

Five Year Progress Report

Searsport District High School

March 1, 2008

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SDHS Section 1
Detailed Responses to Highlighted Recommendations
Page Two

1. Submit the school-wide rubrics for the four academic expectations in the mission.
Classification: Completed

Response: Searsport District High School decided to expand on the idea of a small handful of academic expectations that cut across the various content areas. Instead, SDHS decided to eliminate the Carnegie Unit completely and institute a comprehensive system of standards for graduation as a matter not only of high school practice but district policy. During two days in January of 2005, granted by the Board of Directors in a special appeal by the high school in order to complete this work, a draft of all standards was created and approved by the staff with the superintendent in attendance.

In this system, every department researched (using the Maine State Learning Results and national standards) a core set of standards that every student would have to meet in order to graduate. This means that, in a heterogeneous structure, every freshman student (for example) would meet all six English standards using the standards-based syllabus from that course, along with the standards-based unit lesson plans from each specific unit, and the assessment rubrics that measure the summative assessments from each of those units. In this way, all our academic expectations are specifically detailed through rubrics that measure how students are meeting all standards and these documents are common because each and every SDHS student is measured against them. This program, starting with the class of 2010, holds for every course a student takes, and for every rubric that is used to measure every summative assessment in every unit lesson plan that is the vehicle for meeting every learning standard. Furthermore, the layout of every syllabus, unit lesson plan, and rubric is the same for every class, whether it be a science, social studies, English, math, or any other department or course.

During those two days in January, 2005, the staff identified five common rubrics that were tied to core skills necessary to meet standards in every content area. It was agreed, at the time, that these common rubrics would be developed and used across content areas.

Faculty and staff members of Searsport District High School (SDHS) met on March 22 and March 23, 2007, with the goal of completing these rubrics. Rubrics devised and discussed during these work sessions centered on the areas of writing, reading comprehension, research, participation and presentations. The rubrics for research and for writing were completed and adopted by faculty on May 2, 2007. The rubric for presentation was completed and adopted on November 5th, 2007 and the reading comprehension rubric was completed and adopted on November 7th, 2007.

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- 2. Submit the school's civic and social expectations and report the indicators by which the school will assess their achievement.**

Classification: Completed

Response: In November, 2005, MSAD 56 adopted a K-12 Code of Conduct, which SDHS uses as the foundation for civic and social expectations. SDHS chose to write citizenship standards that would take our current service learning hours and other, scattered pieces of civic and social expectations and bring them together in one, coherent set of standards that would be reflected on a student's permanent transcript.

On March 22 and March 23 of 2007, a group of faculty and SDHS administration met to research and write civic and social expectation standards and to devise a way to report the indicators by which the school would assess their achievement. Work continued into the 2007-2008 school year and three civic and social expectations standards were finalized and adopted by the staff on December 5th, 2007 then later also approved by our Community Council.

The system will include a set of certificates (in lieu of rubrics) earned by every student when they successfully complete a variety of activities each year that demonstrate they have successfully engaged the civic and social expectations for student learning. These three standards will be reported on the new standards-based report cards that measure and report on all the academic standards as well, and civic and social expectations will also be reported on every student's permanent transcript. Additionally, all students will create a civic and social expectations vitae during their four years to help document their participation and level of meeting these three standards.

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5. Ensure that professional development opportunities address efficient and effective use of instruction time in the current scheduling model.

Classification: Completed

Response: Opening day workshops in the fall of 2004-2005 were focused on differentiated instruction and presented by Diane Heacox, a national speaker and author on the topic of differentiation. Through the Great Maine Schools Grant SDHS worked with the Southern Maine Partnership to provide professional development on efficient and effective instruction. SDHS later met with Leslie Applebaum from the Southern Maine Partnership to continue work on differentiated instruction with the classroom. SDHS is continuing to work on the transition to a standards-based system with the class of 2010. Classwork and assignments under this new system have become more differentiated in order to provide students opportunities to meet the standards.

Devising new assignments and course structures under this new system has created the need for Professional Learning Community (PLC) discussions for the ninth and tenth grade teams. The science department attended a two-day conference featuring Rick and Becky DuFour in October of 2007, then another, cross-department team attended another DuFour conference in November of 2007 and both groups reported out and have led discussions on transitioning the high school to both the PLC model and to help devise our own pyramid of interventions that systematizes how and when we help students who are not meeting the standards.

The 9th and 10th grade teams have used the PLC discussions during their team planning time every other day. PLC discussions have allowed teachers to obtain feedback on their assignments and rubrics from their grade level team. Student work has also been examined through the PLC process. Upper level teachers will use the process as the class of 2010 become third and fourth year students in the next two years, and SDHS becomes a completely standards-based school.

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7. Finalize the development and implementation of assessment strategies using school-wide rubrics for the four academic expectations in the mission.

Classification: Completed

Response: As SDHS transitioned from a system of Carnegie units to a standards-based system, each department in the school created their own set of standards. The departments arrived at these standards after discussions within the department, which included consultation of both national standards and the Maine State Learning Results. The standards of each department were brought before the faculty as a whole and finalized as graduation requirements beginning with the class of 2010. The approved standards were integrated into the syllabus for each course, and frameworks for addressing the standards within the content of each course were added to each syllabus. Over the course of many professional development days and summer planning days, the course frameworks were translated into standards-based unit lesson plans. Individual rubrics that measure achievement of stated standards have been devised for summative assessments accompanying these units. Course frameworks and standards-based unit lesson plans have been approved as SDHS curriculum by the MSAD 56 board of directors. The assessment strategy within this new standards-based system has become the school wide expectation for student learning. In our heterogeneously grouped school, all students have the same course expectations and are assessed using the same rubrics over the course of their high school career.

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8. Develop and implement a plan to resolve the issue of student to student harassment and respect to achieve the goal of a safe climate for student learning.

Classification: Completed

Response: The MSAD 56 Code of Conduct was finalized and published in November, 2005. This document serves as the basis for conduct expectations throughout the the district, including SDHS. Both high school staff and students worked on this document and students were surveyed for input throughout the process.

In the spring of 2005 our first peer mediation class/program was launched. A pilot program, this first small group of students was trained and worked on spreading the word to other students. Student mediations were held that year both in the high school and middle school. Beginning in 2005-2006, a signature sheet has been placed in the student handbook, encouraging all students and parents/guardians to commit to students going to mediation if they are involved in student-to-student harassment.

First SDHS sent its student support assistance coordinator (who holds a masters of social work degree) to a Challenge Day, a national program dedicated to exploring the roots of our common humanity while addressing issues of student-to-student harassment, among other social ills and the courage to overcome them. Next, this coordinator brought a group of students to attend Challenge Day, then in October of 2005 all freshman and junior students attended this program. SDHS continued to ramp up to whole school participation in the fall of 2006. when all members of the new freshman class attended Challenge Day along with a handful of upper class student mentors. This Challenge Day was followed with the formation of a “Be The Change Team”, a group of students and staff at SDHS dedicated to improving the climate at the school. Our peer mediation program has been instituted in order to coordinate with Challenge Day. The freshman class also attended Challenge day in the fall of 2007 as an ongoing program.

Additionally, every year all our sophomore students and sophomore advisors attend sophomore awareness, again designed to address major social issues facing teens, including self-esteem, substance abuse, and other risk-taking behaviors as well as student-to-student harassment.

SDHS administers the MYDAUS survey every four years (and has just administered it this past February, 2008) in order to assess levels of student and community pro and anti social behavior, substance abuse, and other health factors. With this, all freshmen and juniors are surveyed by the funders of our Great Maine Schools grant each year in order measure levels to which students feel supported by the school, how safe they feel, how much or little harassment they perceive

exists, and how they judge the rigor of our curriculum along with other criteria. All this information went into the consideration of

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what moves to make regarding being pro-active around solutions.

In December of 2007 the school's principal and student assistance coordinator brought a bill to the Community Council in order to institute a restorative justice option for all students who enter the disciplinary system. While the old discipline ladder (which identifies a series of consequences for various infractions) remained in place, students could choose to take advantage of a restorative justice option to settle student to student conflict as well as for other infractions. Training for teams of staff and students who would run the various restorative structures took place on February 14th, 2008.

SDHS reports no student fights in the past year and a half (school year 2006-2007 and thus far in school year 2007-2008) with record low numbers of student suspensions and including all areas of discipline. Only eight students are currently on the school's discipline ladder.

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13. Use the comprehensive educational plan to guide and promote future decisions at Searsport District High School.

Classification: Completed

Response: The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) is a compilation of documents, policies, etc., instituted by the district to guide day to day activities. SDHS has been and continues to be guided by the MSAD56 district vision articulated in that plan. The Code of Conduct, MSAD 56 Policy manual, and individual school policies are contained in the CEP. In addition to these documents, SDHS has been guided by our goals set forth in our work on our grant initiatives and in our goals in creating a standards-based school.

**Five Year Progress Report of Searsport District High School
March 1, 2008**

Section II– Evaluation Report recommendations not previously reported as completed

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

1. Complete the civic and social expectations for student learning and ensure they are used along with the mission and expectations and all decision-making.

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #2.

2. Formally accept the rubrics and use them throughout the school to assess student performance of the academic expectations.

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #1.

3. Develop and implement a comprehensive process and utilize a variety of data to regularly review the mission statement and expectations for student learning to assure they reflect student needs, community expectations, district mission and state standards.

Classification: Completed

1. **Response:** A review committee met on November 7th, 2007 to institute a plan to review and revise the mission statement. It was decided that a formal review committee should be representative of staff from varying departments and grade levels and include a support staff/special services member. The committee will also include an administrator and students will be invited to attend. Information to use in reviewing the mission statement will include data from our Great Maine Schools Grant and technology surveys. The committee will also look at the district vision statement to assure that the mission and vision are compatible. Staff are currently being trained in the use of PDAs to conduct “walkthroughs” in classrooms throughout the building. This information will also be considered in the revision of the vision. The mission will then be sent to Community Council for input/feedback. The Mission committee will be convened every four years , to assure that with each rotation of students the vision is revisited. The mission will also be revisited if the district vision statement changes or with the creation

of a regional school unit (RSU) under the state's consolidation plan. The first review will take place in

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Evaluation Report recommendations not previously reported as completed

2. **Page Ten**
- 3.
4. the fall of 2008. Final approval of new/changed mission would be a faculty and administration fist to five poll. All votes must be at least a four in order to approve new mission.

SDHS administers the MYDAUS survey every four years (and has just administered it this past February, 2008) in order to assess levels of student and community pro and anti social behavior, substance abuse, and other health factors. With this, all freshmen and juniors are surveyed by the funders of our Great Maine Schools grant each year in order measure levels to which students feel supported by the school, how safe they feel, how much or little harassment they perceive exists, and how they judge the rigor of our curriculum along with other criteria. All this information goes into planning adjustments in the program and in how the mission is functioning.

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STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Curriculum

3. Complete the aligned curriculum in the content areas of modern and classical languages and visual and performing arts.

Classification: In Progress

Response: New standards-based curriculum were completed for social studies on February 27th, 2007, physical education and health on May 22nd, 2007, math on August 8th, 2006, science on November 28th, 2006. The standards-based VPA curriculum was completed on October 23rd, 2007. The Foreign Language curriculum committee is in the middle of its alignment and have completed forming standards, syllabi, and are in the process of aligning standards-based unit lesson plans and rubrics. This work will be completed by the end of school in June, 2008. The standards-based curriculum for English Language Arts was completed February, 2008.

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STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Instruction

5. Expand interdisciplinary connections between and among content areas and grade levels.

Classification: Completed

Response: Grade-level teams combined with work on core curriculum standards and common learning rubrics promote interdisciplinary connections between and among content areas. Grant money has been made available for grade level teams to take all students from particular grades on authentic field work experiences that can then be brought back to the school and used across the curriculum to expand and deepen learning along with increasing interdisciplinary connections. Examples of this include a trip to the Challenger Learning Center by all freshmen students and teachers, and a trip taken on Penobscot Bay that included work in science and English classes. In the spring of 2007 all freshmen continued interdisciplinary field experiences by having all students and core content area teachers go to a University of Maine ecology walk through a protected bog and use the experience in all four core content areas of English, science, math, and social studies.

Eleventh grade students complete a research project for their courses in English and World History and come together to share results of their research. These students have also worked in these courses to participate in a Great Gatsby Party, which combines study of the novel with an examination of the historical period in which it is set.. The music and art departments collaborated to present an “Arts Evening” and the music department has collaborated with English on an interdisciplinary project. Work is ongoing in this area, and is expanding to include the Penobscot Marine Museum, which is located within walking distance of SDHS.

Additionally, the concept of the new common rubrics is to tie together the standards across the various departments through a common set of skills necessary in order to meet all our standards. In this way, a science teacher and a social studies teacher, for instance, will both be using parts of the common research rubric with the same students.

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STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Assessment

2. Ensure that all teachers use classroom assessment to revise curriculum and improve instruction.

Classification: Completed

Response: Searsport District High School's move to a standards-based educational program includes having assessments closely align with the standards that drive daily education in the classroom. This sets up a cycle of curriculum revision and analyzing the assessments, themselves, in order to know that we're measuring what it is we expect students to be able to do and know. This cycle, known as the *Standards Achievement Planning Cycle* (SAPC) is explained and supported in a recent publication from ASCD titled From Standards to Success by Mark O'Shea, professor of education at California State University-Monterey Bay. SDHS started communicating with professor O'Shea via email in the early fall of 2005 and held a conference call with him later that same season in order to examine our standards-based syllabi, unit lesson plans, and rubrics to see if our assessment system was indeed measuring attainment of the standards. With professor O'Shea's feedback, we revised the templates of these documents and distributed them to all teaching staff as models for curriculum and assessment design in our new standards-based system.

Faculty members on the ninth and tenth grade teams went on from those templates (given out to everyone in a school-based document titled the "Red Packet") to develop summative rubrics to assess standards for the classes of 2010 and 2011. The rubrics and their accompanying assignments are discussed in Professional Learning Communities and then revised according to team feedback and student performance. This PLC work has become integral to our work on the standards-based curriculum and instruction and assessments are being continually revised and improved.

4. Finalize the development and implementation of assessment strategies for the school's academic, civic, and social expectations.

Classification : Completed

Response: See **Highlighted Recommendations #2 and #7**

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Evaluation Report recommendations not previously reported as completed

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STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Leadership and Organization

3. Provide formal opportunities for additional teacher collaboration around learning.

Classification: Completed

Response: Common planning time is currently built into the master schedule for the ninth and tenth grade teams. A percentage of this meeting time is used for PLC discussions relating to implementation of the standards-based curricula. In the 2006-2007 school year, the second faculty meeting of each month was dedicated to either grade level or department meetings to allow more formal time for teacher collaboration. This practice has continued through the current school year. Planning for the master schedule in ensuing years will include addressing the issue of finding common planning time for upper grade level teams to utilize the PLC process as they transition to standards-based coursework.

Additionally, both the 9th and 10th grade teams staff have been paid to attend summertime team meetings designed to aid in the conversion to a standards-based program which includes setting team norms, practicing the PLC protocols while examining and critiquing standards-based syllabi, unit lesson plans, and rubrics.

There have also been three meetings of the *School One* team which is comprised of the 9th and 10th grade teams, together. The concept of School One is it forms the first two years of meeting core standards during which time skill based remediation takes place [a literacy program (FAME) for all freshmen and Writers Workshop for all sophomores]. There is a very controlled curriculum in School One with less student choice than they would have in the subsequent years of School Two and School Three. No student graduates from School One without having met all standards covered in those two years. Therefore, this team has collaborated and will continue to do so around learning in a standards-based system.

As the upper level teachers are brought into the standards-based system, the same will be offered to them during the summer of 2008, and they will also have scheduled team meetings in the spring of 2008 in order to begin the process of conversion and formation of their team. They will take on some similar issues that every team must approach in terms of how to handle learning and assessment in a standards-based system, but they will also have unique issues to confront as they deal with School Two and School Three topics, such as upper level electives in a standards-based system.

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4. Develop and implement a plan to resolve the issue of student-to-student harassment and respect to achieve the goal of a safe climate for student learning.

Classification: Completed

Response: See highlighted recommendation #8

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION: Community Resources for Learning

1. Use the comprehensive educational plan to guide and promote future decisions at Searsport District High School.

Classification: Completed

Response: See Highlighted Recommendation #13

Section III – Substantive Changes With A Negative Impact

There have been no substantive changes with a negative impact that have not been previously reported.

Section IV – Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Searsport District High School
Mission Statement

Searsport District High School provides a quality education for all its students. We foster academic success through a spirit of inquiry, high expectations, responsibility, and openness. Our school embraces individuality while expecting excellence from all. We recognize that students bring a variety of backgrounds, skill, and learning styles to our school and, using these strengths, we guide students toward academic achievement, personal growth, and social awareness. We open the doors of education to students, parents and community members in a safe and respectful climate that honors life-long learning and service to society.

The mission statement of Searsport District High School was adopted on February 12, 2002. There have been no changes in the statement since this date. The process for revising this statement is described in section 2, Mission and Expectations, standard 3.

Section V: Specific examples of how mission and expectations have been used to guide decision making.

Searsport District High School has undertaken several major reform initiatives that are in keeping with our Mission and Expectations and that are both driven by Mission and that also allow us to more fully meet our Mission.

These initiatives include creating and adopting three Civic and Social Expectations standards. During that discussion, when some staff were concerned about the school trying to legislate or enforce morality in a way that would ring hollow and perhaps accomplish the opposite, direct reference was made (as a counterpoint) to the Mission statement that is mounted on a sign in our conference room. After this, these three new standards were ultimately unanimously approved.

Our new, fully standards-based educational system gives all students a deeper guarantee that SDHS, “foster[s] ... high expectations” and “expect[s] excellence from all.” Further

this new system supports that, “we guide students toward academic achievement ...”

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Likewise, our system of interventions for all students has been developed over the past two years, the design of which was completed in a series of whole-staff meetings between October, 2007 and January, 2008. These interventions that address all students' learning and support needs again is motivated by our belief about working with students, as expressed in our Mission, and again the work we've done strengthens the claims made therein.

Our work bringing Challenge Day and *Be the Change* initiatives to SDHS and the work on restorative justice is all derived from and supports the ideas of “responsibility”, “personal growth”, and “social awareness” in our Mission Statement. Further, these efforts are directly linked to the idea of a, “safe and respectful climate” in our Mission.

Section VI: Significant achievements or strengths not previously reported.

As SDHS has transitioned into a standards-based system, the need for an intervention system to accompany this system has become increasingly evident. During the 2007-2008 school year, staff members at SDHS have been concentrating their efforts on establishing a system of interventions to offer structured opportunities to students who are struggling to meet standards. On January 17th and January 23rd, 2008 both teaching and support staff met and finalized a system of intervention. This intervention system, parts of which have been piloted from 2006 onward, has a significant impact on student learning, as it allows all students access to the time and resources needed to be successful in meeting content standards.

SDHS is now entering a new phase with restorative justice being formally realized in our district policy, as a result of the restorative justice bill brought before and adopted by our Community Council. Now all students will be able to both take ownership of disciplinary infractions and actively participate in atoning for those mistakes. While we piloted various forms of restorative justice over the past two years, it will now be an official option all students have access to as an alternative to the traditional discipline model.

Section VII: School restructuring or reform initiatives not previously reported.

All restructuring and/or reform initiatives at Searsport District High School have been previously reported and/or are addressed earlier in this report, including in Section VI.

Section VIII: Description of Follow-Up Program

The follow up steering committee at SDHS consisted of two faculty members and the principal of the high school. Time was provide in the master schedule to meet and work on the follow up plan. The entire SDHS staff was involved in the follow up process, utilizing staff meetings, early release time and in-service days to complete work on the standards-based educational system, common rubrics, the mission statement and the intervention system among other reform initiatives. Furthermore, our Community Council has played an increasingly influential role in governance of the school; reforming our student portfolio requirement; providing feedback and voting to support learning standards and interventions; hearing the bill, debating, and approving the new restorative justice model among various other issues. The Council is comprised of 12 students (freshmen to seniors) and 12 adults (that include teachers, support staff, administration, a school board member, business owners, members of the non-profit community, an alumnus, and parents).

Committee Members:

Gregg Palmer, principal

Leanne Groening, teacher

Darci Bradstreet, teacher

STATISTICAL DATA SHEET

School: Searsport District High School **Principal:** Gregg Palmer

City, State: Searsport, Maine **School Telephone:** 207-548-2313

E-MAIL Address: gpalmer@msad56.org **FAX Number:** 207-548-2354

Dates of Evaluation: November 16-19, 2003

Grades: 9-12 **School Enrollment:** 272 at time of the evaluation

Grades: 9-12 **School Enrollment:** 238 at present time

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

4.56% -- 2004

2.87% -- 2005

8.2% -- 2006

(dropout rates for 2007 not yet available)

DISPOSITION OF VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

	<i>NUMBER</i>	<i>PERCENTAGE</i>
COMPLETED	33	97%
IN PROGRESS	1	3%
PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE		
REJECTED		
NO ACTION		
TOTAL	34	34

*The figures reported in the Five-Year Progress Report

Signature of Principal/Headmaster _____

Signature of Chair of Follow-Up Committee

Position

Date Progress Report Submitted