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 Brookline High School

Brookline, MA

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School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Brookline is a residential community bordered on three sides by Boston, MA. Some consider it a semi-urban community, and it is known as the birthplace of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy and the home of Frederick Law Olmsted, the landscape architect who designed Central Park in New York City and the Emerald Necklace in Boston. As of 2021 Brookline had 62,620 residents and a median income of $122,356. In Brookline, 4.3% of the population lives in poverty. The state median income is $89,026 and in MA, 10.4% of the population lives in poverty.

Brookline Public Schools serve 7060 students (pre-k-12th grade) and there are 2081 students at Brookline High School. The demographics for the school district in 2022-23:

- African-American 6.4% (district) vs 9.4% (state)
- Asian 20.7% (district) vs 7.3% (state);
- Hispanic. 11.3% (district) vs 24.2% (state);
- Multi-race, Non-Hispanic. 11.6% (district) vs 4.4% (state)
- White. 49.9% (district) vs 54.4% (state);

The percentage of students whose families are considered low income is 13.8% (district) vs 42.3% (state)

The Public Schools of Brookline has eight Kindergarten-8th grade schools (Baker, Driscoll, Florida Ruffin Ridley, Heath, Lawrence, Lincoln, Pierce, and Runkle), one comprehensive high school (BHS or Brookline High School), and one early education program (BEEP). There are a number of private schools (10) in the town of Brookline, including Beaver Country Day School (6-12), Dexter Southfield School (k-12), the Park School (k-8), Maimonides School (prek-12), and St Mary's of Assumption Elementary School.

Brookline High School serves grades 9-12. There are four main buildings on its campus: 22 Tappan (serving mostly 9th grade), the Unified Arts building (housing many electives), the Tappan Gym, and 115 Greenough (housing most of grades 10-12). Brookline High School reflects the high value the town holds for education having established a tradition of excellence and innovation, which has earned a national reputation. Brookline High represents the whole world, and it is a laboratory for the future of our global society. The student body is diverse in terms of race, nationality, culture, and socio-economic strata. Students come from over 69 countries and speak 44 different languages. We are proud of our diversity; and we have simultaneously created unity amidst the diversity, as our students pursue two common goals – academic success and exemplary citizenship.

Finances:
The state of MA average expenditure per student is $17,058. The town of Brookline expenditure per pupil is $24,779.19, and when that is combined with Federal support and programs, the Total Expenditure per pupil in Brookline $25,689.75. 32.6 % of town budget goes to Public Schools

Attendance and graduation rate.
Most of the students at BHS matriculate. The average drop out rate for all students over the last 2 years is 0.2%. BHS has a strong graduation rate. The class of 2022 had a graduation rate of 93.9% with 4.8% remaining in school and 1.1 % of the senior class dropping out. The high school also has a high attendance rate (94%). in 2022, the average number of absences for students was 10.5. Post Covid, there has been a slight uptick in chronic absences: 15% of students are missing more that 10/% of school, and 3.2% are missing more than 20% of school. Like with many schools across the country, this seems to have been triggered by the pandemic.

Many Brookline students attend four-year colleges after graduation. 53.7% attend private four year colleges or universities and 32.6% are attending public colleges and universities. A smaller number attend two-year colleges (5.5%), even fewer enter directly into the work force (3.2%), and a very smaller number enter the military (0.4%).

Brookline High School takes pride in its Career and Technology Education Department, its Performing and Visual Arts Departments, as well as four alternative programs that address the interests and needs of the student community: ACE, School-Within-a-School, Excel and Winthrop House. BHS has had global travel opportunities to France, Mexico, Italy, China (which. Brookline High features the largest interscholastic athletics program in New England, with 74 teams in 40 different sports, and over 1300 student athletes. BHS serve the co-curricular needs of its students through an intramural sports program, over 50 clubs, an interesting variety of academic teams (including robotics, oceanography, and mock trial) and student activities. BHS math and science teams achieve highly in state competitions. BHS has a democratic system of governance that engages students and faculty in important policy discussions and continues to improve our school. In the 2009/2010 school year, BHS opened a state-of-the-art television studio and media center in partnership with Brookline Access Television.

Brookline High School is fortunate to be supported by a knowledgeable and generous School Committee, and three foundations - The Brookline Education Foundation, The Brookline Community Foundation, and the BHS Innovation Fund. BHS also has an energetic and generous PTO whose Executive Committee is an important advisory body on school policy and practice. Each of these groups supports the professional development and innovative projects that allow us to support the achievement of all Brookline High students.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

Brookline High School has clear values and vision, at both the school and district level. Though we were working on revising the Vision of the Graduate between 2015-2018 through work with the Office of Teaching and Learning, leadership changes at the System wide level and the pandemic have stalled that work. We currently do not have a clearly articulated Vision of the Graduate.
From the High School's Website:
Mission Statement
The mission of Brookline High School is to develop capable, confident life-long learners who contribute to their community, participate thoughtfully in democracy, and succeed in a diverse and evolving global society.

Core Values

- HIGH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS
- EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING
- UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIFFERENCES
- COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS
- EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

From the Public Schools of Brookline (whole system) Website:

Vision, Mission, Core Values & Goals

VISION STATEMENT:
Brookline provides an extraordinary education for every child. Each child's unique path to achievement is supported in academically exciting and programmatically rich environments. A dynamic, diverse community of teaching professionals works collaboratively, innovating and inspiring each other and their students. Staff gets to know students intellectually, developmentally and culturally. Students are encouraged to question and challenge ideas and participate as active citizens. Schools use a variety of assessments to get the fullest picture of student learning and growth over time. These data are shared regularly with the community, and they form the basis of how we understand and improve student, teacher and administrator performance. Parents are partners with the schools in supporting their children's education, and schools communicate effectively so that parents are confident of the response to their child's circumstances and needs. The community, well informed and involved in the schools, supports these efforts that continue a tradition of challenging ourselves to do better, efforts that ensure the enduring value of a Brookline education.

- CORE VALUES:

High Achievement for All

Our schools are dedicated to teaching students to be involved, active learners who work hard, think critically and creatively, and communicate effectively. We emphasize high expectations for all students, and support them to reach their full potential in all aspects of achievement, especially in academics, arts, sports, social skills and civic participation, all of which prepare students for success in their lives after high school.

Excellence in Teaching

Passionate, knowledgeable, skillful teachers are the core strength of our school system. We expect our faculty and staff to provide a dynamic and rewarding learning experience for students. Excellent teaching begins with strong relationships between faculty and students and is nurtured by collaboration among colleagues. We are committed to supporting a professional community that creates and sustains an atmosphere of intellectual excitement, innovative instruction and personal growth.

Collaboration

Through collaboration we find new sources of learning and strength. The Public Schools of Brookline actively promote collaborative relationships. We seek out partnerships with community organizations that add value to our school system. We urge and support collaboration and exchange within and across our school community.

Respect for Human Difference

We are committed to acknowledging and celebrating the diversity within our community while affirming the importance of our common humanity. By promoting a safe environment for questioning and challenge, we foster the growth and value that comes from different perspectives, cultures and experiences. Our commitment is to create an atmosphere of safety in which to acknowledge and express difference while advancing true acceptance and respect for all.

Educational Equity

The Public Schools of Brookline are committed to identifying and eliminating barriers to educational achievement in our schools. To this end, we create policies and practices that are fair and just and provide

educational opportunities to ensure that every student, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, disability, or economic status, meets our standards for achievement, participation, and growth.

- GOALS:

Goal 1: Every Student Achieving

Ensure that every student meets or exceeds Brookline's high standards and eliminate persistent gaps in student achievement by establishing educational equity across all classrooms, schools, and programs.

Goal 2: Every Student Invested in Learning

Increase every student's ownership of his/her learning and achievement by using rigor, relevance, and relationships to foster a spirit of inquiry and the joy of learning.

Goal 3: Every Student Prepared for Change and Challenge

Instill in every student the habits of mind and life strategies critical for success in meeting the intellectual, civic, and social demands of life in a diverse, ever-changing, global environment.

Goal 4: Every Educator Growing Professionally

Foster dynamic professional learning communities that inspire inquiry, reflection, collaboration, and innovation, and use data to improve teaching, advance student learning, and refine the programs and practices of the Public Schools of Brookline.

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

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

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

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Professional Practices

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

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

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support

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

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

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning Resources

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

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

Introduction

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Reflection

Accreditation coordinators and a steering committee composed of the professional staff were appointed to supervise the school's self-reflection and Accreditation process. A steering committee, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the Accreditation process. The steering committee organized an appropriate committee or committees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people by completing the school self-reflection.

Public schools evaluated by 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. The school used questionnaires developed by the Commission on Public Schools to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-reflection.

In addition, the professional staff was required to read and vote on Part 2 of the self-reflection to ensure that all voices were heard related to the alignment of the school to the Standards for Accreditation. All professional staff members were expected to participate in the self-reflection process either by participating on a committee or by participating in discussion and evidence gathering to support the school's alignment to the Standards.

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of five members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Collaborative Conference visit to Brookline High School in Brookline, MA. The visiting team members spent two days conducting a visit; reviewed the self-reflection documents, which had been prepared for their examination; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents; and observed classes

to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Commission on Public Schools' Standards for Accreditation. The team also reviewed the proposed priority areas for the school's growth plan to be developed as part of the Accreditation process.

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.

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 Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

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

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Narrative

The school community is working towards building a safe environment for students; however, the school is not physically safe because of the unsecured exterior doors.School buildings are open throughout the school day. None of the entrances are locked; therefore, anyone can enter the school at any time. The school is located in an urban area with an MBTA subway stop on the grounds, attracting significant pedestrian traffic. The school headmaster reports that the school has dealt with instances of non-school personnel entering the school buildings that have posed a safety risk to students. The lack of locked school entrances throughout the campus poses a serious safety risk for students and adults.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Narrative

Brookline High School's core values and beliefs about learning drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and allocating learning resources. The school does not yet have a complete vision of the graduate.Teachers are observed pushing their students to access higher-order thinking and prior material to solve problems. Staff members are committed to evolving best practices and expertise in their fields. Eventually, the core values, beliefs about learning, and the vision of the graduate will inform student learning and instruction.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Narrative

The school does not yet have a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that include units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills for each department. Curriculum calendars, scope and sequences, unit plans, and essential questions are evident for some courses, but are not in any standard format and are often in separate documents rather than in one cohesive document. Students report significant inconsistencies in the same courses that are taught by different teachers in the school.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Narrative

The 2022-2023 School Improvement Plan (SIP) represents Brookline High School's values and priorities but does not yet include a vision of the graduate. School Council members, administrators, professors, parents, students, and community members created the plan. The current SIP reimagines ninth-grade academic offerings while highlighting graduation requirements, equity, and student support. The plan has deadlines to track progress toward each goals. The goal of analyzing and revising ninth-grade academic subjects has led departments to focus on de-leveling English, science, and world language classrooms.

Rating
Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 4.1a - Learning Support

Narrative

Students at Brookline High School receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success. All students are assigned a school counselor and a dean. Beyond this, there is a student intervention team (SIT), composed of a dean, guidance coordinator, special education administrator and 20 other staff members (including teachers, social workers, and guidance counselors) that engage in both school-wide systems work and student-centered interventions. Student referral to the SIT is initiated by either a guidance counselor or a dean based on academic data (progress reports, grades, etc.) or teacher feedback. According to staff, 80-90 percent of referrals are related to social and emotional issues. Students also participate in a universal screening survey multiple times during the year, identifying students needing SEL Support. Academic support is provided by teachers and by various programs throughout the school.

Rating
Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Narrative

The school community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of a high-quality educational program and student services. Brookline completed a recent renovation and expansion of school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality programs and services. This project included the addition of a new building for grade 9 students, the addition of a STEM wing to an existing building, the addition of a student-run restaurant, spaces for a robotics class, revised spaces for the special education department, new spaces for some smaller programs (ACE, Winthrop House, and EXCEL), and a refinishing of the Tappan gymnasium fitness center and locker rooms. The renovation project additionally addresses accessibility issues in the school adding ramps and elevators in the school as well as upgrades to ventilation in several areas.

Rating
Meets the Standard

Standard 1 - Learning Culture

Narrative

The school community is working towards building a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought; however, the school is not physically safe because of the unsecured exterior doors. Eighty-six percent of students and roughly eighty-eight percent of faculty members report feeling safe at school all or almost all the time. Seventy-eight percent of students report feeling that students of diverse backgrounds are treated with respect all or almost all of the time, along with seventy percent of the faculty. A culture of learning is demonstrated through the variety of courses available to students and the spaces available for students to collaborate and work with peers. Programs are created and implemented to support the diversity of identity amongst students and to promote an environment of equity. Some of these programs include School Within a School, ACE, and the African American and Latino Scholars Program. Individuality is supported through the many clubs, groups, sports, and work opportunities and connections on campus. Counselors are accessible to students, and the school ensures that all learners are known, valued, and can access programs and necessary support.

While there are many positive aspects of the school culture, several aspects still need attention. School buildings are open throughout the school day. None of the entrances are locked; therefore, anyone can enter the school at any time. The school is located in an urban area with an MBTA subway stop on the grounds, attracting significant pedestrian traffic. The school headmaster reports that the school has dealt with instances of non-school personnel entering the school buildings that have posed a safety risk to students. The lack of locked school entrances throughout the campus poses a serious safety risk for students and adults. In addition, the school has had several racist incidents in the last few years, igniting strong reactions and debate. The BHS Legislature, made up of faculty and students, has drafted a policy to more directly and clearly define and address hate speech.

Brookline High School's core values and beliefs about learning drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and providing and allocating learning resources. The school does not yet have a vision of the graduate. The school utilizes five mantras that best articulate its core beliefs and values. Freedom and Responsibility (1997). This is hard. You can do it. We can help you (2017). We create the culture we want (2017). We are not done yet. (2017). Every student is a scholar, citizen, and caretaker (2022). The second mantra (This is hard. You can do it. We can help you.), for example, opens a line of communication within student learning and reinforces an overall belief in a growth mindset. Teachers are observed pushing their students to access higher-order thinking and prior material to solve problems. Staff members are committed to evolving best practices and expertise in their fields. Eventually, the core values, beliefs about learning, and the vision of the graduate will inform student learning and instruction.

This 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. Parents, teachers, administrators, and students express pride in the sense of community, thanks to the school's robust program of studies, extracurricular activities, and collaborative opportunities. Parents describe BHS teachers as kind, committed, and caring and report that they are accessible and willing to talk with students and families. Students report that freedom, responsibility, and great opportunities are the best parts of BHS. To address inequities within student placement, the school is working towards de-leveling the ninth-grade, beginning with social studies. The goal is to offer each student a challenging and supported experience upon transitioning from eighth to ninth grade while addressing unfair or potentially biased placements. To ensure that each student is known by an adult mentor in the school, all learners are assigned a guidance counselor and dean. These adults, along with social workers, work together to care for and monitor students' social-emotional and academic well-being. Student Intervention Teams (SIT) are available to address and support students who may require additional services. This team meets weekly to discuss teacher and/or counselor referrals. Support for learners who may be struggling academically is offered through a variety of avenues, such as Steps to Success, School Within a School, Tutorial Classes, and departmental daily/weekly help centers. Teachers report a sense of ownership and responsibility over the well-being of all students and feel that when they raise an issue, a team can come together to resolve it quickly or address the student issue. Many teachers report embedding SEL practices into their content material to ensure that students are cared for academically, socially, and emotionally.

Each year, the school conducts a survey to gather information both about students' sense of belonging within the school community and whether or not they can identify having a trusted adult at school.

The school community's professional culture demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection. Seventy-two percent of teachers report that they evaluate their lessons and adjust their teaching accordingly (or evaluate their practice and adjust accordingly) either daily or weekly. In response to the statement, "Teachers seem eager to try new ideas" seventy-four percent of families answered either "totally true" or "mostly true." BHS teachers value and feel pride in their autonomy around planning and instruction, though many report a desire for increased consistency across content areas and the need for more common practices. The weekly schedule includes 40 minutes of collaboration time during the school day, and most departments share a common prep period. Meeting during common departmental prep time is not required of teachers, and teachers report that not all departments take advantage of this allotted time for collaboration. Lack of collaboration and common assessments/practices leads to inconsistencies in classroom instruction and the experiences of students taking the same courses from different teachers.

The school's culture almost always promotes intellectual risk-taking and personal and professional growth. Eighty-seven percent of BHS students responded True/Mostly True to the statement: "I learn that mistakes are part of the learning process." Additionally, 81.9 percent of students responded True/Mostly True to the statement: "I am encouraged to try new things or experiment." The overall atmosphere of the school's culture is dynamic and vibrant, as the campus is buzzing with students taking advantage of their Freedom and Responsibility mantra. The BHS Mantras reinforce a commitment to intellectual risk-taking. Learners are constantly reminded to ask for help and to take responsibility for their personal and community well-being. However, students express inconsistencies between the value of learning from mistakes and the inability to retake assessments in most of their classes. BHS teachers promote norms and protocols that support respectful discourse, including diverse perspectives, experimentation, innovation, and a disposition to listen well and learn from others. Teachers encourage student voices and foster independent thought, striving to maintain an environment where all learners feel safe to share their diverse and varying opinions and perspectives in class.

Brookline High School has an inclusive definition of leadership and provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning. The school ensures the principal, along with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that sets high standards for student achievement and fosters a growth mindset throughout the school community. BHS has a range of leadership positions, including teachers, curriculum coordinators, deans, and ultimately the head of school. All leaders within the school report a strong dedication to improving student learning, and note the autonomy of how they work towards this goal. Connecting back to the five BHS mantras, a strong belief in a growth mindset is evident among staff and students alike. Many opportunities for leadership involvement exist at the high school. Some students become involved in leadership through the three branches of student government. Students report utilizing the judiciary branch to bring issues to light and work toward a solution with staff members. An area for growth surrounding leadership is to create a more unified vision that goes beyond the five mantras and unifies all roles, rather than functioning as separate entities or departments.

The school culture fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility through its wide array of course offerings, extracurricular programs, student-run clubs, and school-wide activities. BHS encourages social awareness, upstanding behavior, and fair and respectful treatment of all. The Advisory/Hub and Wellness curricula address topics such as decision-making, upstanding behavior, and the impact of personal choices. BHS students have many opportunities throughout the year to participate in school-wide activities such as the Lunar New Year Celebration, Spirit Week, and Transgender Day of Remembrance. Parents report an appreciation for assemblies and Advisory days covering issues of identity (classism, racism, etc.) but feel there is not enough action or follow-up after the initial discussions. The school acknowledges this and states that there are no school-wide plans or initiatives to foster civic engagement and social/personal responsibility that reach all students in a consistent/sequential way. The school reports that a need for improved school-wide efforts at building a culture of civic engagement and social awareness has been increasingly evident over the last two years when incidents such as vandalism and hate speech have been rising within the school community.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- NEASC survey
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- student work
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Standard 2 - Student Learning

Narrative

The school does not yet have 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. However, through input from educators, school-based administrations, and district leadership the following are identified as the critical attributes of a graduate of Brookline High School: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills, Empathy, Collaboration, Flexibility and Adaptability, Personal Responsibility, Creativity and Innovation, Resilience, Conflict Resolution, Metacognition, and Academic Mindset. Based on administered surveys, 63 percent of faculty, 68 percent of families, and 64 percent of students believe that the statement, "BHS is clear about the skills and knowledge students need to be successful in life," is "totally" or "mostly" true.

The school does not yet have a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that include units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills for each department. Curriculum calendars, scope and sequences, unit plans, and essential questions are evident for some courses, but are not in any standard format and are often in separate documents rather than in one cohesive document. For example, essential questions are developed for a reading on the American Revolution, but the plan does not include anything about instructional strategies or assessment practices. There are curriculum calendars for Algebra 2 and Geometry Honors, but they are in varied formats and do not include consistent elements (one links to tasks while the other lists topics). Students report a lack of consistency across the same classes taught by different teachers. They also report that friends who take the same course with another teacher have different assignments, assessments, and workloads. There is time set aside for departments to collaborate around common curriculum and instructional practices. The school's master schedule includes a common planning block (in which no courses are scheduled for that particular department) for the math, social studies, and English departments. Common planning blocks for science and world language teachers are based on specific subjects. Additional time for teacher collaboration is built into the weekly schedule once a week at the end of the school day. A yearlong calendar also provides after-school department-wide meeting time 1-3 times per month.

The curriculum ensures that learners demonstrate a depth of understanding over a breadth of knowledge. Many courses emphasize deep understanding through interdisciplinary and/or project-based learning. In an interdisciplinary American Studies course, students select one of six project-based inquiry prompts requiring them to condense information from the course, perform additional research, present their project, and submit a written reflection. In a culminating activity for a Spanish course, students can demonstrate their understanding of Chilean history and culture by writing a protest song, creating a clothing line, writing a graphic novel or children's book, and describing what they've learned. At all grade levels, students complete a multi-week research project on a chosen topic. Several students report that this project is an impactful learning experience.

Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of many students. Many teachers understand the learning needs of their students and employ differentiation strategies, adjust based on formative assessment, and provide additional support within the classroom to meet students' needs. In unleveled classes, teachers differentiate by working with small groups on one concept while other students are working independently. For example, in a Drawing Foundations class, a teacher demonstrates the use of two different types of pencils to create depth while students work alongside the teacher to execute the techniques. Then, the teacher moves to the other table and models shading techniques for a group of more established art students. In some unleveled classes, teachers provide three levels of differentiated instructional activities. Students often work in partners or groups. In other cases, teachers provide scaffolded support for students. For example, in a US History lesson on Japanese incarceration during WWII, guided notes and graphic organizers are provided while viewing a newsreel. During this co-taught class, one teacher leads and explains while the other circulates the room to check for understanding and provides 1:1 assistance. In a Geometry Honors class, a "Menu of Options" is projected on the smartboard. Some of the items on the menu include studying for the oral assessment, working on classwork, and preparing for the mini-quiz. In this case, students can choose which option best meets their needs. Teachers refer to office hours and before-school times as opportunities for students to receive extra help,

but the structure of this support seems to vary by teacher. The school offers various levels (i.e., college prep, Honors, AP) for many courses, allowing teachers to move at varying paces with different groups. However, there are questions as to whether this tracking, sometimes based on grades and teacher recommendations from middle school, truly moves the school towards meeting the needs of all students.In some classes, instruction is primarily teacher-directed, and some teachers spend a fair amount of time reviewing homework and agendas at the beginning of class.

Students are active learners who often have opportunities to lead their own learning. In interviews, students describe a research paper in all second-semester history classes as a personalized, relevant, and authentic learning experience. One student is researching the history of special education (he is a student on an IEP), and one is looking at Serbian culture (his mother grew up in Serbia). Another student describes a math project on probability in which students select a topic of interest. This student investigated the probability of having a "bad day" after consuming alcoholic drinks the previous day. In the African American and Latino Scholars program, students have opportunities to hear from guest speakers and go on field trips related to course content and current issues impacting them. In a Spanish class, students give themselves weekly participation grades, and then conference with the teacher to set the goal for next week. The school also has a robust selection of arts electives including drama, intensive ceramics, dance, jazz band, concert orchestra, piano, and more. Students have opportunities to pursue their interests and express themselves creatively. However, students and teachers report that this is sometimes hindered by the pressure to take academic classes and AP courses and the lack of flexibility in the master schedule. In a Concert Orchestra class, the teacher notes that students shared concerns about a particular section of the piece, so the teacher uses that feedback to prepare the rehearsal. Courses such as Medical Careers and Medical Interpretation in Spanish & Portuguese help students develop real-world skills in future professions. Brookline High School has programs such as School Within a School and ACE, a competency-based program where students can choose how they apply their knowledge and skills to a wide variety of topics, as well as the opportunity for dual enrollment in community college courses. Many schoolwide institutional systems and programs allow students to be active learners who direct their own learning.

Learners have multiple opportunities to engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills, but the opportunities are sometimes inconsistent from class to class. In some science courses, students regularly participate in investigations in which they make hypotheses, gather data, and then analyze the data to make inferences regarding their hypotheses. They also learn to apply their knowledge to novel situations. For example, 9th-grade Physics students use their background knowledge about how circuits work to design a complex system of circuits. In some mathematics courses, students routinely apply analytical and inquiry skills to problem-solving. Sophomores in the Interactive Math Program are challenged to apply their skills to solve POWs (problems of the week). In Humanities courses, students use text-based evidence to draw inferences and support claims. Students simulate a UN-style COMP Climate Change conference in a Climate Science & Social Change class. Each student, representing a specific country, researches and identifies potential solutions to major global climate issues. Through collaborative efforts, "countries" negotiate with one another to reach results, decisions, and compromises. In an English class, students display their critical thinking skills and ability to connect as they sit in a circle and discuss a novel. The conversation is largely student-led and centered on the analysis of the text. One student asks, "Why does the author use the pronoun 'you'?" Later in the conversation, a different student offers, "I think there's a big question here about assimilation," and reads a quote from the book. While there are many opportunities for students to engage in inquiry and problem-solving, students report that this can vary significantly from course to course and from teacher to teacher within a course. For example, one student reports that their Biology class is primarily lecture-based while another reports that their Biology class often involves student-centered exploration. Students report that because of these discrepancies, there are strong student opinions about which classes and teachers they hope to have and hope not to have.

Learners demonstrate their learning through various assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum. In a Geometry Honors class, students demonstrate their learning through a one-on-one oral assessment with the teacher. In a medical careers class, students learn about the signs and symptoms of diabetes. A student talks with an interactive manikin and asks him questions about his symptoms to demonstrate the student's understanding. During an Advanced Spanish 3 class, students demonstrate their learning through various assessment strategies in the target language. To reinforce understanding of the present subjunctive mood, learners complete sentence fill-ins on the board with their peers. While working independently, students meet individually with their teacher to report their self-evaluated weekly participation grade. This grade evaluates the student's level of engagement, effort, and time spent in the target language during the week. This formative assessment allows for reflection moving into the week ahead. Students report that teachers assess their learning

in various ways. Students participate in traditional tests and quizzes to demonstrate their knowledge, as well as having to complete research papers. Additionally, students report that they have teachers who will have more project-based learning assignments where students demonstrate their learning through performance tasks and occasionally they are provided a choice of the way they can demonstrate their learning. Teachers share that they use strategies like exit tickets, "Do Nows," and online practice to collect formative assessment data, but that these practices are not uniform within classrooms, across departments, or across the school. Teachers note that many departments have common mid-years and finals across course sections or will have mid-years and finals where 80 percent of the assessment is common.

In some classes, learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning. Formative and summative assessments are used across all courses and departments. Course expectations list the values and weights of assignments and the process-related work; in some classes, there are separate categories for tests, projects, quizzes, homework, and engagement while other courses calculate grades using points without categories. English courses assign twelve drafted pieces of writing each year, and both peers and teachers provide constructive feedback to students while drafting their essays. In a Spanish class, the teacher leads an interactive vocabulary review activity in which they provide a definition or example in the target language. Students compete to write the corresponding vocabulary word on a whiteboard. The feedback from the review leads to students demonstrating their understanding of the unit's theme by writing their own plays or "obras de teatro" (*theater*).In an Algebra 2 class students work in partners on multi-step tasks. The tasks are in plastic sleeves, and students collaborate to find and write the solutions. When they finish one task, the teacher gives them a small paper with the answers, and they check their work. If there are mistakes, they try to find the problem. If they can't identify the mistake independently, they talk to the teacher. When they complete the first task, they move on to the next task. There are many opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in different ways through their classwork activities and assignments. However, there does not appear to be consistency regarding opportunities to improve work on assessments. Seventy-five percent of teachers report that they offer multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning. However, students report that there is no chance to retake assessments in some classes. One student asks, "If the goal is for us to learn the material, shouldn't they want us to show we've learned it? Even if it takes a little longer? No retakes just promotes a fixed mindset."

Learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning. All BHS students have a personal or school-issued laptop and access to Turnitin, Aspen, and Canvas. Within the World Language Department, technology such as Quizlet, Gimkit, Peardeck, Conjuguemos, and all of Google Suite are utilized to access new information and review content. For example, students in anAdvanced Spanish 3 class utilize Conjuguemos to enhance and demonstrate their language learning. These learners use online review activities and games to demonstrate their understanding of the present subjunctive mood.Students also engage in learning beyond the constraints of the school building and school day. In a biology class, students accessed technology to photograph flowers outside, upload them to their devices, and then demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of flower anatomy by labeling the images correctly. Students access, support, document, and supplement their learning.In a 9th-grade Responding to Literature class, students work on a culminating project from their Mystery unit. They work on Chromebooks and use Google Slides to create "Amazon wish lists" that represent their novel.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- department leaders
- facility tour
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- student work
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Standard 3 - Professional Practices

Narrative

The 2022-2023 School Improvement Plan (SIP) represents Brookline High School's values and priorities but does not yet include a vision of the graduate. School Council members, administrators, professors, parents, students, and community members created the plan. The 2021-2022 SIP included three goals: update graduation criteria, evaluate student support structures, and deliver equitable content. The current SIP reimagines ninth-grade academic offerings while highlighting graduation requirements, equity, and student support. The plan has deadlines to track progress toward each goals. The goal of analyzing and revising ninth-grade academic subjects has led departments to focus on de-leveling English, science, and world language classrooms.

Brookline High School educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being. Teachers receive 40 minutes of weekly collaborative time, and many departments have a common planning block.Teachers report that weekly collaboration time is inconsistently used across departments for aligning curriculum and instructional practices . Fifty-seven percent of educators report developing challenging lessons and assessments with colleagues weekly or daily. Teachers report some subjects have common cumulative assessments and formative/end-of-unit assessments to ensure all students have mastered common objectives. Ninety-four percent of teachers say collaborative planning time with colleagues improved student learning, achievement, or well-being this year. Brookline High School's network of organizations helps educators apply for time and money to improve their practice. The Brookline Education Foundation offers local and international training for educators to bring new ideas and skills to the classroom. The Brookline High School Innovation Fund also allows instructors to design and teach interdisciplinary courses each year, creating a diverse course catalog that meets student needs. Finally, the BHS PTO supports students and teachers. The Office of Teaching and Learning also publishes equity and social-emotional learning best practices newsletters.BHS educators have many professional development options, yet the schedule often inhibits formal frameworks for learning from one another. According to surveys, on-site workshops, instructional coaching, and classroom evaluations serve less than half of educators. Some years, professional learning communities have been established during Tuesday meetings, suggesting this could be a time to create structures for educators to observe and learn from each other. Teachers state they regularly and promptly seek student feedback on lessons/concepts. Feedback allows teachers to modify units based on student needs. Teachers and curriculum coordinators also noted that structured PD time and expectations would allow for more unified units across the same classes, creating the same learning outcomes regardless of who is teaching the course.

Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services. Some teachers report they use current student work as an immediate resource of evidence/data collection to improve curriculum and instruction. Teachers assess student learning evidence alone and with grade-level or department peers. Many departments use common unit and midyear/final assessments and review results in teams. Teaching teams evaluate student evaluation, attendance, and enrollment data at various department meetings. Over 80 percent of faculty members report asking students for feedback to improve teaching. Seventy-two percent of teachers report reviewing student work to make instructional decisions only once or twice a month. Faculty members report that they often analyze student work and formative assessments to alter teaching tactics in their own classroom but seldom review team data. The school's leadership team analyzes whole-school attendance trends and student attendance engagement data for credit-risk kids. Panorama helps the district track pupils' social-emotional well-being and identify those not linked to adults or peers. All students and families receive Interim Progress Reports with class performance feedback at mid-quarter. All students/families at risk of failing get a "Critical Update" two weeks before the end of a grading session. Student support workers monitor student development using Critical Updates and Interim Development Reports. Despite these strengths, the school does not systemically share student performance data across disciplines or teaching teams. Schoolwide data work is limited, and instructional leaders' data access and analysis tools are inefficient. The district's data team is improving data tools for school needs.

Collaborative structures and processes support the coordination and implementation of curriculum. Several collaborative structures support curriculum coordination and implementation. Weekly teacher collaboration time is 40 minutes. Most departments also have a planning block for teachers to collaborate on curriculum. New

teachers receive mentors, frequently from their department or grade level team, and a cohort-based mentorship program that fosters cross-disciplinary collaboration.Each department has a curriculum coordinator with .8 of their job dedicated to this work, and department meetings are scheduled 1-3 times a month to provide curriculum development opportunities.Google folders and school-department email conferences enable informal communication in departments. Curriculum coordinators assist grade-level curriculum integration with the district's Office of Teaching and Learning. K-8 and high school teams work on vertical curricular integration in at least one professional development conference annually. Teachers report this is insufficient to align K-8 to the high school successfully. Sixty percent of educators say their department/grade aligns curriculum across grade levels.The Brookline Education Foundation and Innovation Fund offer instructors interdisciplinary professional development and financing for innovative interdisciplinary courses. These courses include Climate Science, Social Change, Drawing for Understanding, and Field Science.Students and teachers express instances where course content disparities are evident, and a scope and sequence would help mitigate some of these disparities. Curriculum coordinators voiced the need for teacher PD to aid in developing scope and sequence and de-leveling/re-leveling courses. The administration does not direct the collaboration time allotted to staff and requires no deliverables/evidence of collaborative efforts, making common practices difficult to achieve.

School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student. Teachers and students choose core academic courses. Students and families can "override" teacher course suggestions to take their preferred course.BHS strives to include diverse students in all classes. BHS has examined student enrollment by course level. Faculty in different disciplines examine racial and gender breakdowns at different course levels and look to address disparities. The Calculus Project supports historically underrepresented students in honors and advanced math courses. The science department used the WiStem club to recruit women into high-level scientific programs when statistics showed a gender imbalance in AP Physics.BHS offers non-leveled electives and key academic subjects so students can learn from and with others. Students and teachers regularly review and alter course offerings to meet student needs. After the success of WHISP, the non-leveled 9th-grade social studies course, the school is moving toward non-leveled courses for all core academic subjects in 9th grade. SWS, Advisory, and elective courses are heterogeneously grouped, and schoolwide "days of" programming and activities on identity topics like race and gender allow students to learn from and about each other. Efforts have been made to identify diversity gaps in courses, but the school needs more systematic strategies to address these gaps.

Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning. In addition to personalized educator-family communication, the school regularly communicates with all families. For instance, weekly messages from the head of school to students and families, weekly guidance and counseling updates, department and instructional leader newsletters, etc.Many partnerships support student learning and well-being at the school. The Innovation Fund, PTO, and Brookline Education Foundation provide time and funding for the professional development of teachers. BRYT (Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition) provides clinical support and care coordination for students through the Brookline Center and the school. The Brookline Teen Center, Brookline Recreation, and Brookline Adult & Community Education fund student-led summer and after-school activities. Some Alternative Choices in Education (ACE) students can dual enroll. Instructional leaders across departments want to strengthen community and post-secondary collaborations through internships, dual enrollment, and/or better linkages to content-expert industry professionals.

Sources of Evidence
- department leaders
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- student work
- students
- teachers

Standard 4 - Learning Support

Narrative

Students at Brookline High School receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success. All students are assigned a school counselor (school counselors address scheduling and SEL) and a dean (deans address discipline, attendance, and case management). Beyond this, there is a student intervention team (SIT), composed of a dean, guidance coordinator, special education administrator and 20 other staff members (including teachers, social workers, and guidance counselors) that engage in both school-wide systems work and student-centered interventions. Student referral to the SIT is initiated by either a guidance counselor or a dean based on academic data (progress reports, grades, etc.) or teacher feedback. According to staff, 80-90 percent of referrals are related to social and emotional issues. Students also participate in a universal screening survey multiple times during the year, identifying students needing SEL Support. BHS also uses Panorama data to identify and place students for support. Teachers report that scheduling issues sometimes make it difficult for students to access electives and wellness classes that could be used as SEL interventions. Courses in these departments provide opportunities for students to interact with classmates from different grades and cohorts, contributing to a sense of belonging. In addition, teachers report that elective classes provide a break from academic stress. Staff voice concern about the feeling of belonging for students and adults primarily because of the size of the school. There are bright spots, however. One teacher reported that students in an engineering class have partnered with a class for students with special needs and are now designing adaptations that would allow these students to participate in various art activities. One student in the School Within a School program said they felt connected to their teachers and "liked myself a lot here." One student who was interviewed summed it up: "It can be hard to find unity, but everyone can find a place."To address the issue of belonging, one staff member suggested that the school repeat the Club Fair mid-year to involve more students and honor students' differing readiness levels to engage.The connection between adult joy and student well-being was also noted, and staff remarked that a (post-Covid) rebuilding of adult working relationships is an important step in supporting students.

BHS has an extensive list of academic supports (African-American and Latino Scholars Program, the Calculus Project, Steps to Success, METCO, a Bridge program, Learning Lab, teacher availability both before and after school, the use of Learning Ally, anextensive library of high quality, human-read audiobooks, student-centric features and a suite of teacher resources) and social-emotional supports (the BRYT program, B-CASA, and a Social Emotional Learning Tutorial (SELT). However, staff report that sometimes these programs can compete with one another. Publicly available MCAS data reveals disproportionality in achievement by subgroups, yet there is a lack of evidence that BHS currently has consistent expectations for specific academic interventions to address this data. Staff report that while teachers hold office hours to provide support, there is a high level of variability in the amount of time offered by teachers, how that time is used (SEL/academics), and how students are identified or recruited for support. In addition, there is very little scaffolding in many classrooms. Continued work on developing the multi-tiered system of support is essential. Families and caregivers receive information about available support through weekly email updates from the counseling department. BHS recently added a new academic intervention, the Critical Update, which flags students who are failing classes two weeks before the academic quarter closes.

At Brookline High School, all students receive academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel and some students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, and emotional needs. Every student meets with a school counselor regarding academic and post-secondary goals. The eleven school counselors have caseloads of about 200 students. The guidance department hosts college-related assemblies eight times per year and annual college and gap year fairs. BHS Guidance also works with the BHS HUB/advisory program to design and deliver assemblies, seminars, and deliver curriculum about post-high school planning. A Career Counseling Office hosts fairs and coffee talks to expose students to different industries and possibilities and provides lesson plans related to career and postgraduate planning to be implemented during advisory time. Some students with IEPs also receive post-high school planning support through the Transitions Program. Transition specialists collaborate with the Department of Developmental Services and the MA Rehabilitation Commission. The school's Bridge program provides specialized vocational programming for students with developmental disabilities until the age of 22. To address students' SEL needs,

there are two social workers at Brookline High School, and systems for collaboration with outside mental health workers, DCF, and Cartwheel Care Counseling. The school also has a class for students with 504 plans. BHS will use grant money this summer to hire counselors for the RISE and Bridge programs. They plan to collect data on the efficacy of these counselors and, if supported, use this data to justify another FTE in the school budget. Members of the school's support teams feel there are insufficient personnel to address burgeoning SEL needs, and noted that it is difficult to find social workers to fill open positions. Specific populations, ELs, and students in the Bridge Program, require specialized counselors to address specific language needs (including counseling for non-verbal students). Staff also report that counseling at BHS is "reactive not proactive" and recommend embedding SEL as a common practice in all classrooms, and making more use of the data available in Panorama. When asked to identify the strengths of the school, some parents spoke about the guidance department, noting that school counselors provide support to students during their time at the school.

All students at Brookline High School receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel. There are two full-time nurses. All students must submit an updated physical during their high school years, and nurses ensure that all students are up-to-date with required immunizations. Nurses implement state-mandated health screenings including hearing and vision, height and weight, posture, and SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment), which assesses students for substance use risk. Evidence reveals the thoroughness of family outreach. The BHS Health Services Back to School Health Information outlines the department's vision and plans for action and state requirements. Evidence also includes letters to families about various screenings. Nurses participate on a larger clinical team of social workers, school psychologists, and the coordinator of guidance to discuss both individual student cases and larger systems health issues that emerge. The nurses also manage protocols and training for staff, including contact with blood and/or other bodily fluids, administering an Epi pen, concussion recovery, elevator use, and field trip safety.

All students at BHSreceivelibrary/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel. There are currently four full-time librarians and one ed tech specialist at BHS. The librarians and the ed tech specialist voice concerns about staffing, particularly given the demands of a rise in enrollment and the responsibility of operating two separate library facilities. The libraries on the BHS campus, one in Greenough and the other in Tappan, are open before and after school most days. The libraries provide ample, comfortable space for individual and collaborative work including conference rooms. The comprehensive library website includes links to over 30 different databases, online newspapers and magazines, eBooks, audiobooks, and a robust menu of "Important Links" (BHS Help Centers, Wifi tips). School community members can borrow a wide range of equipment including iPads, ELMOs, graphing calculators, GoPros, and video cameras. Library/information services staff noted that there have been several shifts to their practice. Their role in assisting students with technology has increased, for example, providing Chromebooks and Chromebook support and serving as the administrator of CANVAS. They also noted a movement from using librarians to instruct teachers on technology (Canvas, available software) and teaching media/information literacy. Work with individual teachers is largely dependent on relationships and there is no time built into professional development for teachers to leverage the librarians. However, one librarian is working on a pilot program with a ninth-grade ELA teacher, and librarians have also worked with teachers of health classes to investigate this question:*How do you know that the online information about your health, particularly from TikTok, is reliable?*The librarians maintain their commitment to building a culture of reading; they highlight different collections of books, and recommend books for celebrating Black History Month. The librarians supervise student assistants and remark that they often provide space for the students in the middle.The librarians also conduct student surveys during freshman and senior year and collect student responses on library usage (i.e. have you ever checked a book out of the library? Have you ever asked a librarian for help with a research project?) and general media literacy (i.e. have you ever used NoodleTools? Have you ever evaluated web pages?) to inform their work.

All 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. Brookline High School has a robust list of programs and services. For students with IEPs, there are over 100 professionals, including two full-time board-certified behavior analysts, a director, 46 special education teachers, and 37 paraprofessionals. BHS utilizes the services of a district-wide vision specialist, an assistive technology specialist, and an audiologist. Students with 504 plans are monitored by the 504 coordinator and supported by accommodations in the classroom. Three-year re-evaluations and annual reviews are filed within the required timeline, and all students on 504s and/or IEPs are monitored during the year through periodic team meetings. BHS reports programs for students struggling in executive functioning and self-advocacy, those with language-

based challenges, and students who struggle with self-regulation and social communication (Learning Center, LAHB program Pathways, Supported Learning Center). Students with requirements for more highly structured programs can be enrolled in the RISE and BRIDGE programs, ExCEL (for students with significant emotional/behavioral disabilities), and the sub-separate public day therapeutic program, Winthrop House. Students with IEPs enrolled in grade-level academic courses can be placed in co-taught or small group classes. Teachers report that the diversity of student services is a strength of the school. However, disproportionality in representation in these programs concerns many school stakeholders. There is one full-time ELE teacher and another full-time teacher who splits time between ELE instruction and serving as an international student advisor. There is also a district-wide ELE Family and Community Engagement Liaison. All core subject teachers maintain Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) endorsement. Given the more than 50 EL students at BHS and the assignment of one ELE teacher to provide instruction in multiple core academic areas to students at EL Levels 1 and 2, the school should consider adding another teacher. One teacher noted the need to reconsider scheduling so ELs can engage in elective classes. A common theme while discussing students with disabilities, students on 504 plans, and English language learners is their sense of belonging. BHS has a Best Buddies program that supports students with disabilities. Students from a photography class recently photographed 40 EL students for a "See Me" project that will be displayed in the school. Support staff members would like to see intentionality around including students in these populations within the larger community and suggested leaning into Advisory time and creating more interdisciplinary opportunities for teachers and students.

Sources of Evidence
- department leaders
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- students

Standard 5 - Learning Resources

Narrative

The school community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of a high-quality educational program and student services. Brookline completed a recent renovation and expansion of school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality programs and services. This project included the addition of a new building for grade 9 students, the addition of a STEM wing to an existing building, the addition of a student-run restaurant, spaces for a robotics class, revised spaces for the special education department, new spaces for some smaller programs (ACE, Winthrop House, and EXCEL), and a refinishing of the Tappan gymnasium fitness center and locker rooms. The renovation project additionally addresses accessibility issues in the school adding ramps and elevators in the school as well as upgrades to ventilation in several areas. The superintendent notes that this project was fully funded by bonds taken on by the townspeople and not supplemented by MSBA funding. Additionally, the townspeople supported a recent override that supports the operating budget for the next three years. The building is well maintained and clean, both based upon data from a staff survey and visual inspection during the visit. There are adequate spaces to address diverse student learning needs and diverse programming. The school provides Career and Technical Education programming, a wide range of electives, computer sciences, visual art, performing arts, athletics, and many more courses to meet a wide range of student needs and interests. The facility has ample space and resources to accommodate this demand.The renovation also included a redesign of Tappan Field and the Brookline Hills MBTA stop. The facilities were renovated to serve up to 2400 students, and the school currently serves 2080 students.

The school provides time and financial resources to enable research-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services. The school has designed a schedule that sets aside one afternoon a week for professional collaboration (40 minutes on a full week and 60 minutes on a 4-day week). Additionally, there is a rotation of weekly meetings on Tuesdays that are used for either faculty meetings, department meetings, student-centered meetings, and new teacher induction. Additionally, the district calendar supports three full-day professional development days and two half-day professional development days for staff. The school leadership team reports that each department has access to funding to support professional learning experiences within their respective departments. Historically, the school and district have supported a wide range of professional development opportunities and interests. Interviews indicate that the school may benefit from better coordination of professional development in a way that supports instructional and curricular priorities.

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. Brookline High School offers many programs and learning opportunities for students. Students note the diversity of programs and offerings as a significant strength of the school. Students describe unique opportunities such as a job fair and internships that they feel help prepare them to be successful within Brookline High School as well as beyond the walls of the school. Students also highlight the club fair, sports, theater, social groups, affinity groups, and a wide range of ways that students can be involved in the school community as an asset to the high school. Parents similarly celebrate the vast program offerings as an area of strength at Brookline High School, noting that opportunities cater to every student's career pathway and interest. The BHS course catalog has over 300 course offerings to students. These courses are well-staffed, with many courses offering co-taught organization and most classes remaining at class sizes at or below 20-25 students per class. Additionally, students, staff, and parents all note that Brookline provides a well-rounded, liberal arts education that they believe prepares them well for life beyond high school. Families explain that this is possible due to consistent financial support from the community. BHS provides a reliable Wi-Fi network to support their Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) technology policy and a web portal system for teachers to request technical support. Finally, Brookline High School has two libraries that students and staff can access (one in the main building and one in the grade 9 building). Librarians staff both of the libraries.

Brookline High School and the larger school district have short-term and long-term plans to address it's buildings and facilities capital and maintenance needs. The school recently underwent a multi-million dollar upgrade to ensure a safe and modernized facility for students and staff. This was a major capital project supported by the local taxpayers that addressed space needs, modernized the building to ensure curriculum delivery, and

addressed many accessibility issues within the school. A routine maintenance plan addresses ongoing, regular building maintenance needs. The school's assistant headmaster coordinates the plan and runs through the school district's work orders. This plan addresses plant needs such as filter replacements, cleaning, inspections, repairs, etc. Some departments classroom spaces were not addressed in the recent school renovation, and these departments believe there is a need for an organized and transparent plan to update their equipment and facilities. Brookline High School has a BYOD technology policy and will provide a Chromebook for students who cannot secure their own device. This BYOD policy ensures students can access sufficient technology to engage with the course content and curriculum.

Brookline High School has infrastructure and several protocols to ensure effective responses in crisis situations. The school has different crisis teams to respond to various emergencies, such as medical emergencies or lockdowns. The school works with the town's Office of Emergency Management and the Brookline School Committee to review and approve emergency management protocols. There is a documented procedure with actionable steps for a medical emergency within the building. Similarly, a procedure, with documented steps exists for a lock down within the building. The school principal reports that procedures and protocols exist for informed decision-making among students and staff in the event of a threat to the school which allow the staff and students to respond to information and make decisions best aligned with their own safety. The principal reports that training has occurred around this decision-making. BHS has increased staff training and increased security with full-time security paraprofessionals. A strong relationship exists between key staff at Brookline High School and local public safety officials as it relates to emergency planning; however, there is a need for regular meetings among stakeholders to coordinate efforts and ensure all planning documents are up-to-date every year. Additionally, students report that communication about events within the school involving safety and emergency could use improvement in clarity, specificity, and timeliness.

Sources of Evidence
- central office personnel
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- parents
- school leadership
- students

Priority Areas

Priority Area

The Collaborative Conference Team concurs with the Priority Area identified by the school.

Priority Area #1 Goal Statement: 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. (1.2a, 1.2, 2.1)

School's Response: The school has values and mantras and shared implicit ideas of what a graduate should be able to do, post Covid we are in need of an updated and aligned articulated vision. Changes in Town Hall leadership have slowed the process down; now is the time to engage with this more vigorously. And to put it in writing.

Team's Response: Brookline High School has a vibrant culture, a rich history, dedicated faculty, and a diverse and involved student body. Many aspects of the school make it unique and could serve as the foundation for a vision of a graduate. The school will benefit from developing a vision that all students can attain and can be the driving force behind decision-making at the school. Ideally, the vision will be a way to bring all of the mantras, core values, and beliefs about learning into one common document that articulates the school's highest hopes for its graduates.

Priority Area

The Collaborative Conference Team concurs with the Priority Area identified by the school.

Priority Area #2 Goal Statement: There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school.

School's Response: Develop a template that will set minimum expectations for curricular documents, and then facilitate a process that makes sure all departments implement the model. Foundational Element 2.2a Reasoning: The school has a culture of autonomy that has resisted standardizing curriculum. However, post-COVID and with an increase of new staff, we need to ensure that we have consistency of curriculum

Team's Response: A consistent theme throughout the visit was the different experiences of students taking the same courses and the feeling that the teacher a student is assigned for a particular course will make or break their experience in that course. Autonomy among teachers has been a long-standing value of the school; however, students deserve consistent and guaranteed outcomes from their courses. There is still room for creativity in lesson design, but the overarching understandings, skills, and knowledge obtained from each course should be consistent from section to section. The best way to ensure this is to have a written curriculum that outlines these expected outcomes for each unit in a course and provides opportunities for common assessments for students to demonstrate that they have mastered the unit objectives across all sections of a course in a department.

Priority Area

The team suggests a modification to the Priority Area.

Priority Area #3 Goal Statement - Develop and implement common instructional expectations, strategies, and practices throughout the school that blend high-leverage instruction with tiered intervention strategies and culturally responsive, SEL, and trauma-informed approaches that benefit all students. (2.4, 4.1)

School's Response - Autonomy vs. Consistency. This work will include developing greater consistency in student support, equitable access for students to programs and classes. Consistency around SEL interventions across the school, consistency in access to accommodations within MTSS, consistency in the administration of rules and supports. Some of that will come through some articulation and documentation of procedures and processes. Other may come through programmatic changes. Several indicators point at how students have significantly different experiences at BHS, including disproportionality in enrollment data for advanced courses and special education supports, MCAS results, AP results and student self-reporting on social-emotional outcomes via the annual Panorama survey. Projects like Reimagining the 9th grade are work in this direction.

Team's Response - The tension between autonomy and consistency is present again in this goal. Students will benefit from more consistency in classroom practices, implementing interventions, and teaching approaches that are informed by social/emotional learning and culturally responsive pedagogy. The school's self-reflection states, "Over the next three years, SIT will need input and involvement from all BHS educators and administrators as we identify and articulate clear common teaching practices that fuse student support with classroom strategies and improve our school's ability to utilize tiered interventions on behalf of students. In general, we need greater consistency in how we teach and serve students."

Priority Area

The team suggests combining and modifying two identified Priority Areas.

Priority Area #4 Goal Statement: The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. (1.1)

School's Response - Making BHS a welcoming school for all. There is work to do around how students and staff think our school supports all students. Staff thinks it is engaging with the parent community at a much higher rate than students or parents do. More parents could participate in the school than currently do. BHS should feel like a welcoming, safe place for all students and families.

Equity: The word comes up in many ways in the report and means many things in different contexts. It includes equity in course enrollment and outcomes in grades and standardized tests. It includes the disproportionate subgroup representation in AP classes or standard classes, special education or electives. Some of the great aspects of the school are not equally distributed to all (students, staff). This is an area where we can move from good to great, with more transparency, communication, and unified purpose.

Team's Response: This goal will encompass aspects of equity and inclusiveness. There is already a pervasive awareness of treating others with respect and kindness in the school. Students have a lot of freedom, and for the most part, they respond to that very responsibly. But there is always room to look at existing practices and expand them to ensure that all students are having an equitable experience and all members of the school community feel included.

In addition, the school currently does not meet the Foundational Element 1.1a because of the open access of entrances across the school campus. This will need to be addressed in order to meet the Foundational Element at the time of the Decennial visit in 2026.

Additional Suggested Priority Areas

The team suggests an additional Priority Area.

Priority Area #5 Goal Statement: Continue the work to reimagine the 9th-grade to ensure that all students have opportunities for equitable experiences at Brookline High School. (1.1, 3.5)

Team's Response: The work of reimagining the 9th grade experience is already in process. The 9th graders have a new educational space, and their courses are being re-designed to ensure equitable access for students regardless of their previous academic experiences. This goal will align with the other Priority Areas as the school aligns the work in the 9th grade with the future vision of a graduate, as the written curriculum is developed for each course, and as common instructional strategies are implemented in the 9th grade and across the school.

Commendations

Commendation

The wide variety of courses, programs, and extracurricular activities that are available to students and enhance the culture of BHS

The overall positive and vibrant school environment and culture that can be felt throughout the campus

The five school mantras that are echoed throughout classes and are well-known by staff and students

The strong sense of freedom and responsibility among students

The commitment of teachers to their students' overall well-being, both academically and emotionally

Commendation

The high student engagement in most classes

The strong collaborative work among teachers happening in the 9th grade

The feeling among parents that teachers care deeply about the learning of their students

The many opportunities for students to lead their own learning across the school

The varied assessment strategies including many project-based and authentic assessment experiences

Commendation

The provision of weekly collaboration time for teachers

The numerous community partners that support the school with education resources for teachers such as the Brookline Education Foundation, The Brookline High School Innovation Fund, and the Brookline PTO

The efforts to enroll diverse students in higher-level courses such as the Calculus Project and the WiSTEM Club

Commendation

The robust and diverse array of academic supports available to students

The Student Intervention Team (SIT) that meets regularly to discuss interventions for students who are struggling

The school counseling services that provide significant social and emotional support for students

The provision of library and information technology personnel and resources

The many intervention strategies in place to support students

The attention to the overwhelming student needs for SEL and health support in recent years

Commendation

The community's overwhelming financial support for the renovations and additions to Brookline High School

The beautiful and educationally supportive spaces for learning throughout Brookline High School

The adequate and dependable funding from the school community to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities

Recommendations

Recommendation

Examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services including disaggregated data of participation, performance, and experiences by subgroups

Recommendation

Identify and adopt common baseline expectations and norms around assessment and opportunities for re-assessment

Recommendation

Create a multi-year professional learning plan that optimizes the existing time the school has in place to support collaboration and provide PD opportunities

Recommendation

Continue to implement the formal tiered system of support for identified and nonidentified students ensuring there are specific entry and exit criteria to allow for increased student mobility between classes

Recommendation

Ensure that the school provides a physically safe environment for students and adults by limiting access to exterior doors across the campus

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This Collaborative Conference Report reflects the findings of the school's Self-Reflection 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 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.

The Commission expects school officials to use the results of the Collaborative Conference Report as well as the school's identified Priority Areas for Growth to draft a school improvement/growth plan, and to review and implement the findings of the Self-Reflection and and Collaborative Conference Report. An outline of the next steps in the Accreditation process is included in the Commission's Accreditation Handbook, which is available on the Commission's website.

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. The school will complete a Summary Report and host a Decennial Accreditation visiting team two years after the Collaborative Conference to show progress implementing the school's Priority Areas. The Decennial visiting team will identify recommended next steps as well as additional recommendations for the school to continue to align with the Standards for Accreditation and to improve outcomes for students.

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 impact(s) the change has had on the school's ability to align with 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 of Planning and Progress 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. The time and effort dedicated to the Self-Reflection and preparation for the visit ensured a successful Collaborative Conference 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: Alyson Geary - New England Association of Schools & Colleges

Assistant Chair: Marc Smith - Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District

Team Members

Ms. Jenn DeMariano - Somerville High School

Amy Kiley - Boston Community Leadership Academy

Ms. Abigail Murphy - Amesbury High School

Ms. Anne Severson - Boston Public Schools