

## STANDARD 7: COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

### **Indicator 1: The school shall engage students and their families as partners in the student's education as well as encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.**

Nashoba Regional High School is fortunate to have a community with many talented people. There are many outreach efforts to engage parents. Each year the school has an open house for freshmen, a college breakfast for seniors, a college planning evening for juniors, a freshmen spaghetti dinner, and a Foreign Language Week for all foreign language students. Annual eighth grade tours of the high school are offered in the spring.

Communication with parents and the community is extensive with a web site, teacher e-mail availability, monthly newsletters, and several parents' nights. Parent conferences are ongoing and conducted as needed. Students and parents are invited to parent/teacher conferences as well as to attend Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings. Parents are involved with site-based councils such as the SCC (School Community Council) and take part in representation on the School Committee.

Parents' support groups such as the Booster Club, Friends of Drama, Friends of Music, and The Scholarship Foundation provide financial assistance for Nashoba students. Annual awards for Nashoba students average \$40,000 in numerous scholarships to graduating seniors. The Nashoba High School Endowment Fund offers mini-grants to teachers for curriculum initiatives, awarding about \$4000 per year. Parents are involved within the school as Media Center aides and assisting with Foreign Language Week, and the After Prom Party. Additionally there is "Partners in Technology" which is of assistance to teachers and others with their technology questions. The C++ class taught by a retired Raytheon person provides students with computer programming instruction. On occasion when Nashoba hosts Career Day, community support is evident; speakers and demonstrations represent a broad cross-section of careers.

There is an active Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) partnership with the town of Bolton, which serves the Bolton community. These students respond to medical emergencies between 7:15AM and 5PM Monday through Friday. The Banking Program works with students in the business department to involve them in a formal program through Clinton Savings Bank.

Parents and the community are invited to various student performances, including six annual concerts comprised of both choral and instrumental groups involving Concert Choir, Concert Band, Pops choir, Jazz Ensemble, Dues Band, Jazz choir, Madrigal Choir & Woman's Ensemble. Class plays include a competition from the four classes adjudicated by invited theatre professionals. There is an annual musical and dramatic production. In addition, there is a great deal of support and involvement of parents through Nashoba's sports programs.

**Indicator 2: The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.**

Nashoba Regional High School promotes productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning in many ways. Nashoba has created business and industry partnerships, which provide students with opportunities for job shadowing, mentoring, apprenticeships, work-study and summer employment. Nashoba has a partnership with Hewlett-Packard/Compaq and Clinton Savings Bank. A number of local businesses support Nashoba through donations of materials.

There is also an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program for Nashoba students, one of two in the state, which provides medical assistance in the town of Bolton. There is a connection with the Young Life Support Group, a local religious organization. And again, Nashoba has the "Partners in Technology" program, in which parents who are experts in technology volunteer their services to teachers and students.

Opportunities for student learning in the community exist through involvement with the Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) and Habitat for Humanity organizations. The Community Service Learning Club undertakes initiatives to assist groups in need with winter clothing drives and other outreach efforts.

There have been several higher education partnerships. The school has brokered summer internships with Smithsonian Astrophysical Lab housed at Harvard. However, there are no formal and ongoing internships available as part of our regular curriculum offerings. Tufts University provided support to develop one science program for freshmen. Several Nashoba students are involved in dual enrollment programs at local and community colleges. Nashoba has lost some internship and partnership programs such as the ones with Clark, WPI, Atlantic Union and Yankee Atomic, however.

Teachers no longer have the opportunity for professional development through Nashoba Valley Professional Development Program at a reduced rate.

**Indicator 3: The school site, plant, and equipment shall support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning.**

The school site, plant, and equipment are sufficient to enhance most aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. Recent renovation has dramatically improved the overall modernization of the building. Most classrooms have opening windows, improved lighting and new desks. The network drops are mostly operative. The computer labs are up-to-date and improved. Storage facilities in most classrooms have been upgraded and locking cabinets installed. The redesigned student lockers are better. The ventilation and heating system is drastically improved in some rooms yet barely adequate in others. The configuration of the stations in the chemistry lab is unsafe, a condition not addressed during the renovation.

The school site has adequate space for outdoor physical education classes and athletic activities. However these fields are overused due to overlap in activities, as a result, the

conditions of some fields have deteriorated. There is a need for additional tennis courts; gym class size does not allow for use of the tennis courts, and tennis matches may take upwards of four hours to complete (well beyond the normal two hours) because there are only three courts available for the players. The courts and track currently need to be re-surfaced. Plans for expansion and change have not been implemented due to being landlocked; there is no long-range plan for land acquisition. Funding is inadequate for irrigation and maintenance for all fields.

Parking for teachers and guests is adequate. With the completion of the auditorium, it is no longer necessary to go off campus for student performances. There is adequate egress for fire drills and outdoor recreation. Computer access for teachers is excellent. Each teacher has been provided a laptop computer and rooms have Internet access. There is a fully functional modern family and consumer science laboratory, which is ADA accessible; however, it is not being utilized.

On the other hand, many areas are inadequate. For example, computer labs are available, but limited to serve class sizes of 25 or fewer. The renovation called for four computers per classroom and four mobile labs of 25 laptops, which would be made available to students, but only one mobile lab with fifteen computers exists. A cable distribution system, TV's, VCR/DVD and laptop computer projectors for classrooms and the auditorium were also omitted from the original plan. Scheduled acquisitions for computers in science labs were never fulfilled. Additionally, more students want to drive than can be accommodated by our present student parking facilities. The entire student body still cannot gather in the new auditorium due to limited seating. The cafeteria can barely accommodate one-third of the entire student body. Science rooms have no proper storage for chemicals, no hot water and are dangerously inadequate in ventilation, security, shower configuration and maintenance. The layout of the stations in the chemistry labs is unsafe, a condition not addressed during the renovation. The girls' locker room is currently used for visiting football teams. The number of faculty restrooms is inadequate. As mentioned on Indicator 13 of the Leadership and Organization report, the design of the school renovation omitted a large and attractive faculty room that would naturally have drawn teachers from all disciplines together to talk and share ideas. Just recently, the former family and consumer science (FACS) room was renovated into the new and attractive faculty lounge. However, there is hope that the FACS program will be re-instated, and therefore there will no longer be a faculty room.

There is an inadequacy of equipment including TV's, VCR's, laptop computer projectors and mobile labs. Some equipment in Technology Engineering is out of date due to renovation money being cut. Music technology money has been cut. Textbooks for classrooms are sometimes inadequate; some teachers have had to resort to photocopying chapters, others use rubber bands to bind texts. The Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FFE) portion of the renovation was spent on constructions overruns. Hence, FFE requests were made but not fulfilled.

**Indicator 4: The school site, plant, and equipment shall be maintained to ensure an environment that is healthy and safe for all occupants.**

Maintenance is an ongoing problem at Nashoba Regional High School, and lack of proper maintenance interferes with the staff's ability to perform their mission. Given that the high school building just underwent a \$22 million renovation, this is distressing. The problem stems from insufficient custodial staff and skilled equipment maintenance personnel. Also corner cutting in the recent school renovation has led to some maintenance issues leading to potentially dangerous conditions.

By International Sanitary Supply Association Standards, proper cleaning requires a custodian for every 20,000 square feet of floor area in a school building; by this standard, Nashoba requires 9.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) custodians. Nashoba employs 5 FTE custodians; they are clearly unable to keep the building clean and maintain repairs. Even a casual observer can see the dust and dirt build-ups in the corners of classrooms and hallways, walls that are not clean, stained and cracked ceiling tiles, graffiti in bathrooms that is not cleaned in a timely manner, etc. Cafeteria refuse is endemic throughout the school. The overall impression is that of an unclean school. Outdoor maintenance is an issue as well, with only one FTE charged with maintaining the entire grounds and athletic facilities.

Numerous other maintenance issues have been cited by staff such as broken bleachers in the gymnasium, doors that don't work, broken fixtures in lavatories, and broken water fountains. These problems have not been addressed in a timely manner.

Inadequate ventilation is an issue in some areas of the building, most notably in the locker room areas, the music area, the guidance area and the science lab areas. There have been numerous ventilation issues cited: poor air quality, moldy smells, etc. These issues probably are a combination of inadequate ventilation system and poor maintenance. What is clear is that there is not a skilled HVAC person on-site who could deal with HVAC issues in a timely manner.

Some inadequacies in the recent renovation project have led to safety concerns. The eyewash stations in science labs are not plumbed into drains; rather, they drain right onto the floor. Proper maintenance of these eyewashes requires periodic flushings that are impossible to perform without flooding the labs. Thus, eyewashes are at this time unusable. Many of the various fire doors around the school malfunction and cannot be opened, creating unsafe traffic jams in the corridors during passing time. While they are fixed from time to time, often weeks go by between the initial complaint and the repair. Punch lists have been formulated, but little action has been taken to rectify the numerous problems.

**Indicator 5: There shall be a planned and adequately funded program of building and site management that insures the maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment as well as the thorough and ongoing cleaning of the facility.**

There is a facilities manager who oversees the planning and supervision of the maintenance program, including the purchasing of supplies, materials, and equipment. There is no long-range plan in place for the regular maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment and for the ongoing cleaning of the facility. He says, "We're just making

a day to day effort.”

Building and site management insuring the maintenance and repair of facilities has insufficient funds. Also, the use of the building for non-school functions does not include charges assessed to cover costs and maintenance. There may be occasions to better appropriate these funds; however, there is no opportunity for maintenance employees to offer input and suggestions to central administration on these matters. One example sited was the expense incurred by plowing and sanding.

Minimal funds are available to buy supplies such as soap and cleaning materials; however, there are insufficient funds and personnel. Due to the inadequate number of employees available there is a need to prioritize; and the number one priority is the daily cleaning of bathrooms. To meet the recommended number of employees an additional four and a half FTE indoor and one FTE outdoors are needed.

In conclusion, there are insufficient staff and funding to adequately maintain and repair the facility.

**Indicator 6: There shall be ongoing planning to address future program, staffing, facility and technology needs as well as capital improvements.**

Although yearly needs in staffing and school enrollment necessitate a yearly improvement plan, a five-year strategic plan or the complementary budget is not in place. Having no department chairs is a significant factor in the lack of such a five-year plan. Due to the ongoing turnover in administrators, at both the superintendent and principal level, the absence of strategic planning is evident. Each transition brings with it new agendas and different ideologies diminishing hopes for continuity in planning. This has led to staff cynicism.

Whether Nashoba plans to continue to be a comprehensive high school is a question that is often raised: This directly impacts planning for programming, staffing and facility and technology needs. For example, staffing availability often drives curriculum decisions; the retirement of the family and consumer science teacher resulted in the elimination of the program. The combining of various levels and a reduction in elective courses also illustrates a lack of planning. Through POWERSCHOOL software the school maintains updated records which track yearly student enrollments with breakdowns by course and department as well as staffing allocations.

Yearly budgets, which include capital expenditures, are prepared by the school administration. Items of need are submitted by staff upon reflection in their specific areas. This budget is submitted to the superintendent after modifications have been presented to the school committee for comment, discussion and approval. The yearly strategic plan is also submitted to the School Community Council for comment.

As part of the building renovation, a technology plan was submitted. This plan included laptops for teachers, computer labs for instruction, computers for science, music and special education. Also included were computers for a guidance career center and the media center. The teacher

laptops and dedicated labs are in place; most but not all of the other planned technology exists. While there has been an increase of technology in the building, support staff has been reduced.

There is not a plan or a budget to support or replace equipment for the future. The high school does not have a budget process to maintain, replace or adequately service equipment, and the school does not have a plan or budget to support future technology expenses. A total cost of ownership should be developed and implemented at the high school. There is no formal five-year plan in place for addressing the needs, costs, and strategic purchase of computers and other technology items. Because of budget shortfalls the school district finances are now overseen by a state appointed advisory board. Such an action by the state may require the formation of such five-year strategic plans.

**Indicator 7: The physical plant and facilities shall meet all applicable federal and state laws and be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.**

According to the district-wide Facilities Plant Manager, the physical plant and facilities of NRHS do meet federal, state and local fire as well as health and safety regulations. He inspects all of the facilities in the district, and he regularly monitors maintenance and upkeep of equipment—specifically those related with fire codes, wastewater, and drinking water. When the plant's facilities are not in compliance, the facilities manager says that “depending on the issue” it gets addressed. For example, fire doors and egress doors to the student parking lot were incorrectly installed during the renovation, but they have still not been fixed. On the other hand, during the building project, problems with drinking water were immediately addressed.

**Indicator 8: The community and the district's governing body shall ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.**

Prior to last year, the budget was generated in a more or less fragmented and potentially adversarial way. Each committee involved in the budgetary process for the entire town(s) generated its proposals individually, without much consultation among the committees. This combined with turnover in the district's (four superintendents in the past five years) and towns' leadership has resulted in a lack of continuity in planning. As a result, communication has been partial at best and adversarial at worst.

In the past year, the Finance Committees of each town have been invited to send one of its members to attend school committee meetings on a regular basis and to act as official liaisons in any fiscal matter the school has to consider. The budget process, consequently, has become a more ongoing and cooperative process than in the past. Additionally, prior to town meetings there are joint board meetings of selectmen, finance committee and school committee members. Their goal is to create better understanding of the district's financial needs, and to the extent possible, agree on budgetary matters, prior to town meetings where budgets are discussed and voted on. The purpose of the preparatory meetings is to foster an understanding of the total financial/educational picture among the towns, thus minimizing their adversarial potential. The budgetary problems that the district is experiencing at this writing occurred not because the process was faulty, but because the numbers used to evaluate its needs and resources were

wrong.

The problem with the process at this time is that it remains informal. There is no regulatory requirement to continue it. It would seem in the best interests of the district to re-visit its charter in order to mandate some procedure by which all of the interested parties would be formally and as a matter of law involved in budgetary deliberations. This process would include some formal way to close the current communication gap between the school committee and the high school faculty.

What remains true is that the district has never proposed a budget that was defeated at the town meetings. In every case, at least two of the three towns have voted to support the proposed budget. The problem has been that there has been a shortfall in the proposed budget due to the necessity of gaining town approval. The high school has suffered disproportionately because of this shortfall. The towns sometimes are more willing to underwrite the needs of their local schools, K-8, than to discharge the shared responsibility to NRHS. For example, there has been 17.6 staff members cut from the high school, resulting in program cuts in art, music, photography, printing, graphics, family and consumer science, health, business, and accounting. One powerful consequence of these particular cuts has been the elimination of the skill building level, the very level that has made Nashoba a comprehensive high school. As a result, there are students for whom Nashoba cannot currently provide adequate and appropriate courses.

An additional cut to the high school has been the loss of department chairs. This has fragmented departments and resulted in poorer communication within departments and within the school at large.

**Indicator 9: Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.**

The budgeting process for Nashoba Regional High School involves two separate steps. The first step is the formulation of the overall regional district budget where district resources are allocated to each of the individual schools, including the high school. The second step involves allocating the high school's portion of the district budget to the various departments and programs at the high school.

In formulating the district budget, the district superintendent typically asks district principals for input regarding anticipated staffing needs and the budget impact of proposed new programs. The superintendent then formulates the district budget. Thus, high school administrators do typically have some limited input into formulation of the district budget. The high school faculty does not typically have active involvement in the budgetary process of the entire regional district.

During the summer of 2002, irregularities and accounting mistakes were discovered in the district financial practices and records, and a deficit of over \$3 million was uncovered. The short-term impact was drastic cuts in the fiscal year 2003 budget and formation of a state-controlled Financial Advisory Board to oversee the district finances and financial decisions. Nashoba's principal believes that a disproportionate share of the cuts occurred at the high school, which has lost 17.6 FTE (11.1 FTE teachers) in the last five years. It remains to be seen what the long-term impact to the district finances this mismanagement will have.

The high school portion of the budget includes site-based funds. This portion of the budget is under control of the high school principal and used to fund the purchase of all high school classroom supplies and materials. The budget process to determine the fate of site-based funds within the high school is informal. Individual teachers send their budget requests to the principal. From there, the principal maintains complete control over the allocations to individual teachers and programs. There are no departmental or instructional leaders to coordinate budget requests between departments or within individual departments; control of how the money is allocated is completely held by the principal.

**Indicator 10: Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.**

There is a point person (as well as a process) in place, who addresses maintenance and replacement of equipment on a school-wide and individual basis. School-wide equipment includes shared machinery such as photocopiers and risographs. The Media Center Director and principal's secretary keep a database of service calls and consumable equipment (e.g. toners). He is notified of malfunctioning equipment and then contacts the appropriate subcontractor (either Off-tech or Icon Business Machines of Worcester). Trained personnel come to the high school to repair photocopiers in a timely manner.

The maintenance of equipment assigned to individual classroom teachers, such as VCR's and overhead projectors, is under the auspices of the Media Director. The procedure for maintenance and repair is that teachers catalogue equipment and request repairs at the end of each school year. During the summer months, AV Labs in Chelmsford repairs Nashoba's equipment; however, in years past, this line item has been level-funded. This year, there is no money in the budget for problems, which arise during the year, and this has caused complications. All of this responsibility has fallen on the shoulders of the Media Director as a result of the elimination of the AV aide's position.

The Media Director is also the liaison with Compaq, who is responsible for laptop repairs. (Each teacher at Nashoba Regional High School has his/her own district-issued laptop.) Currently the laptops are under a three-year warranty with two years remaining. Currently there is no plan for the repair of desktop computers whose warranty has expired.

Usual custodial maintenance and repair issues (i.e. clocks, blinds, shelves, etc.) are currently addressed through the high school office. Such requests are then forwarded to the custodial and maintenance staffs to prioritize these needs.

**Indicator 11: School board decisions, policies, and procedures and district plans shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.**

The school committee's administration has led to several financial crises. The most recent crisis, which came about in the fall of 2002, resulted in teachers being notified one or two days before school began that they had no job, or their assignments were dramatically changed. The district's governing body does not always make decisions and pass policies and procedures that support the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The serious cuts in

high school budgets and programs have negatively impacted the ability of Nashoba's teachers to serve students. In addition, the changes in academic, attendance and discipline policies do not fully support student learning.

However, since the fall of 2002, the school committee has become more involved with the school's mission through contact with the administrative council, a group composed of the administrators throughout the district. The school committee has become increasingly more dependent on this council, particularly since the district has currently experienced yet another shift at the superintendent level. This group has kept the school committee informed of events within each school in the district reflecting their own mission statement intrinsic to their needs. In addition, there were two open forums—one for students and one for teachers-- with the school committee to discuss ongoing issues regarding the budget crisis.

A faculty handbook distributed to the staff each year cites some of the policies, but is not inclusive of all of the school policies. It contains comprehensive, functional and operational information as well as various request forms.

### **Community Resources For Learning Executive Summary**

The Nashoba community does support this district through many initiatives consistent with its mission. Parents' support groups are very active in their efforts to enhance the music, drama, athletic, and scholarship programs. Collaborative efforts are evident through business, community and higher education partnerships to support student learning. However, the district's governing body does not always make decisions and implement policies and procedures that support the school's mission and expectations for student learning. They have not always ensured an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, equipment, materials and supplies. The mismanagement of funds has created a recent budgetary shortfall of more than \$3 million, which has negatively impacted many areas. For example, there is not enough personnel to properly clean, maintain and operate this facility or to provide an adequate selection of electives for all students.

The high school has recently undergone a \$22 million building renovation. Many improvements are significant, including new computer technology, a new auditorium, a new administrative wing, and an improved ventilation system. However, the project was not fully completed and a lengthy punch list remains. Many programs, particularly in the science and computer labs, as well as in technology engineering and music technology, have been negatively impacted by the incomplete renovation.

Ongoing planning to address future program, staffing, facility and technology needs, as well as capital improvements, is inadequate. Building administrators have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation, but teachers' input into this planning is limited. The need for middle management in the form of department chairs is evident in order to improve efficiency with strategic planning and the budgetary process. Administrators work to have effective communication through faculty and student handbooks, newsletters, e-mail, open houses and meetings.

The physical plant and facilities do meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations. The fact that the system has a building and facilities manager is positive, but his inability to do long-term planning and maintenance undermines the impact of the position.

The members of the Community Resource committee and the faculty support a unanimous **limited** adherence to the standard on Community Resources for Learning.

_____	Joseph Cieri, Chemistry Teacher
_____	Joan Fallon, Chairman, Math Teacher
_____	Al Fordiani, Physics Teacher
_____	Carl Haarmann, English Teacher
_____	Susan Mianulli, Chorus Teacher
_____	Lee Ricker, Physical Education Teacher
_____	Dawn Rysdon, Spanish Teacher
_____	Loretta Williams, English Teacher

### **Community Resources for Learning Strengths and Needs**

#### **Strengths:**

- Community and parental support for athletics, music, technology, drama, the scholarship foundation and the endowment fund
- Technological support through teacher laptops and networking capabilities for research, lesson planning, classroom instruction, communication and record-keeping
- Productive partnerships with business, the community, and higher education to enhance student learning
- Input into the district budget process by high school administrators
- Site-based funds allocated by district to be spent at the high school based on decisions by high school staff
- Recent renovations including a new auditorium, adequate teacher parking, additional classroom storage, administrative offices and improved ventilation in some areas
- Software to maintain updated records tracking yearly student enrollments with breakdowns by course and department as well as staffing allocations

#### **Needs:**

- Develop a formal process to assure the fostering of community, business and higher education partnerships
- Finish the renovation project including fulfilling the technology (FF&E) commitment, fixing malfunctioning fire doors, heeding to safety standards in science labs, fixing holes

in walls, ceilings and floors, improving problem ventilation areas in labs as well as other concerns on the punch list

- Formalize a five-year plan for addressing the needs, costs and strategic purchase of computers and other technology items
- Create a procedure to formally involve all of the interested parties (fincom, town officials, school committee, administration, faculty, and support staff) in the budget process for the district
- Designate department heads to coordinate and prioritize budget requests and to improve communication within and between departments and administration
- Undertake the development of a long range and ongoing plan to address future program, staffing, facility needs and capital improvement
- Hire sufficient custodial staff to adequately clean, maintain and repair the facility
- Fund equipment, supplies and personnel to support the high school's mission