

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

Commission on Public Schools



**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

Commission on Public Schools

**Report of the Visiting Team for
Mansfield High School**

Mansfield, MA

04-06-2025 - 04-09-2025

**Patricia Rocha, Chair
Jeanine Boulay, Assistant Chair
Russ Booth, Principal**

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Mansfield High School, located in Mansfield, Massachusetts, is about 20 miles north of Providence, Rhode Island, and about 30 miles south of Boston, Massachusetts. A popular stop on the MBTA's commuter rail line, Mansfield is also located at the intersection of routes 495 and 95. As a result of this accessibility, Mansfield residents are often commuters to the two larger cities between which it lies.

With a combined population of approximately 23,860, the median family income as of 2020 was \$125,506. While 86 percent of the community is white, it also comprises an African American population of 2.4 percent, a Hispanic or Latino population of 4 percent, and an Asian population of close to 6 percent. According to the 2020 Census, 11 percent of Mansfield families speak a language other than English at home.

There is a bustling downtown with many small businesses, including restaurants, bars, retail companies, and service establishments. In addition to the downtown business community, the town has Mansfield Crossing, a large outdoor retail space. Mansfield also has an industrial park, in which the biotech industry is growing, and is home to the Xfinity Center, a popular outdoor entertainment amphitheater.

The 2020 census indicates that 96.2 percent of citizens ages 25 and older have at least a high school diploma or higher level of education, and 52.9 percent have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. In 2020, 3.3 percent of residents were at or below the poverty level.

In the 2024-2025 school year, Mansfield High School has an enrollment of 1,001 students, Qualters Middle School (6-8) has 773 students, the Jordan-Jackson Elementary School (grades 3-5) has 770 students, the Robinson Elementary School (K-2) has 676 students, and the Roland Green School (Pre-K) has 118 students. In addition to the Mansfield Public Schools, students and their families have several other school options, including Al Noor Academy in Mansfield, St. Mary's Catholic School in Mansfield, and the Foxborough Charter School in Foxborough, among others.

Per-pupil expenditures in 2023 were \$19,375, compared with the state average of \$19,714. In FY2023, state Chapter 70 education funding accounted for 35 percent of the district budget's funding, leaving local resources responsible for funding the remaining 65 percent required to operate the school district. The district utilizes federal and state grants and other available resources to support all district initiatives.

Over the past several years, the student enrollment for Mansfield High School and the district has declined. Currently, the makeup of the student community is 80 percent white, 4.5 percent African American, 5.7 percent Hispanic, and 6.5 percent Asian. Roughly 15 percent of the student population is economically disadvantaged, while approximately 16 percent of the school community are students with disabilities. The average dropout rate for 2023 was 0.1 percent. The average student attendance rate in 2023 was 94.8 percent.

There are 97 full-time equivalent teaching positions at Mansfield High School, creating a student-teacher ratio of 10:1. Individual teachers carry an average caseload of approximately 80 students, and the average class size is just over 14.

At Mansfield High School, the core subjects use a multi-level approach, including courses in college preparatory levels A and B, honors level courses, advanced placement courses, and essential college prep courses. In the 2023-2024 school year, 326 students took at least one AP course and sat for 670 exams. In the current school year, MHS has 308 students taking 673 exams. Additionally, students can select from a wide range of elective courses. Participation in school athletics and clubs/activities is robust.

Students at Mansfield High School have the opportunity to explore professions through the career pathways program, a course that matches students with local community members to provide hands-on experience. Some students have the opportunity to enroll at Southeastern Technical Institute. Students can also take online courses facilitated by the business department.

Students at Mansfield High School are recognized for their accomplishments through our end-of-year underclassmen awards night. During this night, the faculty awards students for academic excellence and industriousness in each grade and subject area. Eleventh-grade students are also presented with book awards for academic achievement, community service, and leadership.

Students at Mansfield High School perform very well on state and standardized tests. The average SAT reading and writing score is 597, and 593 in mathematics. In the class of 2024, 79 percent of graduates attended four-year colleges, while 4 percent enrolled in two-year colleges, 7 percent enrolled in career education/apprenticeship programs, 1 percent entered the military, 1 percent took a gap year, and 8 percent entered the workforce.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

Mansfield Public Schools Mission Statement

The Mansfield Public Schools supports each student so they feel recognized and valued. All students are empowered academically, socially, and emotionally so they can reach their maximum potential.

Mansfield Public Schools Vision Statement

The Mansfield Public Schools will foster an environment where all students share a sense of belonging and experience academic and personal growth. We will inspire and empower active and engaged learners, citizens, innovators, and communicators.

Once the mission and vision statements had been written and approved, a subset of that group composed of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and parents/guardians was formed to update the district's core values. The group met four times to develop their ideas and then identified five principles that are highly valued in the work that is being done to educate Mansfield students.

Core Values of the Mansfield Public Schools

Belonging:*We build a supportive and understanding community through kindness, respect, and empathy.*

Collaboration:*We work together, share ideas, respect each other, and celebrate our achievements as a community.*

Curiosity:*We question, explore, and discover in order to foster a love of learning, not just for school but for life.*

Integrity:*We are honest and do the right thing, even when no one is watching.*

Resilience:*We adapt and grow in the face of adversity, always persevering and continuing to try.*

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); 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 composed 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.

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 seven members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Decennial Accreditation visit to Mansfield High School in Mansfield, Massachusetts. The visiting team members spent four days conducting a 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 the school.

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.1a

The school community provides a socially and emotionally safe environment for students and adults. Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated they feel safe in the school community. Students have access to trained support staff and resources at Mansfield High School through the school counseling services, the nurse's office, the current Bridge Program for students transitioning from extended absences, and the BESST program, which provides therapeutic and academic support for students with significant social, emotional, and/or behavioral needs. School programming includes a signs of suicide discussion with grade nine students, and the backs of student identification cards list crisis center phone numbers. Programs such as Project Teammate, Best Buddies, and Unified Athletics promote inclusivity. One hundred students and 25 staff members recently engaged in a "challenge day" that featured activities to build connection, empathy, and understanding.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.2a

The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success. Mansfield High School's vision of the graduate was collaboratively developed during the 2021-2022 school year. The school synthesized input gathered through faculty meetings, surveys, and summer institute work. The vision of the graduate is included in the school's student-parent handbook and is visible on posters throughout the school. The vision of the graduate focuses on four "M-Powered Competencies": empowered learner, empowered citizen, empowered innovator, and empowered communicator, along with related dispositions that all students should develop. During the 2024-2025 school year, academic departments began identifying the skills associated with each competency and what can be done within classrooms to foster growth in each area.

The Mansfield Public School District publicly released its mission and vision statements in May 2024. Each is visible on the district website's homepage. Their development was a collaborative effort among stakeholders, including students from both the middle and high schools, staff, and community members. They are intended to align with the district improvement plan, the Student Opportunity Act plan, and the high school's vision of the graduate.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Foundational Element 2.2a

The school does not yet have written curriculum documents for all courses that include a scope and sequence or curriculum map with units of study that contain expected course outcomes for each student, guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, formative assessments, assessments aligned with expected course outcomes, instructional strategies, and connections to the school's vision of the graduate. Since the Collaborative Conference, Mansfield High School has made significant progress in creating a written curriculum. Department chairs engaged in professional development related to the Understanding by Design (UbD) model and used that model to develop curriculum templates and create training for department members. Members of curriculum teams from each department are in the process of creating curriculum guides and scope and sequence documents for each course, but the work is not fully complete for each course. Curriculum documents are housed in a central, accessible Google Drive and are revised and updated regularly.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Foundational Element 3.1a

Mansfield High School has a current school improvement plan. The 2024-2025 plan can be accessed on the district's web page. The principal developed the school's plan with input from the school, district leadership team, and the school council. The school improvement plan focuses on three district strategic objectives: curriculum, instruction, and environment. The school plan informs decision-making in the school. For example, under the curriculum objective, the school's goal is to expand the UbD implementation to increase connections to skills identified in the vision of the graduate, something actively underway in the 2024-2025 school year. Curriculum teams are working to develop a written curriculum, and department chairs have begun discussing the skills and classroom activities needed to connect each competency. Further, the school is actively implementing and assessing a flexible learning block in their schedule, an initiative presented under the environment strategic objective.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 3.6a - Professional Practices

Foundational Element 3.6a

N/A

Foundational Elements 4.1a - Learning Support

Foundational Elements 4.1a

The school has intervention strategies designed to support learners. Academically, Mansfield High School's programming includes focused reading intervention, math remediation, and academic support courses for English language learners (ELLs) and students receiving special education services. Content teachers are paired with special education teachers in co-taught classes. The Believe Every Student Succeeds Today (BESST) therapeutic classroom is staffed by a special education teacher, paraprofessional, and school psychologist to support students with social, emotional, and behavioral needs. The Bridge program supports students transitioning back to school from extended absences, but the program is being eliminated due to budget constraints. Hornet block, introduced in the 2024-2025 school year, provides teachers and students with regular opportunities to meet for academic support.

The school has a process to identify and refer students who need support. Faculty can refer students to the student support team (SST), which consists of administrators, school counselors, and school nurses. The team meets weekly to review referrals and to develop individualized intervention plans with benchmarks to support the student using the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model. The academic learning center provides Tier 1 support to students referred by the SST as needing support, but not qualifying for Tier 2 services. A teacher and student teacher assistants staff the academic learning center.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Foundational Element 5.1a

The school site and plant support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services. Constructed in 1968 with subsequent additions and updates, the current school plant includes traditional classroom spaces, science labs, art studios, music rooms, and a small wood shop. Business classrooms have desktop computers for all students; however, given the one-to-one Chromebook program, there is potential to repurpose space to create a makerspace or innovative learning lab. A dedicated space for the NEXT steps program supports the transition program for 19 to 22-year-olds. Athletic facilities include a recently renovated gymnasium, outdoor fields, and a new track. A library media center can be used for class instruction and student collaboration. The cafeteria is a multipurpose space, used for food service, meeting space, and athletics. School facilities are mostly clean and well-maintained. Building technology includes accessible Wi-Fi, interactive whiteboards in all classrooms, and a one-to-one Chromebook program. The school building and facilities comply with federal and state laws and local fire, health, and safety regulations.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.5a - Learning Resources

Foundational Element 5.5a

The school provides a physically safe environment for students and adults. All entrances to the building are locked during the school day. Cameras are strategically positioned in public areas. Staff and students must wear a picture identification in the building, and a school resource officer is accessible during school hours. Mansfield High School has a security welcome window at the main entrance to monitor guests who enter the building. There is staff presence in hallways and common areas, including two full time hallway monitors. School staff regularly supervise building areas after school, during passing time, and during lunches. Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are accessible on campus. The school engages in emergency drills throughout the year including fire evacuation, bus evacuation, and active shooter drills. Staff and students are trained in the 4L (locate, lockdown, leave, live) emergency protocol.

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	Meets	Meets	Meets
2.2a - Student Learning	Does Not Meet	Does Not Meet	Meets	Does Not Meet
3.1a - Professional Practices	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
3.6 - Professional Practices	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4.1a - Learning Support	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
5.1a - Learning Resources	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
5.5a - Learning Resources	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets

Priority Area 1

Priority Area

Engage the entire teaching and learning community with the recently adopted vision of the graduate, establishing a means to measure and report student proficiency with respect to the four competencies at both the individual student and school levels in all curricular areas. (2.2)

Action, Impact, and Growth

During a 2022 summer institute, a team of educators and students created the vision of the graduate for Mansfield High School. On May 20, 2024, Mansfield Public Schools released its new mission and vision statements to the community, which drew on the language of the vision of the graduate: "We will inspire and empower active and engaged learners, citizens, innovators, and communicators." A press release was shared with families detailing the district's mission and vision statements.

On June 12, 2024, the district shared the creation of its new logo, which has now been incorporated into the high school vision of the graduate graphics. A staff member with graphic design experience created a new vision of the graduate logo and presented it at a staff meeting. Vision of the graduate posters have been placed in many classrooms to increase visibility of the initiative. They exist alongside posters for the district's core values: belonging, collaboration, curiosity, integrity, and resilience.

The school has dedicated some professional development time to engage staff with the vision of the graduate competencies. On March 5, 2024, a voluntary session was offered where a small group of staff brainstormed what each competency looks like in classrooms, with the resulting information later disseminated to all staff. Another session on January 29, 2025, was facilitated by department chairs, during which they explored examples of the competencies in practice. For instance, the "learner" competency was broken down into the traits "curious, motivated, equipped," with discussions on what behaviors demonstrate curiosity, such as wondering about a new topic or being curious about U.S. culture. Mansfield's principal plans to synthesize this information and share it with staff.

Mansfield administrators find opportunities to communicate the vision of the graduate to students through events like opening day student assemblies, summer orientation for ninth graders, and the eighth-grade open house. The vision of the graduate continues to be discussed at school council meetings. They have decided to develop a fully formed plan before sharing more broadly with staff and students. The vision of the graduate has also been included in the school improvement plan for 2024-2025, and the school committee has expressed support for the holistic approach of the vision of the graduate initiative.

While few teachers report incorporating the vision of the graduate competencies into their practice, a small sample of teachers shared examples of their practice, such as allocating time at the beginning or end of lessons for reflection on how the lesson connects with any of the competencies or using the language from the vision of the graduate poster when providing feedback to families about student progress. The few teachers actively incorporating the vision of the graduate concepts into their practice could serve as models for broader adoption.

The visual nature of the new vision of the graduate logo and graphics is likely to resonate with students, who tend to be visually oriented. The classroom posters are beginning to draw attention. However, the signs appeared without explanation, indicating a gap in communication about their purpose and significance. Few staff members make connections to the vision of the graduate, and it is not being discussed in most classrooms.

The inclusion of the vision of the graduate in the school improvement plan signals institutional commitment, but the impact of this inclusion is yet to be determined. Similarly, while the school council continues to discuss the vision of the graduate, their cautious approach to rollout may be delaying the broader impact. The limited student

awareness and engagement suggest a need for more intentional communication and involvement of this key stakeholder group.

Recommended Next Steps

Develop and implement a plan to

- ensure the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are known and understood by all stakeholders
- ensure the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are actively reflected in the school culture and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations

Develop and implement a plan to

- define what proficiency looks like for each aspect within the vision of the graduate with specific and measurable criteria for success
- integrate opportunities for students to practice the skills within the vision of the graduate and receive feedback on their progress throughout the curriculum
- embed the vision of the graduate into curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices

Develop and implement a formal process to assess and communicate each individual learner's progress toward achieving the school's vision of the graduate to learners and their families

Develop an annual report on whole-school progress toward learners' achievement of the vision of the graduate

Include the vision of the graduate in the newly created Understanding by Design curriculum guides through the enduring understandings and transfer goals sections of the guides

Share the synthesis of staff commentary to have a shared common language around how the competencies can be developed and demonstrated in the classroom

Facilitate the sharing of best practices among staff, showcasing those who have found ways to implement vision of the graduate into their daily lessons and classroom activities

Acknowledge and celebrate students who demonstrate the vision of the graduate qualities, such as through regular teacher nominations and/or end-of-year underclassmen and senior awards celebrations

Develop and implement systems to measure and report student growth in the vision of the graduate competencies

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- facility tour
- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- school summary report
- student work
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Priority Area 2

Priority Area

Complete the written curriculum in all content areas using the recently developed common curriculum template that uses the Understanding by Design model and links essential questions, competencies assessed in the vision of the graduate, pacing guides, and common tasks in all subject areas. (2.2a, 2.2)

Action, Impact, and Growth

Mansfield High School has implemented a robust process for developing a written curriculum in all content areas based on the principles of Understanding by Design (UbD). After a brief hiatus from the work during the COVID-19 disruption, work began again. In January 2023, department chairs and middle and high school administrators engaged in training for UbD with McTighe and Associates. This served as a refresher to assure a common understanding of the practice. The template developed includes essential questions, evaluation criteria, and learning activities. In addition, a separate scope and sequence template was developed. The leadership team guided the faculty through their work. Department chairs created a UbD instructional guide, which includes links to videos, slideshows, and templates. During the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, professional development was dedicated to training the faculty and initiating the writing of curriculum guides. Curriculum teams of four to six teachers, paid a stipend for 30 hours of work, were also created during both school years. Developing the curriculum guides and scope and sequence for all courses is ongoing. Curriculum guides and related resources are housed on Google Drive. Currently, these documents are not accessible to the public. Ultimately, the District's goal is to make them available publicly on their website.

Although robust, the work on this Priority Area is led by a smaller group of department heads and curriculum team members. This has caused some challenges in allowing for all stakeholders' input and understanding. Professional development (PD) time for the work is limited to what is contractually available - one full PD day and four early release PD days. During the 2024-2025 school year, professional development time during early release days became re-allocated to other initiatives and school concerns, further impacting the ability of all faculty members to be involved in the process.

Teachers who have been involved in the work report that the process has been helpful. They had the opportunity to consider the importance of depth over breadth to support student learning. Teachers have uncovered blind spots in their curricula, allowing them to identify inconsistencies.

Recommended Next Steps

Increase the time allotted to curriculum development to allow educators the focused time needed to design high-quality curriculum

Establish firm due dates for all draft submissions to maintain accountability

Provide continued support for curriculum teams and ensure timely feedback from the curriculum director

Focus on creating common formative and summative assessments, including end-of-course assessments throughout the year

Encourage department heads to take a more active role in developing UbD curriculum guides, ensuring greater leadership and collaboration within their teams

Develop and implement a curriculum review and revision cycle

Sources of Evidence

- department leaders
- priority area meetings
- school leadership
- school summary report
- teacher interview
- teachers

Priority Area 3

Priority Area

Implement a master schedule that provides time for each student to be well known by at least one adult, and simultaneously facilitates department and/or subject area teacher-led common planning time during the school day. (1.3, 1.4, 3.2, 3.3)

Action, Impact, and Growth

During the 2023-2024 school year, a scheduling committee was formed to discuss ways to change the daily schedule to support students. The committee was developed through collaborative negotiations between the district administrative team and the teachers' union. The agreement included developing a schedule with a flex period to be piloted over a two-year period.

To begin their work, the committee surveyed faculty to consider the goals of a flex block. Faculty input determined that the flex block would support student learning, allow access to extra help during the school day, and allow students to complete homework. The block would support dedicated learning experiences and collaboration time for students. The committee also went on site visits to local area schools to observe flexible learning structures.

Based on the vision and site visits, a schedule including two flex blocks, the Hornet block, was adopted. The schedule maintained the waterfall structure of the prior schedule. On days with Hornet block, class time was reduced from approximately 60 to 46 minutes. Throughout the development process, faculty were presented with updates at faculty meetings to expand the feeling of buy-in.

The schedule was implemented at the start of the 2024-2025 school year. The committee has continued to review the implementation over the year. Both faculty and students were surveyed. Surveys reflect positive opinions about the Hornet block, the majority of respondents reporting a belief that the Hornet block provides opportunities to support students' academic growth and development and has contributed to a more positive school climate. One concern voiced by teachers was the loss of some instructional time and a need to adjust to the impact of short blocks on days of the Hornet block. The faculty also voiced concern about the Hornet block becoming an additional prep. Students reported they appreciate the added access to teachers during the school day, decreasing the days they must stay after school. The students requested that the Hornet block be moved later in the day. The pros of the Hornet block outweigh the cons. The school is committed to ongoing reflection and making necessary adjustments.

During the Hornet blocks, some students receive extra help from teachers, while others use the time as "downtime." Students take advantage of the opportunity to use the gym and weight room for physical activity. There are a limited number of students in the hallways. Some classes had a large number of students, while others had only a few. As the end of the quarter was approaching, teachers reported that many students were using the time to make up work. These observations were consistent with the committee's findings.

Recommended Next Steps

Review opportunities for the school counseling department to utilize the Hornet block to ensure that students have access to the school counselors' curriculum

Review and adjust course content as needed to compensate for the loss of instructional time on Hornet Block days

Reflect on the implementation, impact on instructional time, and positive impacts on student learning

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- department leaders
- priority area meetings
- priority area observations
- school leadership
- school summary report
- teachers

Part 3 - Reflection on Student Learning

Reflection on Student Learning

Instructional practices meet students' needs in many classes. Purposefully designed, rigorous coursework was regularly noted in advanced placement (AP) and honors classes, but was less evident in college prep courses. Teachers provide differentiated instruction based on individual student needs, such as grouping and tiered intervention strategies. However, some teachers group students randomly, or by personality, rather than by targeted needs. Formative assessment occurs in some classes, typically with teachers circulating during group work and asking clarifying and recall questions to monitor understanding. Training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is helping teachers with more effective strategies to allow students to demonstrate proficiency in a variety of ways. Some teachers offer differentiation in assessment choices to their students, allowing them to demonstrate proficiency in a way that is most beneficial to their learning style, such as a written or project-based product.

Students have opportunities to be active learners and lead their own learning. In some classes, students are given a choice in project-based assessments and can demonstrate their learning in rich, meaningful ways, such as English writing assignments, presentations, or creative projects. Some English teachers employ a "drop everything and read" activity daily for the first 10 minutes of class, which allows students to read a self-chosen book simply for the enjoyment of reading. Social studies teachers offer research projects, such as creating a new bill or a civics learning project. Science has various hands-on experiments with students evaluating their data and making claims. In a French course, students develop a childhood story in French, promoting students' use of specific vocabulary and encouraging students to share and provide feedback to each other. In math classes, teachers use their classroom walls as a second teacher, with many useful content-related posters, and many students engage in group work. Theater arts courses are very student-driven, as students are allowed to be part of the decision-making process with regularity regarding set design, costume, and production. However, student-led learning is inconsistent throughout the content areas and is more commonly noticeable in AP and honors courses. College prep students are more likely to be engaged in copying notes from the Smartboard, completing worksheets, and traditional assessments such as quizzes and tests.

Students are encouraged to take rigorous classes and take advantage of the school's many electives. As the students advance in grade level, more AP classes are available, allowing them to engage in college-level work. The elective courses connect to students' personal interests and creative expression. Students seek out electives that have a connection to their postgraduate plans or college majors. Many students have leadership opportunities through elective and co-curricular activities such as student voice summit, public speaking, internship/career pathway opportunities, and teaching assistant (TA) opportunities.

Many learners at Mansfield High School engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. In science classes, students examine experimental data and connect new concepts to previously learned material. In several math classes, students work together to solve mathematical equations ranging from Algebra 2 to trigonometry. In an AP history course, students review for the AP exam by discussing multiple-choice questions based on primary documents. Then, they discuss several reasons why the distractor may or may not be correct, citing specific evidence to support their claims. In a ninth-grade history class, students can create a magazine or a documentary explaining the common characteristics of dictators throughout history using multiple varieties of technology, as well as incorporating a previously completed writing task. In an English course, students rewrite and perform the stage directions in *Macbeth*. In a business elective course, students engage in a simulation of how to do their own taxes and complete federal tax forms. However, higher order thinking occurs most often in higher-level classes and is not yet prevalent across the school. Sometimes, students are given information on Google Slides or through a lecture. In some classes across all content areas, students complete packets that include level 1-type questions (recalling information, defining terms), but do not apply, synthesize, or evaluate the material. Teachers occasionally miss opportunities to engage students in meaningful, rigorous, and self-directed work where they can explore a topic and discuss their findings.

Learners demonstrate their learning through various assessment strategies in classes; however, this informs classroom instruction and curriculum in a limited way. Students show that they are learning and what they can do with that knowledge through formal quizzes and tests, research projects, essays, creating book jackets and board games, robotics using a Rover, Google Slides, videos, scale models, and labs. A wider range of assessments allows students to express their knowledge in different media in honors and AP courses compared to college prep courses. Summative and common assessments are prevalent in certain departments, but are not a standardized practice. Specific and measurable criteria for success are inconsistently provided to learners before assessments and are not shared across grade levels, departments, or courses at this time. Department meetings or structured PLC meetings to review data to inform instruction are not a regular occurrence.

Learners have some opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning. Some teachers provide quality feedback and have students revisit work to promote mastery of the curriculum by allowing students to revise and improve their work. In college prep English courses, students can use one block before their quarterly writing samples to brainstorm and create a draft for the prompt. English teachers also provide explicit grammar reviews to strengthen their students' writing proficiency. Some teachers provide feedback through Google Classroom. In some ELA and social studies classes, teachers and students confer about essays and research reports, providing feedback about introductions and topic development. Many math teachers review homework immediately and reteach in areas when necessary, but they often leave it to students to request reteaching. Other teachers are reluctant to allow test corrections and make-up work to demonstrate students' understanding once the deadline for the assignment has passed. Learners are inconsistently provided with separate grading, reporting, and feedback on work habits and academic skills.

Learners use technology frequently in classes to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning. Students use 1:1 Chromebooks. All classes use the Google Suite tools with various curriculum or department-specific software options, such as Google Slides and Google Classroom. Students are aware of artificial intelligence (AI) and its expectations. Students can access software programs within the library media center and specific classrooms designated for courses. These software programs are available during classroom time and the Hornet block. Students can access guitars, Rovers (robots), printing methods, Google Scholar for research, Desmos, digital microscopes, digital labs, Canva, calculators, Screencastify, and laptops with science software for lab simulations. Teachers utilize Illuminate Ed, Renaissance DNA, College Board, interactive SmartBoards, AI, worksheets, and handouts. Special education teachers use Follett ASPEN for individual educational plans (IEPs). Students often collaborate digitally on projects to support their learning. Students use technology to enhance learning and communication in co-curricular activities, such as being social media coordinators for clubs such as 'The Buzz', a weekly school news program. Within the technical theater elective, the students can share their work with an audience beyond the school through stage set design, costumes, lighting, and sound.

Part 4 - Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization

Conceptual Understanding

Faculty and administration share an understanding of what effective learning looks like, and this understanding is embedded in the school's core values, beliefs, and vision of the graduate. The primary goal at Mansfield High School is for all students to share a sense of belonging and experience academic and personal growth. To achieve this goal, the school will empower students to become active and engaged learners, citizens, innovators, and communicators. The school has demonstrated a clear understanding of the key concepts associated with its Priority Areas for Growth and consequently has initiated methods to address these areas. Additionally, the school has identified and defined the key concepts associated with its core values. These values include belonging, building a supportive and understanding community; collaboration, sharing ideas and respecting each other; curiosity, questioning and exploring; integrity, being honest and doing the right thing; and resilience, adapting and growing in the face of adversity. Faculty, administrators, students, and parents/guardians developed the vision of the graduate over two years.

These beliefs are designed to engrain the vision of the graduate into the curriculum by transferring goals, enduring understandings, and authentic assessment opportunities. However, plans and timelines must be developed to facilitate this process. The faculty works with students to build a sense of common purpose and supports students in taking risks and working collaboratively. The faculty and staff are aware that the vision of the graduate is a continual process and fully understand that time is essential for full integration into the curriculum.

Commitment

The school exhibits a moderately strong commitment to its vision of the graduate and actively endorses the four pillars of the vision. A visual representation of the vision of the graduate is displayed in all classrooms, and the faculty has, in some departments, discussed how each pillar is integrated in the classroom. In multiple ways, the school has demonstrated a commitment to the Standards of Accreditation and utilizing the accreditation process to drive school improvement. Mansfield High School has made, and continues to make progress in developing curriculum templates, providing professional development opportunities and time to develop curriculum guides that utilize the Understanding by Design model. During the 2023-2024 school year, professional development days were dedicated to UbD training. In addition, curriculum teams were developed during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years to continue to develop curriculum guides. All guides are electronic-based for ease of access. It is clear, however, that Mansfield High School needs to commit additional time and resources to curriculum development.

The administration initiated learning walks this school year, focusing on teaching and learning and student engagement. Department chairs and administrators will conduct learning walks to provide staff with meaningful feedback regarding instructional improvement. A commitment has also been made to foster a positive school culture and support ongoing professional growth.

Competency

The administrative team and the faculty are committed to assisting students in attaining their goals and clearly understand the necessary steps to achieve and implement the vision of the graduate. However, students have only limited working knowledge of the vision of the graduate. The school has support to achieve continued progress and ensure its identified priorities are reflected in its culture. Professional development has been provided to administrators and faculty to facilitate the writing of curriculum guides. However, the staff and

administration recognize that more dedicated time is essential to develop skills and strategies to support all students in reaching their learning goals. Classroom observations indicate using multiple strategies to assist students in achieving success. Some teachers include problem-solving and higher order thinking skills through questioning, analysis, inquiry, and understanding impacts. The 2025-2026 academic year will focus on a structured cycle for examining student data, including common assessments, MCAS, PSAT, SAT, and AP exam scores. This process will utilize a district student management system (SMS) to improve communication and efficiency with staff and administration.

Capacity

Mansfield High School has limited time and resources to sustain its progress in addressing its three Priority areas. Time is currently available through early release and full-day professional development. The professional staff is invested in the continued improvement in the areas of a school schedule change, facilitating the writing of curriculum guides, and engaging the entire teaching and learning community in understanding and adopting the vision of the graduate. Administrators are creating new professional development opportunities through collaborative experiences with colleagues to support student learning. Common planning time within the school day is not generally available and would add to the capacity of the teachers to provide higher quality instruction. The district provides funding for infrastructure, technology, supplies, and maintenance, but is limited in other programs integral to the school's ability to realize growth and progress successfully.

Additional Information

Additional Information

The school requested that the team focus on the following areas:

School: The vision of the graduate has been created and is in the beginning stages of being implemented in the classroom. We would like the committee to provide suggestions as to how to live the vision of the graduate.

Team Suggestions:

- Develop vision of the graduate rubrics for each of the four competencies
- Explicitly state the competency of the vision of the graduate that is the focus of a project or assessment
- Develop lessons that assess the vision of the graduate competencies
- Assign each department one area of the vision of the graduate to prioritize
- Create school-wide professional practice/student learning goals around the vision of the graduate
- Use the vision of the graduate language in rubrics and feedback to normalize and prioritize these outcomes in all content areas
- Develop and implement systems to measure and report student growth in the vision of the graduate competencies, such as in-person student work showcases that can be shared with the broader community or digital learning portfolios, through which students can share artifacts and reflections on learning connected to each competency over the course of their high school experience
- Celebrate examples of the vision of the graduate in action during Hornet blocks, assemblies, or classroom shout-outs to reinforce the language and values

School: After assessing all the work done to implement our Hornet block, we would like the committee to consider where we can integrate common planning time for staff.

Team Suggestions:

- Stagger preps by department within the same period
- Schedule weekly department chair meetings with leadership related to establishing CPT priorities and protocols
- Cluster smaller groups of teachers of similar classes
- Use teacher prep time more efficiently

School: In light of current budgetary constraints, several student support services are being cut. The Bridge program, an adjustment counselor, the McLean Hospital Support Program, MHS Night School, MHS School to Career Partnership, and an assistant principal dedicated to student services have been cut from the 2025-2026 budget. We greatly appreciate recommendations for how to support our most vulnerable students.

Team Suggestions:

- Continue to train student mentors or peer leaders to provide academic or social support, expanding reach without adding staffing costs
- Use Hornet block to teach SEL skills like conflict resolution, self-advocacy, and emotional regulation
- Provide professional development for staff in trauma-informed practices to ensure interactions are supportive and not punitive
- Expand the reach and services of the academic learning center

Commendations

Commendation

The student showcase that highlights student academic engagement and pride in their learning

Commendation

The collaborative efforts to initiate a new daily schedule and continuously reflect on the implementation of Hornet block during the two-year pilot time period to resolve concerns and adjust practice as needed

Commendation

The effective use of teacher assistants (student mentors) in support rooms that provide additional academic and social-emotional support for students

Commendation

The plan for further engagement of staff with the vision of the graduate competencies, which includes identifying common understandings of competency look-fors in classrooms across departments, and creating a school-wide common language to acknowledge and celebrate students

Commendation

The authentic learning experiences such as internships, capstone projects, civics projects and electives which help connect the classroom to students' future goals

Commendation

The commitment to and value of the vision of the graduate competencies that the administration shares in any public addresses, including class assemblies, open houses, and weekly newsletters along with the new vision of the graduate logos and posters hanging in classrooms and other areas of the school which provide visible reinforcement of the value of the competencies

Commendation

The respectful and kind behavior of students that contributes to a positive and productive school climate

Commendation

The increased engagement and skill development through diverse learning experiences that foster deeper understanding and real-world application

Commendation

The inclusive environment at Mansfield High School, evident in the wide range of course offerings and co-curricular activities, that supports a sense of belonging for all learners

Commendation

Additional Recommendations

Recommendation

Increase administrator visibility through regular classroom walkthroughs to support instructional practices and foster a culture of feedback

Recommendation

Create standardized best practices that support inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills consistently in all content areas at all levels

Recommendation

Improve assessment practices by creating common assessment requirements (quarterly, final exams) and create department time for teachers to use data to drive instruction

Recommendation

Increase equity for all students by creating and implementing authentic and rigorous lessons across all content areas, at every level

Recommendation

Provide timely, insightful, and actionable feedback for continued improvement in learning

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: Patricia Rocha - Dedham High School

Assistant Chair: Jeanine Boulay - Nashoba Regional High School

Assistant Chair: Mr. Paul Daigle - New England Association of Schools & Colleges

Team Members

Joyce Biagini - Marshfield High School

Sherri Blake - Doherty Memorial High School

Ashley Fiore - East Lyme High School

Mrs. Patricia Puglisi - Lynnfield High School