



Webster Academy

Self-Study Report

Program Narrative

Visiting Committee Report

Note: *The sample Self-Study Report (Standard 4 and Part II only) and Program Narrative are provided as illustrations of one school's approach and are not intended as a model that other schools must follow. The sample Visiting Committee Report (Standard 4 only) is provided as an illustration of one Visiting Committee's approach. This is not intended as a model that other Visiting Committees must follow.*

July 2017

Webster Academy Self-Study Sample

Self-Study Report

SCHOOL DATA SHEET

Note: Your completed School Data Sheet may be copied and included with the Visiting Committee Report.

School name: Webster Academy
Address: 1234 Main Street
 Springtown, MA 01234
Telephone: 617-123-4567
Date of Founding: 1924

Total Enrollment (at the time of evaluation visit): 327

	P	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	PG	Totals
Male									22	22	33	30	29	28		164
Female									23	23	25	30	30	32		163
Day									45	45	58	60	59	60		327
Boarding																
Homestay									3	3	11					

International students included in the above table who are not U.S. residents:

Day																
Boarding																
Homestay									3	3	11					17

Number of Faculty: 44 full-time; 5 part-time

Number of Administrators: 10 full-time; 2 part-time

Brief statement of school’s history, mission, and culture – what makes this school unique?

Webster Academy was founded in 1924 as a high school to prepare boys for the most competitive New England colleges. In 1948 the school admitted girls and added 7th and 8th grades. The school was renowned among NAIS schools for its rigorous and traditional college preparatory program. In 2009, the Board of Trustees affirmed their determination that Webster Academy maintain its leadership among independent schools and set as a strategic goal to re-envision the Academy as a NAIS “School of the Future” – a transformation they completed in 2014.

Webster Academy's Mission

The enduring mission of Webster Academy is to challenge young people with an intellectually rigorous course of study that will prepare them for admission to and success in the most competitive New England colleges; the Academy also seeks to equip each student with the essential capacities to lead purposeful and constructive lives in the globalized workplace of the 21st century.

Person(s) completing this form: _____ Date: _____

Webster Academy Self-Study Sample

Standard 4 (Program): The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that is appropriate to support the school’s mission and core values, and is consistent with the needs of the range of students admitted. Program planning is informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

Assessment of Standard	
Met <i>(The students’ experience is supported.)</i>	Unmet <i>(The students’ experience is compromised.)</i>
SM1. Standard Met: evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.	SU1. Standard Unmet: evidences inadequate understanding, implementation and planning for remediation that may foreseeably compromise student experience.
SM2. Standard Met: evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.	SU2. Standard Unmet: lacks understanding, implementation and planning for remediation, thereby compromising student experience.

School’s Self-Assessment - SM2

Brief narrative description of the school’s position with regard to this Standard
(This summary may be copied and used in the Visiting Committee Report.)

Webster Academy offers a full program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities for all students. We are a college preparatory school with a student body of above average ability. In 2009, the Board of Trustees challenged the faculty to re-envision the school’s program around four foci:

1. NAIS' Essential Capacities for Students in the 21st Century;
2. The core concepts and content for each academic discipline
3. The structure of the schedule and allocation of time to support priorities
4. A comprehensive program of assessment to measure the success of the new program, including data on student outcomes

Over five years, we have made great progress in response to these mandates. The school sponsored a series of ten professional development days devoted to current thinking and research about new economic, political, and social realities; changes in the behavior of young people as a result of technological innovations; methods to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction; essential content for a college preparatory curriculum; pedagogy that recognizes individual student learning styles; and ways to refine the development essential capacities in all aspects of the program.

The school funded a week-long summer retreat at which each department and major program area responded to the charge from the Board and decided on the core of traditional learning that it feels is essential to the educated person in the 21st century and, insofar as feasible, redesigned classes for grades 9 and 10 to cover this material. This step opened up grades 11 and 12 for more elective offerings, interdisciplinary courses, online opportunities, and student designed independent study.

A new schedule was implemented this year that allots time according to the needs of each class or activity so that significantly longer periods are available for some classes that are exploring greater emphasis on

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collaborative learning and/or student leadership and/or have adopted a “lab” format (in any of the academic disciplines).

All classes are grouped heterogeneously except for high school math and writing sections that meet two times a week in 8th and 9th grade. Study skills classes are provided for students in grades 7 and 8 who need help structuring their work and their time. Following the lead of NAIS, the new Innovation Lab offers support and inspiration for high school students with instruction in the application of technology and with small group exercises in purposeful cooperation and collaboration.

Webster Academy requires all students to participate on sports teams (intramural or interscholastic) at least two seasons a year. The school’s policy is that all students on a team will have significant playing time. Physical education classes for students in grades 7 through 9 focus on health, safety, nutrition, and life-long recreational activities.

Webster Academy also offers a full range of activities during and after school and on vacations. These include a major service program in which all students participate, in-school for grades 7-9 and in the community for grades 10-12; an international travel opportunity in grade 11 that is coordinated with language study and for which funds are raised so that all students can participate; student government; and a host of clubs, student publications, and other activities. The activities program, which was initially organized to encourage student initiative and leadership, will increasingly focus attention on developing all the essential capacities.

Webster Academy is well along, but not finished with a total revamping of its program. We do believe that what we now have in place provides a coherent program for our students and establishes a solid foundation for further work that we anticipate will be guided by our assessment of results. We welcome the opportunity to share what we have done with the Visiting Committee and look forward to the observations and recommendations of that body.

Self-Study Committee membership, meeting schedule, and procedures

The six members of the Self-Study Committee for Standard 4 included the Dean of Studies, department chairs for English and Science, the middle school art teacher, a Spanish teacher, and the librarian who served as Chair. We met weekly for an hour and a half after school for six weeks, presented our draft report to the full faculty for comment, and then met twice more to make edits and finalize our report. At our first meeting we reviewed a summary of survey information related to program and we read through the reports from the departments, curricular areas, and major programs. Our second meeting was devoted to discussing and completing the indicator check list (see attached). Members of the committee volunteered to draft comments on the indicators and identify additional indicators for discussion at our third meeting. At our fourth meeting, we discussed Webster Academy’s strengths and weaknesses and aspects warranting attention. Members were assigned to draft these sections. Our fifth meeting was an opportunity to review a preliminary draft of our report, rate the school with regard to the Standard, and identify recommendations for Part II of the Self-Study Report. Our Chair volunteered to write the overview section for our report for the sixth week, at which time we also planned our presentation to the full faculty. We drew up a list of questions we wanted to ask the faculty to confirm our conclusions and we assigned members to present and lead a discussion of each of our recommendations.

The feedback we received at the faculty meeting was very helpful and we used it as a guide in finalizing our report. We also polled the faculty on the rating for this Standard and, as a result, changed our rating to acknowledge that we still have significant recommendations to address and issues warranting further discussion. We added a recommendation to our report concerning the need to assess where we are and to set goals for the next stage of Webster’s development. We also modified our assessment of the

Webster Academy Self-Study Sample

universality and extent to which faculty integrate the essential capacities into their teaching and added a recommendation concerning professional development.

List of background materials reviewed and people interviewed

Parent survey

Faculty survey

Student survey

Alumni/ae survey

Department and major program reports

Publications (all available on the NAIS website)

A Guide to Becoming a School of the Future

NAIS Commission on Accreditation

NAIS Essential Capacities

NAIS Innovation Lab

Other: We specifically interviewed the Director of IT regarding plans in this area; members of the committee met with the Math and History department chairs to clarify points in their department reports, especially with regard to teaching methods and addressing the essential capacities; we interviewed the Dean of the Faculty about the professional development programs that are planned for the upcoming year.

Comments regarding suggested indicators

(Indicator Checklists with comments should be included in the supplementary materials)

Webster Academy meets all of the suggested indicators, although there is certainly room for improvement with regard to some.

Over the past two years, significant professional development time for the entire faculty has been devoted to current research and thinking about teaching and learning and the capacities students will need. The middle school faculty has hosted an ongoing comprehensive series of presentations and workshops on issues of early adolescence. The middle school faculty meetings are often devoted to discussions of approaches different teachers have found successful with a given class.

Full faculty and high school faculty meetings generally have a more administrative focus. During the year, departments meet monthly by division (three times a year as grades 7-12) and focus discussion on the ongoing curriculum changes.

The program at Webster Academy reflects the developmental stage of students. The middle school is designed as a supportive environment with a cluster of classrooms, a separate faculty, and an active advising system that deals with a full range of academic support, social adjustment, and health activities. The high school gives students increasing responsibility and independence to prepare them for the situation they will find when they matriculate in college. At all levels the service learning program confronts students with their obligation to care for others who are less fortunate.

Departments are responsible for approving any new course in their area. This procedure assures attention to continuity in the curriculum; however, the reshaping of the curriculum with required courses in grades nine and ten and more electives and independent study options in grades eleven and twelve has led to much innovation, many new classes, and broad opportunities for student choice. At the end of each year, high school departments work with the Dean of Studies to assess what has worked well and to make adjustments for the following year. There have been many changes in the high school program since 2009; we anticipate greater stability in the program after 2016. The middle school teachers tend to do more team teaching and offer more interdisciplinary courses. Because they work so closely together, they

Webster Academy Self-Study Sample

are able to focus on continuity of program and transitions for students. There is a nice stability to program given how well they work collaboratively.

Webster deliberately differentiates between the middle and high school in program design and planning. We are aware of the importance of assuring a smooth transition for students. At the curriculum review last year, middle school teachers presented expected outcomes for students by the end of 8th grade and 9th grade teachers presented their expectations. There was a very productive discussion that resulted in adjustments at both levels. For example, middle school language classes will devote more time to grammar and writing, completing the first year text in full over the two years of 7th and 8th grade; the math department will offer optional after-school review classes for students beginning algebra.

At the end of the school year, meetings are scheduled for 8th and 9th grade teachers to talk about students who will enter the high school in the fall. Student academic files are available to all teachers at any time.

Webster Academy is committed to developing global awareness and educating future citizens of the world. The flexibility within the class schedule in grades eleven and twelve has afforded many opportunities for faculty to offer courses focused on different cultures around the world, has allowed students access to a wealth of online offerings, and has provided for student directed independent studies. In addition, our International Club is very active sponsoring events throughout the year that highlight customs and traditions around the world. The two international buffet lunches are very popular. The 11th grade trip abroad is also an important way for our students to see and appreciate how others live.

Historically, Webster Academy has provided support services for middle school students and has challenged high school students to become more independent and self-directing. We have found that with the new range of choice for students, additional guidance is needed to support high school students in planning their programs, and we have added an additional counselor to our staff. We have also established the Center for Essential Capacities to provide support for students when needed.

The decision to allow students to take online courses was controversial among the faculty, many feeling that we could offer a sufficiently rich program in-house – with the possible exception of a rare need of a single student for very advanced work in an area. We have limited students to taking courses offered by New England universities that we know, but we recognize that we need to find time to assess the place of online courses in the Webster curriculum and determine a system to evaluate the appropriateness of offerings available from many sources.

Comments regarding alternative indicators proposed by the school

We did not propose any alternative indicators.

Notable strengths of the school in this area

Traditionally, the “proof of the pudding” for Webster Academy has been the outstanding college placement record, the state championship teams in soccer, basketball, and tennis, the testimony of satisfied parents, and the public recognition of Webster as the pre-eminent school in the area. We are maintaining those markers and adding to them our leadership on the national scene in developing ourselves as a model independent “school of the future.”

The impressive breadth of curriculum and the quality of teaching are the strongest attributes of Webster Academy. On the surveys of parents, students, and faculty, no item scored higher than the one that begins, “I find the school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that...” The success of our graduates in gaining admission to the most competitive colleges confirms the

Webster Academy Self-Study Sample

rigor of our program. It is important (and satisfying) to note that the already high scores on the surveys have improved still more since the initiatives to bring our program to the forefront of current educational thinking.

Notable weaknesses/needs

The greatest challenge we face with regard to program is finding time in the day and in the students' schedules for new initiatives. The advisor program also suffers without enough meaningful time to meet.

The concentration of departmental requirements in grades nine and ten has resulted in a very challenging (even stressful) program for the youngest high school students.

As a result of the Self-Study, we discovered that Webster Academy has work to do in integrating technology into the curriculum. It is clear from the surveys and from talking with faculty that many teachers are still uncomfortable with the idea of bringing technology into their classrooms. This is an especially high priority because many of the essential capacities we seek to inculcate in our students have a technological aspect.

Aspects warranting attention

During the course of the Self-Study, a number of differences between middle school and high school emerged. This is perhaps explained by the division of faculty, the age of students, and the separation of classroom areas. While this does not seem a particular issue for Standard 4, we feel it is important to structure more communication and dialogue across the divisions, especially as the school engages in significant re-envisioning of its mission and program at all levels.

Evaluation of the many initiatives and innovations is essential if we are to develop a strong and coherent program. We need to design instruments and techniques to assess programs and to gather data about the students' experience.

Recommendations for school improvement and issues for further discussion

- (1) We recommend that a faculty task force be formed to work with the Dean of Studies to evaluate the impact of the ongoing changes in program in a systematic manner and make recommendations.
- (2) We recommend that a second faculty task force be formed to establish guidelines for further integrating the essential capacities into the curriculum. This should include goals for every department, plans for professional development offerings, and a timetable against which to measure progress.
- (3) We recommend that a plan for expanding regular dialogue between middle and high school faculty be adopted and implemented with the goal of assuring a coherent "whole" school at Webster Academy.
- (4) We recommend that the Board of Trustees hold a school-wide retreat to gather information necessary to lock in a new strategic plan that will identify resources needed to enhance, maintain, and assure the success of the exciting new Webster Academy that is emerging as a result of their 2009 decision.

Webster Academy Self-Study Sample

Self-Study Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion

Webster Academy is re-envisioning itself as a national model of a “school of the future.” The pace of change since 2009 has been breathtaking and the achievements equally so. We need now to consolidate our accomplishments and develop a comprehensive plan to move ahead in all areas. We have focused this Part II on this priority. These recommendations are not arranged by priority.

Reflections	Recommendations
<p>MISSION: College placement is still the highest priority of our families; however, it does not capture the vital essence of Webster today. We are looking beyond college, helping students develop essential capacities that will serve them throughout their lives.</p>	<p>Convene a task force representative of all constituencies to draft a new statement of mission that will integrate our goals and guide the Webster Academy of today.</p>
<p>GOVERNANCE: The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the mission of Webster Academy and using it as a guide for strategic planning.</p>	<p>The Board of Trustees hold a school-wide retreat to gather information necessary to lock in a new Strategic Plan that will identify resources needed to enhance, maintain, and assure the success of the exciting new Webster Academy that is emerging as a result of their 2009 decision.</p>
<p>ENROLLMENT: We have a well-tuned admissions process designed to support a narrow student profile, focused on traditional measures of academic success. We must broaden our student population to include those who bring other qualities: creativity, social awareness, entrepreneurial spirit, etc.</p>	<p>Charge the admission department to examine possible ways to broaden the current student profile and make a recommendation to the faculty and administration.</p>
<p>PROGRAM: The new program is the essence of the transformation of Webster. We must give the highest priority to assessing what we have accomplished and planning next steps.</p>	<p>(1) Form a faculty task force to establish guidelines for integrating the essential capacities into the curriculum.</p> <p>(2) Implement a plan for regular dialogue between middle and high school faculty with the goal of assuring a coherent “whole” school at Webster Academy.</p>
<p>EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT: Our new program sets goals for students beyond their years at Webster and a suitable system of evaluation must be designed and implemented to guide changes and to support decisions.</p>	<p>Form a faculty task force to work with the Dean of Studies to evaluate the impact of the changes in program in a systematic fashion and make recommendations. The evaluation system must include attention to student outcomes.</p>

Webster Academy Self-Study Sample

Reflections	Recommendations
<p>COMMUNICATION: We have the support of current parents who were involved in planning change at Webster, but we must move quickly to assure their continuing support and the support of new families in years ahead.</p>	<p>Several steps are essential:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. articulate the implications of the new mission,2. develop new admissions materials,3. redesign the website to reflect new approaches to learning as well as to inform prospective families,4. establish forums to engage families to assure their understanding and support of our innovative program.
<p>INFRASTRUCTURE: Big ideas require a major financial investment beyond the resources produced from tuition.</p>	<p>Charge the Development Office with drafting a case statement for review by the Board and designing a major capital campaign to reach out to all constituencies of Webster and beyond to those who are interested in supporting educational initiatives designed to move schools into the 21st century.</p>

Webster Academy Program Narrative Sample

Program Narrative: Humanities

Internal document to be distributed to the writers of Standards 4, 5, and 6.

Mission Statement: *The enduring mission of Webster Academy is to challenge young people with an intellectually rigorous course of study that will prepare them for admission to and success in the most competitive New England colleges; the Academy also seeks to equip each student with the essential capacities to lead purposeful and constructive lives in the globalized workplace of the 21st century.*

1. **Contribution to the mission** – The short answer is yes. The mission as written is multi-faceted, and at each level we see alignment. We are undeniably rigorous – to the point of being too much so. Our students are capable of completing remarkable amounts of work. The college admissions process and record would indicate that we are hitting the mark for most of our students. Amongst ourselves, we do see varying comfort levels with preparing the students “to lead purposeful and constructive lives in the globalized workplace of the 21st century”. Some question what in fact this means. Given that we cannot agree on the skills, it is very difficult to teach them effectively. Finally, some of us simply cannot fully embrace the ever growing commitment to more technology in the classroom.
2. **Consistency of activities** – As noted above, this presents some challenges. If someone were to ask what all Webster students can do academically by graduation, it would be difficult to characterize. These students are talented – but you could not pin down what a Webster diploma truly represents. The whole discussion around 21st century schools divides the faculty into two camps – “embracers” and “luddites”. To our credit, we do not personalize such designations. They are who we are as a faculty.
3. **Planned continuity** – This is a strength. There is strong and effective communication through the grade levels and between the upper and lower school. Some wish that we had more time to align the teaching and learning. This seems like an impossibility given our already jammed schedule.
4. **Coordination with Curriculum Plan** - Some may call our curriculum traditional college prep. Through the leadership of the Board, we have expanded beyond traditional to embrace our vision of 21st century skills. We agree with the direction and aspiration of our focus. The school is devoting reasonable resources to this vision. We are blessed by a “Who’s Who” in education as speakers and consultants. However, we also note that it would take years to effectively address any one of the proposed 4 foci and we are taking on all simultaneously:
 1. NAIS' Essential Capacities for Students in the 21st Century;
 2. The core concepts and content for each academic discipline
 3. The structure of the schedule and allocation of time to support priorities
 4. A comprehensive program of assessment to measure the success of the new program, including data on student outcomes.Simply put, there is a disconnect between the vision of the Board and what we can in fact accomplish.
5. **Appropriateness of curriculum** – Increasingly we question this – not through any concern that admissions has lowered its Standards. There are clearly more students being counseled out before high school upon completion of the middle school experience. In many cases, this makes complete sense. We track our students well, and provide them with the appropriate level of support and guidance to succeed in the middle school. However, such scaffolding falls away in the high school. We have made important adjustments to both 8th grade and 9th grade courses so

Webster Academy Program Narrative Sample

that more students can succeed with this transition. The second concern about the appropriateness of the curriculum relates to the evolving “brain” of our students. They aren’t reading anymore! And we expect a tremendous amount of reading.

6. **Appropriateness of offerings** - See 5 above.
7. **Pedagogical methods used** – Essentially – Yes. We are a talented bunch of teachers. There is a universal commitment in our department to take full advantage of professional development opportunities, and to improve as a teacher. We get along well. We share best practices and disasters. As impressive as this sounds, we are also aware of a blind spot. Some, without embarrassment, acknowledge that they have effectively steered for years around all PD related to technology. From above, there is clear acknowledgement that these are some of our finest teachers. There is little pressure to make them change. And therefore, as noted in 2, our students are delving into their learning with varying levels of commitment to applying technology to the process.
8. **Adequacy of resources** – We are blessed! Do we know how to use it all? That’s another question.
9. **Professional development** – Ditto. However, and we may regret saying this, we are essentially the drivers of our continuing education. We are not directed in any way by the Dean of Studies or Dean of Faculty.
10. **Strengths/weaknesses/areas needing improvement** –

Strengths

- Great school and a wonderful place to work
- Extremely well resourced
- Essentially unlimited PD support
- Near universal support of our parents

Weaknesses

- Stretched thin

Areas needing improvement

- Concern for the apparently increasing number of wonderful students who struggle with our expectations
- Getting to the same page – Vision and Reality

Webster Academy Visiting Committee Report Sample

Visiting Committee Report

Standard 4 (Program): The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that is appropriate to support the school’s mission and core values, and is consistent with the needs of the range of students admitted. Program planning is informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

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SM1. Standard Met: evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.	SU1. Standard Unmet: evidences inadequate understanding, implementation and planning for remediation that may foreseeably compromise the student experience.
SM2. Standard Met: evidences understanding, adequate implementation and partial planning for improvement.	SU2. Standard Unmet: lacks understanding, implementation, and a plan for remediation, ultimately compromising student experience.

School’s Self-Assessment - SM 2
Visiting Team’s Assessment – SM 2

Brief narrative summary of the school’s position with regard to this Standard
(This summary was copied/abridged/adapted from the school’s Self-Study.)

Webster Academy offers a full program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities for all students. We are a college preparatory school with a student body of above average ability. In 2009, the Board of Trustees challenged the faculty to re-envision the school’s program around four foci:

- 1. The NAIS Essential Capacities for Students in the 21st Century*
- 2. The core concepts and content for each academic discipline*
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Over two years, we have made great progress in response to these mandates. The school sponsored a series of six professional development days devoted to current thinking and research about new economic, political, and social realities; changes in the behavior of young people as a result of technological innovations; methods to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction; essential content for a college preparatory curriculum; pedagogy that recognizes individual student learning styles; and ways to incorporate the development of essential capacities into all aspects of the program.

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9 and 10 to cover this material. This step opened up grades 11 and 12 for more elective offerings, interdisciplinary courses, online opportunities, and student designed independent study.

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Webster Academy is well along, but not finished with a total revamping of its program. We do believe that what we now have in place provides a coherent program for our students and establishes a solid foundation for further work that we anticipate will be guided by our assessment of results. We welcome the opportunity to share what we have done with the Visiting Committee and look forward to the observations and recommendations of that body.

Observations/Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

From the outset, the Visiting Committee was struck by the comprehensiveness and impressiveness of the Webster Academy program. A closer look however afforded during the visit did yield some areas for more consideration and reflection. The Self-Study itself prompted this next level of inquiry.

The school’s first recommendation to itself was perhaps more prescient than they may have realized in asking for a systematic evaluation of the changes in program. Interviews with faculty and students conducted by the Visiting Committee identified an undercurrent of concern about how much was going on at Webster as it sought preeminence among independent schools. The community welcomed the upcoming evaluation of the changes in the program but many wondered though about what would be done with the conclusions and recommendations since the impetus behind the program initiative came from the Board. The Visiting Committee felt that faculty participation in this evaluation process is crucial. Hints of cynicism emerged because the impetus behind all of these changes came from outside the faculty, and was beyond their control or influence.

The Visiting Committee therefore concluded that the second recommendation in the Webster Academy Self-Study should be tabled until the first is comprehensively completed. Once the faculty task force has

Webster Academy Visiting Committee Report Sample

accomplished its evaluation and made recommendations to the school community, a new faculty task force can then take those recommendations and establish guidelines for integrating the Essential Capacities into the program.

The Visiting Team felt that their third recommendation concerning the relationship between the middle and high school fell in the category of being too humble. The school identified the differences between the middle and high school as warranting attention. However, the Visiting Committee found through interviews with faculty and students that Webster Academy has a good record of investigating the connection of the middle and upper school. Conversations with parents in particular confirm this. It would be important for the school to continue regular dialogue between the middle and high school faculty as the school continues to implement its new program initiatives as a coherent whole school.

Finally, the fourth recommendation, a Board school-wide retreat to gather information necessary to prepare a new Strategic Plan that will assure the success of the school's new program initiative and identify needed resources. Like the second, this should be tabled until the first is complete.

Ultimately, the school's stated interest in fully integrating the NAIS Essential Capacities into the curriculum presents the greatest challenge – particularly as you add another layer to the complexity of this undertaking. Finding time in the already compacted schedule and the stated hesitation of the faculty to bring more technology into their classrooms present challenges to Webster Academy. Simply put, the Visiting Team is very concerned that you cannot put anything more into the curriculum at Webster. As the old adage says – “Something has to give”.

All of this said, the Visiting Committee could not get away from one line in the Self-Study – “some teachers are still uncomfortable with the idea of bringing technology into their classrooms.” How was this possible with all of the professional development the school enjoyed? Answers to this question were not hard to get, and generally fell into one category – aging faculty. These remarkably talented and committed teachers were simply reluctant to commit too much energy to teaching “another way” given the success they had enjoyed to date, and the fact that many of them would be retiring in three years or less. Some called the initiatives a “mere fad”. “We have no choice but to attend the workshops and presentations – but that does not mean I have bought in.” The Visiting Team was obviously concerned by this observation – both in that it existed, and that the school, having hinted at it, had not elaborated on it in their Self-Study Report.

Commendations:

The Visiting Committee commends Webster Academy for:

1. The expansiveness of its curriculum;
2. The school's commitment to being a great “independent school of the future”;
3. The remarkable commitment of all parties to doing all that needs to get done every day at Webster Academy to meet the goals and objectives laid down in 2009;
4. The humility of the faculty to give themselves a SM2 on this Standard when they could have made the case for a SM1.

Recommendations:

The Visiting Committee shares the following recommendation made by Webster Academy:

1. *That a faculty task force be formed to work with the Dean of Studies to evaluate the changes in program in a systematic fashion and make recommendations.* The committee encourages broader inclusivity on the task force (varied levels of experience in the faculty, and students).

Webster Academy Visiting Committee Report Sample

The Visiting Committee also recommends that Webster Academy:

1. Table the second and fourth recommendations it made in this Standard until the conclusions of the task force mentioned above are considered by the school community;
2. Pay close attention to how to best take advantage of its immensely talented senior faculty;
3. Develop a strategy to unfold appropriate technology in to every classroom;
4. Review the effectiveness of the remarkably varied professional development opportunities the faculty enjoys.

