **Design and implement a plan to provide regular, formal, and accessible opportunities for faculty and staff within and across departments to participate in discussions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** Rockville High School staff is engaged in an initiative that addresses this recommendation. Teachers have been assigned to data teams based on the Data Driven Decision Making model of the Center for Performance Assessment. The data teams will be meeting at least monthly to implement the model.

The Center for Performance Assessment, an international organization, is dedicated to improving student achievement and educational equity. Through its long-term relationships with school systems, the center helps educators and school leaders with practical and constructive approaches to standards, assessment, and accountability. The districts with whom the center has worked represent a wide array of demographics, including high need and high poverty schools, rural districts, and urban environments. Through professional development with the center, teachers have been and will continue to be trained in DDDM in the following areas:

- Analyzing data
- Setting goals
- Implementing strategies for improved teaching and learning
- Unwrapping the Standards
- Designing and developing performance assessments
- Utilizing the nine categories of effective teaching strategies

In addition to the DDDM initiative, Rockville High School has provided to all teachers a CAPT instruction notebook and associated professional development training, has conducted two collaborative meetings among departments in grades 6-12, and has held interdepartmental meetings in core subject areas.

Initial data teams have been established within departments, although interdisciplinary collaboration is a desired and

viable option for the future of this initiative. Staff recognizes the need to increase collaborative opportunities and is committed to exploring creative options to increase the frequency of formal and informal teacher collaboration, especially across departments.

**9. Develop and implement an outreach program specifically designed to expand and enhance the involvement of parents representing the diversity found at Rockville High School**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Rockville High School is pleased with the progress that has occurred in the expansion and enhancement of parental involvement in general at Rockville High School. Attempts to address the lack of parental representation reflecting the diversity at Rockville High School have not been as successful. For instance, the RHS Minority College Return Evening, when five Rockville High School alumni of color came to the school during the day to speak with students of color in an assembly and then stayed on to speak to parents of color in the evening, produced limited results. A woman of color who is prominent in the community participated in the planning of the parent evening and personally called fifty Rockville High School parents of color to encourage them to attend, with no results. The World Language Department had better parental and community involvement at its Taste of Languages evening in March of 2005. This first annual event was very well attended by a diverse cross section of Vernon students, parents, and community members. The school is exploring other avenues for parental outreach which include linking with the Vernon Youth Services Bureau, partnering with local churches both in and outside of Vernon, and holding parent orientation meetings in the homes of volunteer parents.

In addition, in conjunction with parents the school has developed the *Rockville High School Parental Involvement Policy*, a document which encompasses the following:

- The respective missions of the school and the RHS Parent Group
- Parental involvement in regards to policy development/revisions

- Shared responsibilities for high student academic achievement
- Activities in place to build parental capacity for involvement
- Avenues of home-school communication
- A Home-School Compact which details the responsibilities of the school, students, and parents

**10. Commit necessary resources to provide communication tools for teachers such as telephones, e-mail, and voice mail to enhance communication within the school community and with parents.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Since the arrival of the Visiting Committee, email at Rockville High School has become fully operational and is used as a major communication tool by administration, faculty, and staff. Previously, the plan was to perform a \$45,000 upgrade to the phone and intercom systems during the summer of 2005. As a result of the recent passage of a \$68,000,000 bond referendum including approximately \$34,000,000 in building renovations for the high school, the completion of this upgrade has been postponed. The phone and intercom system upgrade will be included in the building renovation set to begin in the summer of 2006.

**11. Create an information technology curriculum for all students which includes library/media skills.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** A committee facilitated by Joy Fitzgerald, Library/Media Specialist, has written a K-12 information technology curriculum which has been approved by the Instructional Council and the Vernon Board of Education. The library media specialist is currently using this curriculum with classes at the high school.

**12. Create a plan for preventive maintenance that will ensure that the critical systems are maintained in good working condition.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** A plan for preventive maintenance has been created. A summary of present plans for maintaining the electrical, heating and ventilation, and water systems at Rockville High School follows:

**Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems**

- Boilers are professionally cleaned annually by outside contractors.
- Large air handlers are professionally cleaned annually by outside contractors.
- Unit ventilators are serviced annually during the summer cleaning by school staff.
- All temperature controls are maintained under an energy management contract with a professional contractor.
- The school system's HVAC is controlled by a centralized energy management system located in the maintenance office at the Vernon Board of Education Building. This system is also maintained by the energy management contractor.
- Air filters are checked and changed during the summer cleaning of the buildings and during the Christmas vacation shutdown.
- Heat pumps and blower motors are inspected and lubricated monthly by both custodial and maintenance staff.
- The school system employs a full time licensed HVAC technician who performs required maintenance and makes repairs as needed. If there is a problem that is beyond this person's ability, the school system utilizes an outside contractor to make repairs.

**Fire alarm systems**

- The school system employs a licensed electrician who maintains and repairs all fire alarm systems. This person also performs

cleaning and testing of these systems per NFPA regulations. The records are kept confidential at Central Office and are sent to the local fire marshal.

- Outside contractors are utilized when necessary.

### **Fire extinguishers and kitchen hood suppression systems**

- An outside contractor performs annual inspections and maintenance of all fire extinguishers and kitchen hood suppression systems per NFPA regulations. Head custodians perform monthly inspection of fire extinguishers as required by NFPA regulations.

### **Intercom Systems**

- The school system employs a licensed electrician who maintains and repairs all intercom systems. An outside contractor is utilized when necessary.

### **Telephone Systems**

- The telephone system is maintained by the local phone company.

### **Plumbing Systems**

- The school system employs a licensed plumber who maintains and repairs all plumbing systems. An outside contractor is utilized when necessary.

### **Electrical Systems**

- The school system employs a licensed electrician who maintains and repairs all electrical systems. An outside contractor is utilized when necessary.

## II. Evaluation Report Recommendations

### STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

1. **Include the mission statement and/or expectations for student learning in the Program of Studies and in the student activities guide and club directory.**

**Classification: Planned for the future**

**Response:** Through an oversight by the former administration, the current Program of Studies and Student Activities Guide/Club Directory went to print before this recommendation could be addressed. Rockville High School assures the Commission that all future printings of the above-mentioned documents will include the Mission and Expectations for Student Learning, as do all other key documents at the high school.

2. **Determine the data that needs to be collected and analyzed in order to review the mission statement and expectations for student learning and develop a timetable for that process.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** In the process of reviewing the mission statement and student expectations, the mission task force will make a final determination of the data that needs to be collected and analyzed and will develop a timetable for the review process. (See Highlighted Recommendation #1.)

Examples of data sources include the following:

- Student, parent, and staff surveys
- Attendance records
- Enrollment figures
- Data team results
- Student achievement records

- 3. Ensure that the mission review committee implements a process to regularly assess the mission statement and expectations for student learning to assure that they continue to reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state standards.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #1.

- 4. Clarify the scoring rubric for student achievement of the academic learning expectations so that faculty members are consistent in its implementation.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #2.

- 5. Examine all school practices and procedures in light of the mission statement and expectations for student learning.**

**Classification:** Completed

**Response:** At Rockville High School, examining school practices and procedures in light of the mission document is an ongoing process. This process begins with the presentation of the mission and expectations to teaching applicants during the interview process and continues in the development of curriculum, policies, and procedures. The Mission and Expectations for Student Learning continues to be displayed in every classroom and in other strategic locations throughout the building and is incorporated into key documents including curriculum guides, the student handbook, and the Guidance Newsletter. RHS recognizes that becoming a mission-driven school is an ongoing process and will continue to move forward creatively in this area.

**STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Curriculum**

- 1. Complete the alignment of all curricula with the school's mission and learning expectations statement.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** Most curriculum revision at Rockville High School is done during the summer according to a long-range plan. Since the summer of 2003, all curriculum revision/development in every department at Rockville High School has included alignment of the curricula with the Mission and Expectations for Student Learning. For example, the Technology Education Department continues to align its curricula with state standards and measures for technology education along with the RHS mission document. As another example, each summer the Mathematics Department reviews and revises several curricula corresponding to its course offerings. This past summer the department revised the curricula for Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, College Statistics, and Honors Statistics. All mathematics curricula are developed to align with both state and national standards as well as the mission statement. As final examples, all English courses except electives will have curriculum guides that are aligned with the mission and expectations by October or November of 2005, and the World Languages Department is in the process of aligning the German curriculum to the mission statement.

- 2. Examine the school's graduation credit requirements in light of the opportunities provided by the block schedule.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Graduation requirements have increased since the visitation. Beginning with the class of 2006, all students must demonstrate Performance Standards for Graduation in the areas of reading/writing, mathematics and science. Further examination of the school's graduation credit requirements in light of the opportunities provided by the block schedule will be an ongoing process at Rockville High School. This issue engenders some debate. On one side are those who

believe that the credit requirements should be increased to provide students with more rigor and challenge, and on the other are those who believe the current requirements allow for students to explore a variety of subject areas while also allowing for opportunities to meet the Performance Standards for Graduation. This group believes that more required courses would make it difficult for students to continue to enjoy this variety and flexibility in scheduling. A formal committee to explore and come to some consensus on this issue has been discussed but not initiated to date. New leadership will bring this matter to committee in the near future.

- 3. Ensure that courses taught at all ability levels have rigor and challenge and that all students are expected to achieve at high levels.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #3.

- 4. Provide necessary support for the guidance department to develop and implement a developmental guidance curriculum.**

**Classification:** Completed

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #4.

- 5. Expand the services of the Career Center to reach all segments of the student population.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** The newly appointed vocational liaison at the high school will provide some impetus in this area. The implementation of the developmental guidance curriculum will also address this recommendation. Departments continue to use the services of the Career Center including guest speakers, career attribute testing, career searches, and college visitations.

- 6. Develop and implement a plan that provides time and resources for teachers to collaborate across disciplines to promote curriculum integration and interdisciplinary instruction.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #8. As stated, the Data Driven Decision Making initiative addresses much of this recommendation. Interdisciplinary collaboration is inherent in various other Rockville High School initiatives. For example, special education teachers are engaged in co-teaching in mathematics, English, science, and social studies. All co-teachers have common planning time available in their schedules. As a further example, the Technology Education department has adopted mathematics skills such as basic measurement as its interdisciplinary and integrated focus. Also, the new Senior Performance Standard Course in reading offered this year is co-taught by an English teacher and a Special Education teacher. Interdisciplinary activities are a major focus of the Grade 9 Smaller Learning Community; these teachers meet every other day for 82 minutes as an interdisciplinary team.

- 7. Ensure that all teachers pursue depth of learning over breadth of coverage in their instruction and assessment of student learning.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** The Data Driven Decision Making initiative will encourage and actually demand that teachers pursue depth of learning over breadth of coverage. In addition, departmental measures have been instituted to address this recommendation. For example, the Mathematics Department has revised several of the pre-assessment tests given to freshmen during the first few weeks of school in order to assess the skills these incoming students have as well as the skills they need to review. This procedure may slow the delivery of the official curriculum but will allow teachers to meet students where they are and to give the students a depth of learning rather than fast movement through a prescribed curriculum that they are not yet prepared to cover. As a further example, the English department revised its lists of required grammar and

literature topics, leading to depth of learning over breadth of coverage. Future professional development topics will address this recommendation as well.

**8. Improve communication with sending schools regarding curriculum articulation and student expectations for learning.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** During the 2004-2005 school year, all middle and high school teachers met twice by department for this purpose. For example, members of the high school and middle school Mathematics departments discussed the curriculum and standardized testing at both schools. The discussion has been described as an open dialogue that allowed teachers from both schools to discuss strengths and weaknesses in the two programs as well as the skills students need to be successful when they arrive at the high school. The recently revised high school algebra curriculum was developed as a joint effort by both schools to ensure continuity of courses. Endeavors in this area continue, including monthly K-12 staff meetings of the Art Department with discussions on such topics as curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student work exhibitions. Other departments also meet on a regular basis with colleagues from sending schools. In addition, the district has created a Student Success Committee composed of elementary, middle, and high school staff and administration to improve K-12 curriculum articulation and student transitions.

**9. Create and implement a plan to increase computer hardware and software for teaching and learning at RHS.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #5. In addition to the district plan, departmental budgets have been utilized to increase technology at RHS. For example, the Art Department has improved the Digital Art Lab by adding nine new computer work stations, seven cameras, and Adobe Photoshop site licenses to supply stations with software and to implement curriculum. The English Department has a multi-year plan for computer purchases, with three new

computers purchased this year, two the previous year, and two the year before that. The Special Education Department has procured three new computers and a new software program, *Lexia*. A SMART BOARD and LCD projectors have been added to the library and are available for loan to classroom teachers, and there is now at least one working computer in each classroom throughout the school. Budget constraints continue to affect progress in this area, especially in the procurement of software licenses, but progress is being made.

**10. Develop and implement a staffing plan that addresses concerns about too few electives, too many study halls and reductions in programs.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #7 and Curriculum Recommendation #2. Committee work regarding the distribution of study halls will also involve an analysis of staffing needs, concerns, and constraints.

**11. Implement a comprehensive data collection and analysis plan that reviews, evaluates, and adjusts the school's curriculum in light of student achievement of the school's learning expectations.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** The DDDM initiative will address this recommendation. Each department will assist in overall student achievement efforts by identifying and targeting instructional needs related to the Performance Standards for Graduation. In addition, over the past few years each teacher has been required to develop a Professional Growth Objective based on student performance data. Departments also examine pertinent data and adjust their curricula accordingly. For example, the English Department annually reviews CAPT and SAT results and utilizes that information to adjust curriculum and instruction. For 2005-2006, the department is requiring more work on vocabulary in context questions as recent data indicates that these questions are frequently answered incorrectly. The Art Department has implemented a three-year process that has entailed benchmarking and setting common standards, developing assessment tools and

measuring student achievement across grade levels, and simultaneously monitoring and adjusting the curriculum based on data/results. As a further example, the Mathematics Department administers Pre-CAPT tests to all ninth graders to assess their strengths and weaknesses in each strand of the CAPT, information that is shared with the students and with their tenth grade teachers. In addition, CAPT scores are reviewed by strand, class, and student, and mathematics curriculum is adjusted accordingly.

**STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Instruction**

- 1. Ensure that all learners are challenged to achieve at the highest levels and that appropriate academic rigor and pacing are in place in the lower level classes.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #3. The Performance Standards for Graduation require students of all levels to demonstrate performance standards in mathematics, science, and reading/writing. In addition, departmental initiatives and school policies address this recommendation. For example, all art classes are heterogeneously grouped. Mathematics students are carefully placed in appropriate levels and encouraged to achieve through mathematics labs, extra help sessions, and after-school CAPT and SAT preparatory courses. The English Department offers much flexibility to students desiring to move up levels and has aligned the ninth grade curriculum to facilitate movement during the year. Many departments including Technology Education continue to build a library of rubrics to establish uniformity and consistency with regard to the content and rigor of the curriculum. Public folders on the computer network will allow for posting and sharing of rubrics among the faculty. Checks and balances are in place to ensure communication among guidance, teachers, parents, and students regarding proper level placement and/or movement. In addition, recent staff development in Differentiated Instruction addresses this recommendation.

- 2. Formalize a system that ensures an advocate, advisor or mentor for every student at RHS.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** Following the visitation, a volunteer pilot program that matched mentors from among the high school staff with selected ninth graders was established and implemented for the 2004-2005 school year. While the pilot met with some success, a final evaluation of the program revealed a need for revision. With the change in leadership, the program has been placed on hold for this year so that the new principal can present his vision of an advisor/advisee model to the School Improvement Committee for review and implementation. Meanwhile, a new attendance program providing mentors for identified at-risk ninth graders has been instituted for 2005-2006.

- 3. Provide on-going professional development for all RHS faculty in the use of instructional strategies for effective cooperative and collaborative learning, for making connections across disciplines, and for teacher use of rubrics in instruction and as a guide for student performance.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** The DDDM initiative, specifically future staff development in utilization of the Nine Categories of Effective Teaching Strategies, will address this recommendation. In addition, teachers have received and will continue to receive related training by department. For example, the art staff has participated in professional development activities that include assessment, aligning instruction with assessment, and aligning instruction with curriculum.

4. **Provide time, resources, and training for teachers to collaborate about instruction and connect content within and across disciplines.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation # 8 and Curriculum Recommendation #6. In addition, collaboration occurs at monthly department meetings, and teachers are provided a copy of all department members' schedules to facilitate further collaboration within departments. Departmental budgets also provide funds for training and conferences, following which teachers share materials and new learning at department meetings.

5. **Design and use formal mechanisms to gather information related to instructional practices from parents, students, and other school constituents and use that feedback for the improvement of instruction.**

**Classification: Planned for the future**

**Response:** Formal mechanisms are in place through the BEST program and the district evaluation process for teachers to receive feedback related to instructional practices from evaluators and colleagues. Although some teachers gather information through formal and informal course evaluations by students and through informal dialogue with parents, as of yet no formal mechanism is in place to fully address this recommendation.

6. **Establish means through which teachers and parents can communicate effectively, confidentially, and efficiently.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** The implementation of a fully functional and reliable email system has greatly enhanced staff's ability to communicate efficiently, effectively, and confidentially with parents and with other staff members. Some departments have explored alternate methods of improving communication with parents, such as the World Languages Department's utilization of postcards to recognize and applaud the accomplishments of its students. An updated telephone system is still needed to further improve inter- and intra-school communication; this

updating is scheduled for completion during the upcoming building renovation.

- 7. Formalize a process through which teacher reflection and collaborative review of student work are incorporated into the teaching/learning culture at RHS.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Teacher reflection and collaborative review of student work will be further formalized and incorporated into the teaching/learning culture at RHS through the DDDM initiative. Teachers in the Smaller Learning Community will engage in additional activities of this nature. (See Highlighted Recommendations #3 and #8.)

- 8. Create and implement a plan to provide sufficient computer technology and related in-service training to support teaching and learning at RHS.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #5.

- 9. Ensure that professional materials are organized, current and that systems for distribution are implemented for ease of access by faculty.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Most professional materials are organized, maintained, and circulated within departments. The media center houses a professional library that was reorganized during the 2003-2004 school year. This collection is in need of a comprehensive plan to annually update and broaden the variety of professional materials. Such a plan will require staff support for materials selection as well as additional funding.

**STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Assessment of Student Learning**

- 1. Ensure that all faculty clearly state learning expectations and provide supporting rubrics or exemplars to inform students about what they are expected to know and be able to do.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** The new principal has asked department chairs to collect and submit for his perusal copies of each teacher's beginning of the year handouts. These include classroom expectations, course outlines, grading procedures, rubrics, and the like. The administrative team will evaluate procedures and provide direction for the building based on these existing documents. All departments are involved in the ongoing process of developing, assessing, reassessing, and fine-tuning common rubrics which serve to clarify to students what they need to know and be able to do. In addition, each department has its own unique approach to the use of rubrics. Some examples of this include the Art Department, which involves its students directly in the assessment process; the English Department, which has piloted a variety of common rubrics and is gathering alternate rubrics for trial use; the Mathematics Department, which distributes sample rubrics and exemplars to all 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in preparation for and anticipation of the mathematics portion of the CAPT; the Technology Department, which is building a library of rubrics to be posted on the computer network for use by all department members; and the World Language Department, which is continuing to develop common language and expectations specifically targeting listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural awareness.

- 2. Expand and enhance communication with parents regarding learning expectations and criteria used for grading.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** Course outlines and expectations are distributed to students in their classes on the first few days of school with the assumption that they will be shared with most parents. In addition, many teachers require an attachment to these forms to be returned signed by both the student and his or her parents. Parents who attend Open House at the end of September are provided with these documents as well. The

Alternative Special Education Program (ASEP) students and parents have a separate Open House before school begins where there is clear and open communication about all expectations. The availability of email in the building has also enhanced the possibilities for home-school communication, allowing teachers regular contact with parents about student progress.

The recently developed *Rockville High School Parental Involvement Policy* addresses this recommendation as well. (See Highlighted Recommendation #9.)

**3. Expand the use of common rubrics for similar assignments within sections of a course.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** Common rubrics are currently in use with many CAPT preparation units and/or classes. All departments are involved in the ongoing development and refinement of common rubrics across their curricula and classes. In addition, the assessment portion of the DDDM initiative will address this recommendation.

**4. Promote the development and use of common mid and final assessments in common courses.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** Where there are common courses and this approach is applicable, departments are either currently using or in the planning stages of developing common mid and final assessments, if not in their entirety, at least in those sections most suited to that format. The DDDM model will continue to move the school in this direction.

- 5. Provide increased opportunities for teachers, both by department and school-wide, to collaborate, review student work and share strategies and results of student assessment in order to develop short term and long term plans for improving curriculum and instruction.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** The DDDM initiative will address this recommendation in part, as will departmental initiatives. For example, the Technology Department and the Mathematics Department are planning to collaborate, review student work, and share results and strategies in order to develop short and long term plans for improving curriculum and instruction. Specialty areas with combined departments also provide shared department meeting times to improve articulation of the program, and with the DDDM model it is expected that these meetings will become more focused and produce very positive results.

- 6. Ensure that the professional development plan provides on-going and meaningful training and follow-up for all teachers in the development and use of assessment strategies.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** Each staff member has the opportunity to provide input and suggestions for professional development at a variety of intervals throughout the year. Department coordinators also seek input from their respective departments. DDDM training will focus in part on assessment strategies.

- 7. Expand the school practice of celebrating students of all ability levels for academic accomplishment.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** This practice is being expanded through a variety of venues. Announcements indicating a variety of accomplishments are becoming more and more frequent. While not always academic in its focus, the “Caught Being Good” initiative recently introduced by administration encourages staff to award students who are “caught” in the act of doing the right thing, an especially meaningful activity for those students who often get no other recognition. In addition, departments

have expanded the awards available at our annual awards night to include students from each level and/or class. The World Language Department plans to institute a number of honor societies this year with an evening induction ceremony for students and parents. Additional methods of addressing this recommendation will continue to be explored and implemented.

8. **Establish agreed upon levels of achievement targeted to the school's learning expectations; describe what data will demonstrate that students have achieved the desired outcomes; and provide training for teachers in the use of this instrument.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** The Performance Standards for Graduation required of all students at Rockville High School address this recommendation, which will be accomplished in its entirety when the school wide rubrics for the student academic expectations are fully implemented. (See Highlighted Recommendation #2.)

9. **Implement a plan of data collection and analysis used to formally assess the student achievement of the school's academic, social and civic expectations and publicize that data.**

**Classification: In Progress**

**Response:** Highlighted Recommendation #2 addresses the school's plan for its academic expectations. Regarding to the social and civic expectations, a draft of School Wide Indicators of Successful Achievement/Civic and Social Expectations has been in place since August, 2003. The Rubric Committee will review, update, and plan for implementation of this document.

**STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Leadership and Organization**

- 1. Promote greater effectiveness of the house system and consistency of policy implementation between the two houses.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** The house system at Rockville High School is currently an administrative function used to determine how students are assigned to their administrator and guidance counselor. Under the direction of a new principal, the administrative team meets weekly to discuss issues. The focus of these discussions is to increase consistency of policy implementation and policy revisions. Additionally, during the building renovation project the house system and the location of the administrative offices will be closely examined to determine the most appropriate and effective format.

- 2. Design and implement regular, formal, and accessible opportunities for faculty and staff to participate in discussions and decisions about school practices.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** The DDDM initiative will allow the opportunity for teachers to discuss teaching and learning. The School Improvement Committee will allow teachers to have a voice in the school improvement process.

- 3. Enhance and expand the student forums and the parent advisory council in order to insure stakeholder voices in the decision-making process.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** A Student Advisory Council has been created with three representatives from each grade level. This group meets monthly to discuss student concerns with the principal. In the past year, the Parent Advisory Council has become increasingly active and is involved in many school improvement plans. Additionally, parent and student representatives will be included on the School Improvement Committee.

- 4. Institute student grouping practices that are consistent with the school's mission and expectations regarding academic rigor, challenge, celebration of diversity, and valuing of all learners.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #6.

- 5. Develop and implement a plan to address the need for reduction of study halls in student schedules.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #7.

- 6. Ensure that the scope and range of elective courses provide equal opportunities for learners at all ability levels and those with varied interests and needs.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** Rockville High School offers a comprehensive program with numerous electives to meet the needs and interests of learners at all ability levels. Through such unique programs as the Regional Agricultural Education Department and College Career Paths, the school is able to offer electives to the student body such as Floral Design, Aquaculture, and Criminal Justice. While extensive, the number and variety of elective courses available to students are affected by such factors as scheduling constraints, prerequisites, and staffing. An analysis of the scope, range, and equitable distribution of elective courses will be conducted in conjunction with the investigation of the distribution of study halls at the high school. (See Highlighted Recommendation #7.)

7. **Identify barriers preventing teachers from providing individual attention to their students and implement strategies to reduce those impediments.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Recent staff development in Differentiated Instruction addresses this recommendation. Although high class size in certain courses adversely affects teachers' ability to provide individual attention in some instances, Rockville High School continues to offer co-teaching and paraprofessional assistance in particular classes where the need for individual attention is deemed greatest. The Mathematics Department's math lab and school wide Wednesday after school sessions for extra help assist in providing individual attention to students as well. Rockville High School will continue to move forward in addressing this recommendation.

8. **Provide regular, formal opportunities for Rockville teachers to collaborate within and across departments.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #8 and Curriculum Recommendation #6.

9. **Develop and implement an on-going, sustainable program of recognition and celebration of the rich cultural diversity found at Rockville High School.**

**Classification: In Progress**

**Response:** Since the visitation, Rockville High School staff has increased awareness of the need to recognize and celebrate the rich and growing diversity at the school and to bring more sensitivity to the classrooms. In addition, although a fully coordinated recognition program has not been implemented as yet, the school has continued to expand activities and programs that address this recommendation, including the following examples:

## Rockville High School Two-Year Progress Report

- Recognition and expansion of student enrollment representing the school's diverse demographics in activities and programs, for example in the planned increase of 10-15% to 30% diversity representation in the 2005-2006 Peer Mediators group and in the continued multicultural enrollment in the Allied Health Program.
- Creation of the RHS Step Team, membership of which is predominantly African American and Hispanic, with participation including three performances last year and more performances planned for this year.
- Expansion of the Minority Return Day/Evening and related outreach activities.
- Celebration of the World Languages Department's first annual Taste of Languages, a program involving the participation of World Languages and ESL students as well as community members in teaching mini-language lessons at an evening program. Students and community members attended the mini lessons and were treated to multi-cultural refreshments and entertainment following their class sessions.
- The RHS Music Department's participation in the district wide celebration of "The Year of Languages" in 2004-2005 by performing a variety of music from diverse cultures and languages in numerous venues involving the marching band, symphony band, and choir.
- Continued visits to RHS by the Prince Tech Dance Troupe from Hartford. For the past three years through a program coordinated by one of the RHS World Languages teachers, these students from Hartford have come to RHS to perform world dances and also to present a fashion show of clothing from around the world, with participation of RHS students in the fashion show.
- The spring 2005 Peer Mediator program involving an outreach to the diversity of Weaver High School in collaborating on a series of mediation videos.
- Unique teacher-constructed units such as the Office Applications mini-project requiring students to create and share PowerPoint presentations on multicultural winter celebrations.
- The continued growth of the International Club, whose monthly meetings focus on the cultural heritage of

diverse groups represented by the high school students and staff.

- Utilization of videos produced by the newly created Video Club (Fall 2004) to share such events as the Minority Return Day and the World Language Department's Taste of Languages with the broader school community.
- Expansion of the German-American Partnership Program (GAPP) to include a full school-year stay by three German students.
- Participation by some members of the high school staff in training in "Don't Laugh at Me," a national program to celebrate diversity and prevent discrimination and bullying.
- The International Tea sponsored by a World Language teacher and the ESL teacher to welcome new ESL and exchange students to the high school each year.

**STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: School Resources for Learning**

1. **Collect, analyze and use data related to the social and civic criteria to inform decisions regarding which civic and social opportunities are most efficacious.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** See Assessment Recommendation #9. Data gathered through the implementation of the School Wide Indicators of Successful Achievement/ Civic and Social Expectations document will be utilized to address this recommendation.

2. **Develop and implement a program that establishes one caring adult for each student in the school community.**

**Classification: Planned for the future**

**Response:** The plan to establish this type of program was put on hold due to the change of leadership. The principal plans on presenting an advisor/advisee model to the School Improvement Committee to research and develop its implementation at Rockville High School.

**3. Develop and implement the developmental guidance program.**

**Classification: In Progress**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #4.

**4. Dedicate the library media specialist to full-time service at Rockville High School.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** This recommendation was completed directly after the visitation and was reported to the Commission in a special required report submitted in November, 2004.

**5. Expand and enhance the role of the media specialist in the revision and development of curriculum.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** The library/media specialist has been directly involved in the development of the library media curriculum. Additionally, she is an active member of the district Instructional Council. This committee approves all new curricula before it is presented to the Board of Education for approval.

**6. Clarify roles, responsibilities, and authority of all library media personnel.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Various measures have been undertaken by administration and the Library Media Specialist to address this recommendation, as follows:

- Assignment of the Library Media Specialist as full-time at the high school starting in September, 2004.
- Clarification of the position of Library Media Manager in 2004-2005 following the elimination of two previous media personnel positions in the summer 2004.

- Realignment and assignment of tasks previously performed by the eliminated media personnel to the remaining media staff or to the full-time Library Media Specialist.

**7. Create an information technology curriculum including library media skills for all students at RHS.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #11.

**8. Provide sufficient resources to expand the print collections and the electronic data bases as needed to support the learning needs of RHS faculty and students.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Although the library media center has been successful in maintaining the current level of print collections and electronic data bases with minimal losses each year for the past three years, most requests for additional funding to expand these resources have been limited by budget constraints. In addition, the cost of print and online materials has increased, resulting in the need to carefully select expenditures, sometimes at the expense of other multimedia collections such as videos or DVDs.

**9. Implement a program of professional development to inform all RHS faculty members regarding the materials and resources available through the media center.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** The library media specialist has implemented a variety of initiatives to address this recommendation, as follows:

- A Library Media Center Open House in 2004-2005 showcasing the SMART BOARD, LCD projectors, newly expanded computer area, and the media center online resources.

- A series of mini-sessions in the use of media center resources for small groups of teachers during planning periods and after school in 2004-2005.
- Ongoing email communication with teachers regarding links and log-in information to many online databases subscribed to or tested on trials by the library media center.
- Scheduled time at RHS Faculty Meetings to announce/explain new library media center resources or offerings.
- A workshop conducted by the library media specialist during the 2005-2006 Fall Staff Development Day covering use of the SMART BOARD, LCD projector, online resources, media center computer lab, and ATHENA, the online card catalogue.
- Plans to create an all new Library Media Center web page on the high school's website with links and information about the online paid library databases.

**10. Develop and implement a plan to establish additional technological resources in the media center such as computer hardware and software, computer projectors, and printers.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** This plan is addressed in the Vernon Public School's Technology Plan 2004-2007 developed by Barry Grant, district Coordinator of Technology. Updates to the technological resources in the media center since the visitation include the following:

- Refurbishment in the summer of 2004 of the library computer lab with 23 new computers, resulting in a new computer area comprising 25 computers in a rectangular area, 5 more computers along the opposite wall, a SMART BOARD on a portable stand, and one LCD projector
- Replacement in the summer of 2004 of the library media specialist's desktop computer with a laptop which is also available for media center presentations
- Addition in the fall of 2004 of a new HP LJ4200 printer in the library media center
- Home and school online access to the library media center card catalog beginning in the fall of 2005 through the purchase of a dedicated server, ATHENA

Webserver software, and an IP address in addition to budgeted and trained support staff for this purpose

- 11. Provide communication tools for teachers such as telephones, e-mail, and voice mail.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #10.

- 12. Establish clear evaluation standards and processes to assess the performance of the student service programs.**

**Classification:** Planned for the future

**Response:** Student services programs are in varying stages of development and implementation in addressing this recommendation. Where applicable, programs have been evaluated through the teacher evaluation process and the analysis of student performance data. A coordinated approach to establishing clear evaluation standards and processes to assess the performance of all student services programs is a future goal for Rockville High School.

**ACCREDITATION STANDARD: Community Resources for Learning**

- 1. Develop and implement an outreach plan to expand the number and diversity of parents involved in school support groups and activities.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #9.

- 2. Address the poor traffic pattern and use of the existing school cafeterias.**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** This recommendation will be addressed in the building renovation project set to begin in the summer of 2006.

**3. Develop and publish a timeline that indicates personnel responsible for implementing the district's strategic plan "Catalyst for Excellence."**

**Classification:** In progress

**Response:** In reference to the portion of the district's strategic plan "Catalyst for Excellence" cited in the evaluation report, on March 29, 2005, the citizens of Vernon approved more than \$68,000,000 for a bond project to renovate the seven Vernon public schools. Approximately \$34,000,000 of that total is planned for a renovation of Rockville High School. This project, when completed, will address all of the facility concerns contained in the NEASC report.

All code violations (health, safety and ADA) will be corrected. A total renovation of the Library Media Center is planned as well as a renovation to the cafeteria. A newly defined entrance for the school with increased security will be constructed. There will be two additions to the building including a new kitchen and a new auditorium that will accommodate the student population of the high school. The classroom "A" wing will be entirely renovated along with the administrative and guidance offices. New boilers will be installed along with new windows and doors with the exception of the 1976 wing. The athletic area (gymnasiums and locker rooms) will be renovated and expanded encompassing the space occupied by the current auditorium.

In July the Vernon Town Council created a nine-person School Building Advisory Commission to advise the superintendent of schools on all aspects of the project. The Director of Business and Finance for the Vernon Public Schools filed the required ED049 forms to the State of Connecticut in June 2005. A Request for Proposal for Architectural Services was advertised and thirteen firms submitted completed applications which have been reviewed by the School Building Advisory Commission. Six of those firms are scheduled for interview on September 27 and 28 with the final selection of an architectural firm scheduled for October 18, 2005. Upon selection of the architect, roles, responsibilities and timelines will be developed for the high school project as well as for the projects in the other six schools.

- 4. Upgrade the phone system so that private conversations can be held between classrooms and offices and for outside communications between teachers and parents.**

**Classification: In Progress**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #10.

- 5. Fund and implement the plan for preventive maintenance that will assure that critical systems are maintained and in good working condition.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #12.

- 6. Develop a plan for soliciting parent and community support for budget and bond issues requests.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** The Parent Advisory Committee of Rockville High School has become very active and supportive of the school's initiatives. The parent group had a strong coordinated effort to assist in the passage of the school referendum project. The parent group will continue with the new principal to promote Rockville High School, especially in its coordinated efforts to successfully support and pass budgets.

- 7. Establish specific funding initiatives that will support the implementation of the newly drafted technology plan.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #5. The implementation of the district technology plan is a priority for the district that will be fulfilled through the district's budgetary process.

8. **Provide sufficient access and implementation of the district's wide area network (WAN) to provide e-mail and network services to all staff.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** See Highlighted Recommendation #10. Access to and implementation of the district's wide area network (WAN) has significantly improved since the NEASC visitation.

9. **Implement a plan to ensure replacement of broken or outdated equipment.**

**Classification: In progress**

**Response:** Administration, coordinators, department heads, the library media specialist, and other high school staff members identify broken or outdated equipment and make decisions and budgetary requests regarding its repair or incremental replacement. Requests are prioritized and fulfilled through the budgetary process.

10. **Ensure that new faculty members are fully informed about the budget process and have access to the request process.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** Faculty members have direct input into budget requests through collaboration with their department chairs. Additionally, faculty will be readily informed about the budget process through faculty meetings and regular correspondence from the principal via e-mail/memo.

11. **Establish protocols that provide communication with staff members on the status of work order requests.**

**Classification: Completed**

**Response:** An on-line work order request system has been implemented at Rockville High School. All requests can be tracked through this program to learn the status of each request. Procedures will be developed for all staff to access this information.

- 12. Address inequities that exist between boys and girls varsity athletic team rooms.**

**Classification: In Progress**

**Response:** The locker rooms will be redesigned and any inequities that exist will be eliminated during the building renovation project.

- 13. Develop and publish procedures for faculty instructing them in the efficient functioning of the heating and cooling systems, ventilations systems, and code requirements.**

**Classification: Rejected**

**Response:** Such a document is not deemed necessary for the high school. Faculty members may request this information at any time and have access to it through the principal.

**III. Current Mission Statement**

See attachment #1.

#### **IV. Substantive Changes**

No substantive changes have occurred since the decennial visit evaluation.

## V. Strengths / Achievements

- Continued improvement of CAPT scores
- Over 30 teachers trained in *Capturing Kids Hearts*
- Use of data to determine critical needs and the development of programs to address those needs, e.g., 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Smaller Learning Community, Attendance Mentoring Program
- Existence of over 50 student extracurricular clubs/organizations
- Increased community service by students
- Expanded new teacher induction program
- Increased parental involvement
- Increased alignment of curriculum to state standards and the RHS Mission and Expectations
- Continued local, state, and national recognition of students for curricular and co-curricular achievements
- Involvement of fall sports teams in the Get Psyched Sports program that focuses on goal setting, teamwork and positive self-esteem
- The development of the *Rockville High School Parental Involvement Policy* as a means of improving home-school communication and clarifying responsibilities of the school, parents, and students.

## VI. Restructuring or other reform initiatives

Since the decennial visit of the NEASC committee in the fall of 2003, Rockville High School has undertaken many initiatives to improve teaching and learning. The adoption of the **Data Driven Decision Making** model, developed in conjunction with the Center for Performance Assessment, should lead to greatly enhanced teaching and learning experiences. Implementing this model has six projected outcomes:

- To establish a process for identifying areas of strength and areas of urgent need related to student achievement
- To transform data into effective teaching and learning
- To implement practical strategies to improve student achievement based on real assessment data of RHS students
- To recognize early warning indicators in order to target specific and appropriate goals
- To develop and monitor instructional strategies linked to the assessments used at RHS
- To establish and support data teams to foster collaboration, shared teacher reflection, and greater consistency at RHS

The **building renovation project** will bring many positive and necessary changes to our facility: new gymnasiums and lockers, an adequate auditorium, upgraded communications, restructured administrative facilities (and with them some restructuring of the current house system), updated windows and heating systems, improved parking and playing fields, an easily perceptible front entrance, and an overall face lift.

Beginning with the class of 2006, all students are required to complete all portions of the **CAPT** and must demonstrate performance standards for graduation in mathematics, science, and reading/writing in order to graduate from RHS. To that end, RHS has provided professional development in CAPT preparation, focusing on reading and writing, and each teacher is encouraged to include CAPT specific goals in his or her annual Professional Growth Objective.

A **Special Education Department Initiative** has changed the structure of resource support services. Students are now divided into 9/10 resource support and 11/12 resource support. The 9/10 resource support classes include specific lessons in preparation for CAPT in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. Support continues to be provided for mainstream instruction. Students in 11/12 resource support classes receive instruction that is individualized based on CAPT scores. Remediation is provided to assist students in meeting the Performance Standards for Graduation either through the testing process, the Senior Performance Standard Courses, or IEP goals. The department has also added the **Next STEP** program which is a transition program developed to meet the needs of students who require further assistance in transitioning into the world. The program was designed for students who have met graduation requirements for RHS and operates off campus.

**Other initiatives include the following:**

The implementing of a **Smaller Learning Community** for 9<sup>th</sup> graders, outlined in greater detail within this document

A grant-funded **attendance mentoring program** that links seven teachers with identified at-risk students to keep them in school

**Celebrating** our students

- Housemaster's **Caught Being Good** program
- Principal's **announcements** honoring student, faculty, and staff achievements

30 members of the staff already trained in **Capturing Kids' Hearts**, a program to

- Develop self managing classrooms
- Decrease delinquent behaviors
- Utilize the EXCEL teaching model
- Build classroom rapport and teamwork
- Develop students' empathy for diverse backgrounds
- Increase classroom attendance by building motivation

Plans to implement a **Teen Leadership Curriculum**, an offshoot of Capturing Kids' Hearts, second semester of this year, a program focused on

- Principle based decision making
- Choices and their consequences
- Public speaking
- Personal responsibility
- Goal setting
- Preparation for school to work transition
- Importance of attitude
- Conflict resolution
- Peer mediation
- Healthy relationships
- Resisting peer pressure

**Community Outreach**

- World Language **Taste of Language** evening, detailed in this report
- Expansion of the **Minority College Return** program
- The former Guidance Newsletter has become the school's publication, **The Rockville TelegRAM**

**Extra- and Co-curricular outreach** to diverse groups of students with new clubs

- **Step Team**, a dance team mostly comprised of students of color
- **KnitWits**, a craft club for many who are not normally joiners
- **FBLA**, a renewal of the Future Business Leaders of America club
- **Video Club**, instituted last year by the library media specialist

**VII. Rockville High School's Follow- Up Program**

**Follow-Up Committee Membership**

<b>Subcommittee</b>	<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Position</b>
Mission Review	Catherine Ginel	Science Teacher
School-wide Rubrics	Mary Leslie Dennis Timberman	Mathematics Teacher Art Teacher
Curriculum - Rigor and Challenge	Sue Andrews Stacey Boisselle	Housemaster Former English Teacher
Developmental Guidance Curriculum	James Balcome	Former Director of Guidance
Technology	Christopher Dresko David Ferrer	Music Teacher World Language Teacher
Student Grouping Practices	Michael Mas	Guidance Counselor
Distribution of Study Halls	Colleen Lepage	Social Studies Teacher
Teacher Collaboration	Calvin Brodersen Sara Jane Reilly	Agricultural Education Teacher Family and Consumer Science Teacher
Parental Involvement	Lisa Fiano	Special Education
Communication Tools	Dianne Grim	Business and Computer Science Teacher
Information Technology Curriculum	Joy Fitzgerald	Library/Media Specialist
Preventive Maintenance	Kelli Courtois Raymond Sutyla	Physical Education Teacher Technology Education Teacher
Writing of the Two-Year Progress Report	Keith Gerritt Brian Levesque Denise Neumaier Margaret Youmatz	Former RHS Principal Current RHS Principal World Language Teacher English As a Second Language Teacher

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## Rockville High School Two-Year Progress Report

### Follow-Up Committee Timeline

June 2004	NEASC Report of the Visiting Committee is released to the school community by Principal Keith Gerritt; individuals begin to work on various recommendations.
March 2, 2005	Keith Gerritt requests faculty volunteers to serve on NEASC Follow-Up Committee.
March 31, 2005	Initial after-school meeting of NEASC Follow-Up Committee composed of one representative from each department; Keith Gerritt assigns members to subcommittees to assess the status of the twelve highlighted recommendations.
March-April 2005	Subcommittees work individually.
April 28, 2005	Second after-school meeting of NEASC Follow-Up Committee, decision is made to bring highlighted recommendations to entire staff for discussion.
May-June 2005	Subcommittees continue individual work; each subcommittee meets once with Keith Gerritt to assess progress and to plan for staff presentation/discussion during June 23, 2005 Staff Development Day.
June 23, 2005	Staff Development Day workshop is held to discuss selected Highlighted Recommendations in breakout sessions followed by a sharing of findings with entire faculty. Discussions center on the following areas:  Mission Review School-wide Rubrics Curriculum/Rigor and Challenge Student Grouping Practices Teacher Collaboration
June 30, 2005	Principal Keith Gerritt leaves Rockville High School.
July 1, 2005	Principal Brian Levesque begins tenure at RHS.
Summer 2005	Brian Levesque reviews draft of Two-Year Progress Report, determines next steps in follow-up process.

## Rockville High School Two-Year Progress Report

- September 1, 2005 Follow-Up Committee reconvenes, decides that small group should complete the writing of the report; Brian Levesque, Denise Neumaier, and Margaret Youmatz Volunteer.
- September 1-28, 2005 Information for report in addition to notes from June Staff Development Day is gathered from the superintendent of schools, curriculum coordinators, coordinator of technology, director of buildings and grounds, department heads, library/media specialist, and faculty.
- Writing subcommittee meets on two release days and several other occasions to write the Two-Year Progress Report.
- NEASC Follow-Up Committee meets twice more after school to discuss updated drafts, copies of which are distributed to committee members periodically by email; committee ultimately achieves consensus approval of the report's findings.
- September 28, 2005 Two-Year Progress Report is mailed to CPSS and released to entire staff by email.
- October 3, 2005 Two-Year Progress Report will be presented and discussed with the faculty at an after-school faculty meeting.
- October 11, 2005 Two-Year Progress Report will be presented to the Vernon Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education at an evening Board meeting.

### **Continued Steps in the Follow-Up Program**

At its final meeting prior to submitting the two-year report, Principal Levesque and the NEASC Follow-Up Committee determined the steps necessary to continue the follow-up program in the next few years leading to the Five-Year Progress Report. NEASC recommendations not currently completed will be addressed by the principal and/or one of the following four groups:

- Mission Review Committee
- Rubric Committee
- School Improvement Committee
- Department Heads

The important work of reviewing and updating the mission and expectations and the accompanying rubrics are time-consuming and complicated tasks that will necessitate the reestablishment of two committees devoted solely to their completion. The remaining recommendations will be addressed by the School Improvement Committee and/or department heads under the direction of the principal.

With the leadership of a new principal who has renewed Rockville High School's commitment to continued improvement under the NEASC Standards for Accreditation, the school intends to move forward deliberately in responding to the recommendations of Visiting Committee.

**VIII. Statistical Data Sheet**

School: Rockville High School Principal: Brian Levesque

City, State: Vernon, Connecticut School Telephone: 860-870-6050

E-Mail Address: [Brian.Levesque@vernonct.org](mailto:Brian.Levesque@vernonct.org) Fax: 860-870-6314

Dates of Accreditation Visit: September 21-24, 2003

Grades: 9-12 School Enrollment: 1284 at time of the evaluation

Grades: 9-12 School Enrollment: 1281 at present time

Based upon the state's definition of a dropout, indicate the dropout rate for the most recently completed school year as well as for the preceding two years:

1.9 % 2004

2.1 % 2003

2.8 % 2002

Disposition of Visiting Committee Report Recommendations

	Number	Percentage
Completed	23	34%
In Progress	40	59%
Planned For The Future	4	6%
Rejected	1	1%
No Action	0	0%
Total	68	100%

Signature of Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Chair  
Of Follow-up Committee \_\_\_\_\_

Date Progress Report Submitted September 28, 2005