In response to the commission’s request, the following Pre-Self-Study Report details the process that has been used to review and revise the school’s mission and expectations for learning to reflect the school’s core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations, as well as the specific indicators in each Standard on which we need to take action in preparation for the 2015 decennial evaluation.

**Describe the process that has been used to review and revise the school’s mission and expectations for learning to reflect the school’s core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations to ensure that they meet the 2011 Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations.**

 **Classification: *Complete***

**Standard 1: Core Values**

1. The Spring 2013 Values and Beliefs Re-Assessment
	1. Survey 1

In the fall of 2012, HDHS began the process of reassessing this community’s core values and beliefs about learning. We realized at that point that most of our efforts at rebuilding this school had not reached out to the greater community. At that point, we designed a survey to assess what people’s core values and beliefs about learning were.

In preparation for the fall survey, we consulted a number of sources. We read and considered documents that other schools had presented as part of the reaccreditation process. We borrowed heavily from Alan Blankstein’s Failure is Not an Option, Fisher’s How to Build a Culture of Achievement and Dufours’s Learning by Doing. We published an on-line survey on January 6th of 2013.

Several limitations immediately became apparent. Participants complained that the survey was not user friendly, because they did not like rating scales that slid as they ranked the items. Some were willing to do a paper survey, but did not want to deal with technology. We also realized that this first survey did not allow ample space for people to express their views. We ended up with 181 participants, but only one of those was a student.

* 1. Survey 2

We decided that the survey needed to be redone. A new survey was drafted at the end of February. Members of the Core Values Committee presented the results from the original survey to the parent forum on March 6th, 2012. The parents and community members present reviewed the new survey draft and helped revise and trouble shoot.

The new survey was posted on the district website on March 18th, 2013. On March 20th, print copies and collection envelopes were placed at approximately 30 locations in the four sending towns. The survey was forwarded to more than half a dozen town committees and organizations. On Thursday, March 21st, the survey link and an introductory letter were placed on the Class of 2016 Parents, Class of 2015 Parents, and HDHS guidance Facebook pages. Jim O’Rourke sent out a Connect Ed phone call and email on Friday, March 22nd. He also prominently featured the survey and its purpose in his bi-weekly letter in The Villager and The Messenger, our two local newspapers. On March 23rd, the students began taking the survey in their English classes. Members of the committee took physical copies of the survey to community events, like the Taste of Hillsboro on March 23rd and the School Board Meeting on Monday, April 8th.

Final survey collection and data analysis took place at the end of April. In all, 511 people took the Spring 2013 Core Values Survey. This included 273 students, 68 faculty and staff, 116 parents, and 106 community members. It should be noted that respondents were able to check more than one group if applicable.

* 1. Guiding Values

Survey 1 asked respondents to rate a list of five suggested values. So many values were written in, and with such frequency, that the second version of the survey offered thirteen options.

The community ranked responsibility (81% ranked it a 9 or 10 out of 10) and honesty (77%) as its highest priorities. Self-respect ranked third at 76%. Ironically, self-respect had not appeared on the original survey. It was suggested by a parent, community member , and para-educator at the parent forum. Honesty (77%), integrity (71%), respect (71%), kindness (65%), self-discipline (65%), perseverance (62%), and accountability (58%) finished out the top ten. Gratitude (44%) and citizenship (43%) ranked further behind, with less than 50% prioritizing them as a nine or a ten.

Diversity (38%) ranked lowest of any category other than “sacrifice” (33%), which seems to have been hurt by the word’s ambiguity. Although diversity scored poorly by comparison, only 19% of respondents ranked it as a five or below. Eighty-one percent ranked it a 6 or above. Further examination of the data reveals that nearly all of the five or lower responses came from the students; hardly any came from parents, teachers, or other community members.

* 1. Beliefs About Learning

Concerning beliefs about learning, the respondents placed their highest priority on making sure that HDHS graduates will be college or career ready, (4.44; 5=strongly agree, 4=agree) and that they are actively engaged in learning (4.44). They also expressed the belief that “all individuals possess a uniqueness which should be valued,” (4.40) “honest, transparent communication is essential to school decision making,” (4.37) and “all students have the ability to achieve.” (4.32) These seem to fit well with our core values of collaboration and communication, constant improvement and progress, and valuing and trying to reach every child. It adds the element of making sure that students are prepared to be successes in the outside world, a concept that deeply influenced our revision of the mission statement.

* 1. Determining our Core Values and Beliefs about learning.

In April, our committee faced its most serious question. How do we translate survey results into a sensible, accurate, well-articulated scaffold of core values and beliefs about learning? Do we simply take the top three to five ranking values and use those?

This forced our committee to deeply consider what values really were driving our building. In 2011, we had hit rock bottom. Our test scores have previously ranked us as one of the five worst high schools in New Hampshire. It was clear that our administration and faculty had forged a response to that crisis that was already proving to be highly effective. It was determined that our day-to-day values had already been forged by that crisis and by our new leadership. Those values were:

* Communication, collaboration, and shared leadership. This included administration, faculty, students, parents, and community.
* Progress. We had adopted a commitment to reflecting upon and improving everything we do. We had adopted a policy of unrelenting progress.
* Personalization. We had resolved to never give up on any student. We had become committed to supplying whatever supports students needed, to reach out to them, to tap into their talents and creativity, and to engage them in learning.
* Purpose. We already were attempting to educate students in gratitude, kindness, health, community service; the things that allow people to live healthy, purposeful lives.

Our survey results soundly confirmed that these were the same things what our community wanted to emphasize, the things they valued.

Throughout May and June of 2013, the faculty collaborated to further redefine our core values and beliefs about learning. The Core Values Committee created an original draft. Communication, Personalization, Progress, and Purpose were introduced as our values. The data and feedback from the survey was used to articulate our beliefs about learning in three to four descriptors under each value. This scaffold was then taken to the faculty. The Core Values team reported on the process and explained the draft. The faculty then broke into small groups and kept notes on their discussions. The guiding questions were “Are these our values?” and “Are we missing anything important?” Because the faculty had viewed the actual results of the survey, they were able to point out several places where the language from the survey needed to be more accurately or completely reflected. One week later the Core Values committee met and made changes based on the faculty’s recommendations. One week later, on June 5th, the new draft was submitted to the faculty for consideration. That evening, the parents in attendance at the monthly parent forum were invited to undergo the same process and give feedback. The next day, members of Student Voice were given a short presentation, were given copies of the draft, and were invited to share thoughts and feedback verbally or in the form or written notes.

**Twenty-first Century Academic Expectations**

During the 2012- 2013 school year the school began the process of creating school-wide rubrics that accurately reflect the current academic standards. Our school-wide writing rubric has been the subject of much work, discussion and compromise.

The survey will guide our efforts as we address the task of creating a full battery of school-wide rubrics. The community’s top priorities were “solving problems” (75% ranked this as a nine or a ten out of ten). This was followed by “reading and comprehending varied materials” (74%), “reasoning effectively” (71%), “making sound, ethical decisions” (70%) and “working independently” (69%). The effort expended on our writing rubric was vindicated by the fifth place ranking that “writing effectively” (69%) received.

The community has spoken. Their strong belief in the necessity of developing the skills of reasoning, problem solving, and ethical decision making have had two effects. Firstly, they support our values of collaboration and communication. This is how things get done in small town government. Secondly, they really were the impetus for us to add the fourth value, purpose. All seem to agree that our students need to be out there, in their communities, solving problems and making the right decisions. Sixty-four percent of respondents ranked “working collaboratively” as a nine or a ten.

“Understanding the role of the economy in society” (63%), “thinking creatively” (61%), and “applying technology effectively” (58%) round out the top ten. Respondents deemed “speaking and presenting effectively” (56%) and “creating new products” (31%) as less essential as the other academic skills.

* 1. Civic and Social Expectations

When it came to civic and social expectations, respondents gave their highest rankings to “understanding economic issues and making wise economic choices” (66%), “understanding how to stay physically and mentally healthy” (66%), “demonstrating the ability to work collaboratively to achieve goals” (64%) and “understanding a person's role and responsibility as a citizen and member of a community” (61%). Here we find yet more justification for our focus on communication and collaborative problem-solving. Staying physically, mentally, and economically healthy are necessary elements of making personal progress and living a purposeful life. We cannot help others when we cannot help ourselves. Interestingly, “understanding how to stay physically and mentally healthy” jumped upward in the rankings after the students began taking the survey in substantial numbers. Clearly, this is a concern of our young people.

“Understanding the local and global implications of civic decisions” (57%), “understanding environmental issues” (50%), “applying entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options” (49%), “performing community service and understanding its importance” (48%) rounded out the top eight.

This data will no doubt play an important role the development of new, more rigorous graduation requirements. We are currently developing a digital portfolio requirement for graduation. We are hoping to align this portfolio with our core values. Students will be asked to provide evidence that they have worked effectively with others, set goals and made personal progress, further explored their personal educations interests, and found “purpose” by impacting their community. This process will be deeply rooted in increasing their understanding of their world, including environmental issues, increasing their own productivity, and serving their communities.

“Understanding diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles” (48%) and “building and maintaining knowledge of international issues” (41%) received the lowest rankings. It should be noted, however, that only 63 of 511 respondents ranked “understanding diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles” as a five or below. Cleary, we cannot teach young people to work collaboratively with others if they cannot understand and how respect to diverse groups of people. Respect entails a willingness to learn about other culture and what is going on in other parts of the world. We will continue to emphasis these concepts, especially within our English and Social Studies courses.

* 1. An On-Going Process

It has been our plan, throughout this process, to develop a method for consistently re-assessing our values. Both surveys have been a learning experience. We plan to further fine-tune this process and survey the full academic community every two years. We will be using similar methods to administer the Endicott survey in the fall of 2013. If our visitation comes in the spring of 2015, we will administer the survey in the fall of that year.

**Submit the revised document**

**Classification: *In Progress***

**See attached draft document**

**Identify the specific indicators in each of the Standards on which the school needs to take action in preparation for the 2015 decennial evaluation.**

**Classification: *Complete***

**Standard 2: Curriculum**

**Indicator 1:** The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the 21st century learning expectations.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *The Core Values committee is currently evaluating a set of 21st Century Learning Expectations; once these have been chosen, the curriculum committee will be able to examine evidence that coordinates with the newly established expectations.*

**Indicator 2:** The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:

* Units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
* The school’s 21st century learning expectations
* Instructional strategies
* Assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION****: At this time, 21st Century Learning Expectations and common written curriculum planning formats are not fully implemented school-wide, but documents to this effect do exist.*

**Indicator 3:** The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:

* Inquiry and problem-solving
* Higher order thinking
* Cross-disciplinary learning
* Authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
* Informed and ethical use of technology

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *At this time, the faculty and staff has begun discussions and planning for cross-disciplinary learning; the actual implementation up to this time has been sporadic, but going forward it will be a primary focus for the 2013-2014 school year.*

**Indicator 4:** There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *The Committee identified this indicator as a concern due to the inability to initially track specifically related evidence. As a response, administration, committee members and faculty have researched new methods of assessment, is prepared to fully implement target-based learning, have created new unit documents to support this thinking, revised our major assessments (midterms, finals, etc.) to reflect this work, and now use specific classroom objectives daily to support this practice.*

**Indicator 5:** Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *The Committee identified this indicator as a concern due to the seeming lack of communication both within the school and with sending schools in the district. As a response, administration organized two major work days for vertical team planning and collegial discussion, which is ongoing. Within the high school, the committee facilitated a student-led activity in which faculty met with multiple peers in order to identify possible cross-curricular opportunities and interests. The data collected from this activity has been analyzed and will be utilized in the coming school year.*

**Standard 3: Instruction**

**Indicator 1:** Teachers’ instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school’s core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Now that our Core Values have been defined, we will examine this indicator for any areas in need of action.*

**Indicator 2**: Teachers’ instructional practices support the achievement of the school’s 21st century learning expectations by:

* Personalizing instruction
* Engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
* Engaging students as active and self-directed learners
* Emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
* Applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
* Engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
* Integrating technology

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *We will focus on providing students with more cross-disciplinary opportunities in order to guarantee engagement. Our continued school-wide work with the Depth of Knowledge and the Common Core State Standards will help us to develop greater emphasis on inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking as students apply their knowledge and skills to authentic tasks.*

**Indicator 3:** Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:

* Using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
* Strategically differentiating
* Purposefully organizing group learning activities
* Providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *We are unsure if faculty is truly using formative assessment to drive and change instruction. This is an area we will need to gather data to have a better understanding. We felt the portion of this indicator that we needed to improve efforts in was differentiation. This is based off our data from focus monitoring. We are aware of this need and are continuing work on improving our instruction. Next year we are implementing an advisory time for students to work with teachers for re-teaching and enrichment. The goal for this program is to offer additional time for strategic differentiation within the school day.*

**Indicator 4:** Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by: using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments examining student work using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents examining current research engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *We need to have a systemic approach to using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents.*

**Standard 4: Assessment**

**Indicator 1:** The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION****: Hillsboro-Deering High School teachers and administrators are in the process of formalizing the 21st century learning expectations. Once the 21st century learning expectations have been identified, both teachers and administrators will work together to develop school wide rubrics to address skills noted.*

**Indicator 2:** The school’s professional staff communicates:

* Individual student progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations to the students and their families
* The school’s progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations to the school community

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Hillsboro-Deering High School teachers and administrators are in the process of formalizing the 21st century learning expectations. Once the 21st century learning expectations have been identified both teachers and administrators will work together in this area.*

**Indicator 3:** Professional staff collects, disaggregates and analyses data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Some teachers do item analyses on tests to examine how well the learning objectives have been met, but we would need to gather specific examples of this, and we are currently unsure how widespread the practice is.*

**Indicator 4:** Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school’s applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be addressed.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *While the school has not formally decided on the 21st century learning expectations, we are familiar with learning targets and many teachers are beginning to use them in planning their units, and have been communicating them to students. The goal is to have students tracking their own progress with each learning target. Teachers will be required to have them as part of their syllabi and course expectations for next year.*

**Indicator 8:** Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Hillsboro-Deering High School teachers and administrators are working to provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Some teachers turn material back in a timely manner while other struggle to achieve this goal.*

*In a survey given during the Spring of 2013, students and faculty were asked about their retake policies and timeliness and usefulness of feedback on assignments. We have not been able to compile the results yet, however, and do not think we are deficient in this area, but there is probably room for improvement.*

**Indicator 11:** Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Departments have been working to align their grading practices with competency-based grading, 21st Century learning expectations, and common core state standards, but this is a work in progress.*

**Standard 5: School Culture and Leadership**

**Indicator 3:** There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Two areas in need of action include increased focus on PLPs as well as increased parental contact. Also, once the 21st Century Learning Expectations are in place, we can begin aligning them with actions in this area.*

**Indicator 6:** The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:***  *The consistency in which we are meeting this indicator needs to be addressed school-wide. Informal collaboration does occur; however, it is because teachers use their own time for collaboration and not because it is a formal process included in the schedule. There are pockets of common planning time utilized by some teaching staff, and there have been opportunities for faculty and departmental collaboration during our weekly learning community meetings. However, this is an area where we will focus for the upcoming year.*

**Indicator 8:** The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Currently, our weekly learning community meetings (faculty, department, team leader, PLC, etc.) provide opportunities for the principal and other building leaders to provide instructional leadership; however, the principal’s time needs to be more visibly focused on teaching and learning inside of the classroom. This indicator will also be deficient until the learning expectations have been adopted.*

**Indicator 9:** Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *There should be a more formal outreach of parent involvement in decision-making; parents need to be more actively encouraged to become involved. The school district has a prior history of poor community relations that must be overcome in order to make it a true partnership. We hope to provide varied times that the meetings are offered to accommodate a wider variety of schedules as well as implement additional strategies for increased parental decision-making.*

**Standard 6: School Resources for Learning**

**Indicator 4:** School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:

* deliver a written, developmental program

• meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling

• engage in individual and group meetings with all students

• deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers

• use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Counseling services should further develop and implement strategies for engaging and collecting feedback from the school community.*

**Indicator 5:** The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:

• provide preventative health services and direct intervention services

• use an appropriate referral process

• conduct ongoing student health assessments

• use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Health services should further develop and implement strategies for engaging and collecting feedback from the school community.*

**Indicator 6:** Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:

• are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum

• provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum

• ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school

• are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning

• conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *Library /media services should continue to broaden their collaboration and support of the school’s curriculum as well as further develop and implement strategies for engaging and collecting feedback from the school community.*

**Standard 7: Community Resources for Learning**

**Indicator 1:** The community and governing board provide funding for a wide range of programs, services, staffing, professional development, curriculum development, materials, equipment and technology support.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *HDHS needs to continue to fund technology and include funding sources to ensure replacement/repair of equipment that has been grant funded.*

**Indicator 3:** The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *The administrative team, under the guidance of the superintendent, is looking to develop a strategic plan, and as a high school, we will need to develop a long-range plan that coincides with it.*

**Indicator 4:** Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *We have implemented structures in the areas of communication with the larger community and will continue to improve upon this area.*

**Indicator 7:** Professional staff actively engages parents and families as partners in each student’s education.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:*** *HDHS needs to increase technology training and access to Web2School for parents and families, as well as make the website more user-friendly to improve communication with parents and families.*

[**Indicator 8:**](https://cpss.neasc.org/downloads/2011_Explanation_of_Standards/cr_indicator_8.doc)The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

***AREA IN NEED OF ACTION:***  *HDHS needs to increase partnerships/collaboration with the community.*

Respectfully submitted,

Jim O’Rourke, Principal

R. Alexander Luhtjarv, NEAS&C Co-chairperson

Sara Paquette, NEAS&C Co-chairperson

Cc: Robert Hassett, Superintendent of Schools