

School Resources for Learning *Support Standard 6*

6.1 Colchester High School's student support services are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Support services at Colchester High School play an important role in preparing students to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. These student support services include health services, special education, guidance, library information services and access to outside referrals. These services work to remove barriers to learning, increase academic proficiency, provide diverse and challenging educational experiences, give emotional support, develop social skills, offer leadership opportunities and work with community resources and families to support student learning. In these ways our support services have integrated the spirit of the mission into service delivery.

6.2 CHS excels at allocating resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for students learning. CHS offers a wide range of opportunities for all students, ranging from individualized outcomes based on the Vermont standards to dual enrollment in college classes. CHS provides Target Graduation, which is an outcomes-based, individualized diploma program. Target Graduation is designed as a credit recovery program to assist students who are behind on credits with earning their diploma. Seniors at CHS also have the option of creating an alternative plan. This plan must outline how the student will maintain a rigorous and meaningful educational experience outside of the CHS classroom environment while meeting the CHS graduation requirements. CHS students are also provided the opportunity to apply to the Colchester Alternative Program, CAP. This program provides lower staff-to-student ratio, shorter class sessions, and multiple experiential learning opportunities. Unique to CHS, this alternative program allows CHS

students who need a mix of “traditional” classes as well as alternatives to stay at their home school. In addition, CHS maintains a strong relationship with many educational organizations outside of the school’s walls, such as Vermont Adult Learning, Recycle North’s Career Start Program and Northland’s Job Corp Center. Each of these programs offers students a variety of learning environments. In addition, CHS has a 1.0 FTE licensed special educator committed to case management and coordination of services for all students who attend educational programs out of the district. These programs—such as Centerpoint, Jean Garvin, and Ontop—allow students an opportunity to meet our school’s expectations in therapeutic environments.

Over the past ten years CHS has continued to build and expand the Writers’ Workshop and Math Lab. The Writers’ Workshop is available to assist students with independent writing projects or with pieces from their literary portfolio. The Math Lab assists over 200 students per month with math assignments and projects. Both offices are open during school hours. Homework Club is also available seven hours a week to assist students of all levels with schoolwork after school hours. English Language Learners (ELL) are supported through in-class assistance as well as through an ELL course that focuses on improving English language proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. At CHS, the planning room continues to be an in-school space for students to process their inappropriate behavior with a licensed teacher. It also serves as a space for in-school suspension, where students develop and implement a plan to address their behavior.

Students with disabilities are provided a number of systemic and individualized resources, programs, and services to meet their needs. Between special education and 504 professional staff meet the needs of over 150 students. Crossroads is a program that is designed

to meet the needs of those identified as learning impaired. Using the LCCE curriculum, students practice functional skills in order to meet the school's learning expectations. The consulting program offers Direct Instruction classes. These students are offered elective credit for receiving services outlined in their IEP. Classes are run by the student's case manager, allowing face-to-face contact between the special educator and the student. In addition, 504 students receive elective credit for a class called Strategic Study, allowing students face-to-face access with their 504 case manager.

The totality and breadth of resources, programs, and services allocated to students support students in achieving Colchester High School's academic, social, and civic expectations.

6.3 Student support personnel enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. The CHS special education consulting program is designed to have special educators and regular educators working together to meet the needs of special education students. Moreover, paraprofessionals work with teachers in classrooms to support all students, not just special education students. *However, while paraprofessionals receive comprehensive training at the start of the school year, there is a need for improved supervision and ongoing training during the school year.* The special education secretary circulates weekly progress reports for teachers to complete in order for case managers to track their students' academic progress on a regular basis. The employment specialist maintains connections throughout the community to help students find internships and jobs. She also arranges opportunities for high school students to mentor elementary school students. Staff in both guidance and special education maintain relationships with YouthBuild,

Job Corps, Howard Center, Centerpoint, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, etc. to support students in the academic and social/emotional domains. The school SAP works closely with guidance, administration, and outside agencies such as Centerpoint and Spectrum to support students with AODA issues. The school nurse works with families and their physicians regarding necessary care plans with students with health needs requiring specific accommodations. Guidance counselors, work with teachers to support students regarding a range of academic, social, and emotional needs. On a bi-weekly basis, counselors hold mini-Educational Support Team meetings, which enable counselors and teachers to discuss the needs of specific students who have been referred to EST. Counselors also work with local colleges to assist students with the admissions process and dual enrollment opportunities. The library also partners with Colchester's public library to promote learning opportunities.

6.4 Most of Colchester High School's student support services are regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning. The Guidance Department meets bi-weekly with the Director of Student Support Services. In addition, the guidance team leader is contracted for additional days in the summer. Many of these days are devoted to working with the director to evaluate and revise guidance services. After each parent outreach night, guidance counselors collect exit cards as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the evening's presentation. In addition, after guidance-led extended TA activities, counselors also collect feedback from students as part of a continuous improvement model of outreach. Other than feedback from specific outreach activities, *there is currently no system in place for regular survey feedback from students, parents and teachers for an overall evaluation of the guidance services at CHS.*

The Health Office maintains a daily log of student visits and services provided. If a student has a chronic health condition or develops a health issue during the school year, the school nurse works with the student, his/her family and their physician to remove barriers to learning. In addition, vision screenings on all ninth- and twelfth-grade students, as well as all special education students, are done annually. An end of year report is completed in June, which reviews all health service activities, screening numbers, CPT's, etc. This is given to the building principal and superintendent. *There is currently no system in place for regular survey feedback from students, parents and teachers for an overall evaluation of health services at CHS.*

The library maintains a log of student, tutoring group, and class visits; it runs reports frequently to analyze collection and patron use. Each year the librarian does request input from teachers and staff when making additions to the collection. In addition, library staff conduct informal assessments of students and staff regarding material and services on an ongoing basis. *However, the library program has no formal evaluation process.*

The Director of Students Support Services is a member of CORE, a district team that meets weekly to evaluate district wide special education service delivery. In addition, special educators meet bi-weekly with the Director of Student Support Services to review nuts and bolts as well as “big picture” planning items. Furthermore, these meetings address legal updates and IEP compliance issues. Each week, the director meets with the Consulting Program and Crossroads, to review and evaluate curriculum and service delivery. *There is currently no system in place for regular survey feedback from students, parents and teachers for an overall evaluation of the special education services at CHS.*

The school's EST, is in the midst of revising itself. Over the last two years, EST has collected data from members and faculty to evaluate its effectiveness. This data has driven reform and goal setting within the team. This process is expected to be completed by the end of the 2009-2010 school year. EST will continue to survey itself and the faculty on its effectiveness.

6.5 CHS has an excellent system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and about identified student needs. *The Laker View*, available to all Colchester families, is the school newsletter distributed via mail, e-mail, and the CHS Web site. *The Laker View* routinely includes articles by support services personnel as well as a calendar of events highlighting support services outreach events.

In addition to hosting the *The Laker View*, the CHS Web site also provides students and families access to daily announcements, yearbook information, links to teacher Web sites, library information resources, and calendars, which include all CHS activities with times and locations.

Instructional aides receive comprehensive support services training at the beginning of each school year, which includes a thorough explanation of the school's commitment to differentiated instruction, an explanation of the various student support services and resources inside and outside of the school, training in the variety of disabilities within the student body at CHS, and de-escalation/behavior management training. As part of the Educational Support Team referral process, teachers are informed when students are discussed at EST and get follow-up information after EST. The EST visioning process, which is a work in progress, includes sharing available supports with teachers and families.

The goal of the Colchester Teacher Advisory program is to provide every student the opportunity to connect with at least one adult every day. In addition to the regular 7-minute TA periods, CHS also has extended TA periods that last 30, 45, or 60 minutes. On average there are two extended TA periods each month. The extended TA periods focus on a specific social emotional learning curriculum that is tailored for specific grade levels. In addition, all grade levels explore career and college opportunities, school safety activities, community services projects, and substance abuse prevention lessons. *However, the mission and goals are under review in an attempt to improve the relevance of TA within the CHS curriculum.*

Colchester High School places a high priority on transitioning students into the high school. As a result, eighth-grade families receive *The Laker View*, the school newsletter, starting in December of eighth grade. In addition, CHS hosts an Open House for eighth-grade families designed to expose these families to the high school curriculum and support services. Moreover, CHS guidance offers shadow opportunities to all incoming students. There is also a great deal of communication between CHS guidance and middle school personnel both within Colchester School District and with Grand Isle Supervisory Union, our primary tuition district. The Director of Student Support Services has created a transition manual for eighth-grade teachers, which explains all of the support services at the high school as well as all aspects of the transition process. The Director of Student Support Services and the Guidance Team Leader also meet with eighth-grade core curriculum teachers to review transition procedures. Guidance personnel from the high school and middle school meet to discuss specific needs of at-risk students. Prior to the start of each school year, all new students are required to participate in Smart Start, a day

designed to orient all new students to the high school. Included in the day's program is a review of the variety of support services available to students and a meeting with guidance counselors.

6.6 Student records, including health and immunization records, are maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law. IEPs and 504s are maintained electronically on SpEdDoc, which is password protected. Each student's file within SpEdDoc is accessible by the case manager, the special education secretary, and the Director of Student Support Services. Hard copies of special education and 504 files are maintained in locked file cabinets in the special education office. Student cumulative files are maintained in locked file cabinets in the guidance office. School personnel who need access to files must sign them out with the secretary. Health records are maintained in locked file cabinets in the nurse's office. Library records are password protected and follow confidentiality standards. Teachers maintain student records and IEP/504 plans in a confidential manner.

6.7 There are sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services. There are 3.0 FTE guidance counselors and one guidance secretary for the approximately 800 students enrolled at Colchester High School. This breaks down to about 267 students per counselor, which is within the Vermont School Quality Standard of 300:1. There is 1.0 FTE nurse assigned to the high school and a 1.0 district nursing supervisor who is based in the high school, which provides a health services ratio that is within the Vermont School Quality Standard of 500:1. There is 1.0 FTE Librarian, which meets the Vermont School Quality Standard for school with more than 300 students, and 2.0 FTE library aides assigned to the CHS Library/Media Center. *However, past and proposed future budget cuts to library aide positions impact the effectiveness of library*

media services. Special education employs 8.0 FTE special educators and 25.0 FTE para-professionals and tutors. CHS also employs a 1.0 FTE 504 Case Manager and a 1.0 FTE 504 Instructional Aide. There are 1.8 FTE school services clinicians contracted through the Howard Center. The Director of Student Support Services (1.0 FTE) oversees all support services at the high school. Additional supports include district-wide support personnel: 1.0 Special Education Director, 1.0 FTE Autism Specialist, 1.0 FTE School Psychologist, and 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist.

The 504 Case Manager and 504 Instructional Aide are relatively recent additions which have significantly increased the level of service to our 504 population. The addition of the 504 Case Manager has also reduced the case management role of guidance counselors, which has increased the ability of counselors to do more outreach via teacher advisory and 1:1 meetings with students. The District Autism Specialist is also a relatively new addition which has added significant support to teachers of and students with autism spectrum disorders. The 2009-2010 school year is the first school year in several years which started with a full complement of instructional aides. Housing the District Nursing Supervisor in the high school allows her to support the 1.0 FTE high school nurse, which results in adequate staffing of the health office while also providing opportunities for pro-active wellness activities like AED training, concussion prevention and management, and H1N1 preparedness.

6.8 Colchester High School provides a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including individual and group meetings with counseling personnel; personal, career, and college counseling; student course selection assistance; collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and

appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students. Throughout the year, counselors meet with students of all grade levels to support them in the academic, personal, and social/emotional domains. Guidance counselors conduct individual meetings with seniors in the fall to support them in the college application process. In the spring, counselors meet with juniors as they complete the course registration process in order to review the student's credits for graduation. Counselors meet with students in groups on average twice per month. These meetings take place in extended time advisories. The primary emphasis of these meetings is post-secondary planning and course selection assistance. The guidance department does a good job preparing juniors and seniors for life after high school. However, while guidance does plan extended TA activities for younger students, *guidance counselors do not meet with ninth- and tenth-grade students individually or in groups regarding post-secondary planning.*

The guidance department excels in a crisis. Counselors respond well to students in need and do an excellent job collaborating with community mental health and social service providers to support student needs. In addition, counselors collaborate with outside agencies in non-crisis situations as well. For example, the guidance department has well-established relationships with many outside agencies and colleges to support students who need alternative means to graduation and/or enhancements to the high school curriculum.

6.9 Colchester High School's health services provide preventive health services and direct intervention services; appropriate referrals; mandated services; emergency response mechanisms; and ongoing student health assessments. The nursing staff does an excellent job with preventive health services. Our District Nursing Supervisor, in conjunction with our high

school athletic trainer, has led the effort to reduce the number of sports-related concussions, especially to prevent second-impact syndrome, by implementing pre-concussion screening of all athletes with the Headminder program. This objective test, along with the trainer and physician recommendations, helps to ensure that our student athletes are not risking serious brain injury by returning to play before they are ready.

The Health Services Department has also successfully lobbied for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in all district schools. There are two AEDs located in the high school, one in the main office and one in the trainer's office. The athletic trainer takes his AED to all home athletic events.

Moreover, school nurses worked closely with the Vermont Department of Health to coordinate efforts in response to the H1N1 pandemic. Information was sent home regularly to families and clinic dates were set up to vaccinate all students who wanted to receive the H1N1 vaccine. The district nursing supervisor also coordinated H1N1 presentations in all science classes.

The district nursing supervisor, based in the high school, serves on the school crisis team and the educational support team. In addition, a school nurse is a required member of every child protection team meeting and is often involved in mandated reporting to the Department of Children and Families. School nurses also conduct annual routine vision screenings.

A goal of health care services at CHS is that students learn how to model healthy behaviors and be good role models for their peers. They develop a clear understanding of the dangers of drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse. Through the direction of the school nurse, at-risk

students are encouraged to develop a positive, preventive approach in the area of their sexuality. Students need to feel accepted and comfortable when discussing choices that they are confronted with; only then are they willing to seek advice and guidance.

6.10 The library/information services program and materials are somewhat integrated into CHS's curriculum and instructional program. The library's direct involvement in the integration of curriculum is evolving in response to recent technology additions to the school. As computer lab space has increased and CHS acquired three laptop carts, the library's role as research and technology hub has been in transition.

The librarian worked with the business teachers during the 2008-2009 CWG meetings to link information literacy into the new the Business and Technology curriculum. Teachers bring their classes to the library for specific research projects, while students also conduct independent research. *However, as technology resources have increased, there is less collaboration between the librarian and teachers on curriculum.*

6.11 Library/information services personnel are somewhat knowledgeable about the curriculum and attempt to support its implementation. Teachers can opt to schedule classes for research, but planning time for the teacher and librarian is limited. When classes are scheduled to do research, the librarian makes resources and strategies available for that class. The library personnel meet as a team when possible to discuss how to best support student and teacher needs and to discuss the status of library projects and programs. *However, because teachers and the library personnel do not have time to collaborate, the library personnel have limited knowledge about the curriculum and have limited ability to support its implementation.*

6.12 A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school’s student population are available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning. The library’s audio-visual collection helps support curriculum. Teacher requests for A-V materials are reviewed and approved by team leaders yearly and as needs arise. The library records programs by teacher request and teachers also now use video streaming from online sources in their classrooms. Several electronic resources have been added to support special education, such as the Read-Write-Gold program, which allows students to access audio versions of print material, and TumbleReadables, which provides online books. These have been useful resources for the general curriculum as well.

The library also provides a wide range of materials to support CHS’s DI approach to teaching and learning. Fiction, nonfiction and periodical materials have been added to support a wider range of reading levels and to address multiple learning styles and interests. To support research, the library also provides subscriptions to ProQuest and Vermont Online Library. The collection is supplemented through interlibrary loans. The library is in the process of expanding electronic resources. For example, a science subscription site is currently being reviewed by faculty. *However, some teachers do not find the resources of the library fully adequate to support curriculum. We need a system that involves faculty, student, and community input to determine the types of resources needed.*

6.13 Students, faculty, and support staff have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day. The library is open to students and staff from 7:15 to 3:15 Monday through Friday. Students go to the library with

classes or independently with a pass from a class or study hall. Many students utilize the library during their lunch period. Occasionally the library is used for other purposes such as special class events, grade-level presentations, and school-wide testing.

The computer lab is open from 7:30-3:30 and space has been increased to support classroom and individual student needs. Many of the library's online resources are available for student use on- and off-campus and information on how to use these resources is published in library brochures and shared with parents through *The Laker View*.

Some students are frequent users of the library space before and during, and after school. *However, due to the loss of the late bus in 2009-2010, student access after school is restricted for those students who rely on bus transportation. The NEASC self-study survey results indicate that only 20 percent of students use the library to prepare for classes. Many faculty members believe there is a need for increased access to the library and computer labs during the school day, in the evenings, and during the summer.*

6.14 The library/information services program plays a somewhat active role in fostering independent inquiry with individual students. Although there is no formal program, orientations to the library and research skills are available upon teacher or student request. Currently, the research process is taught through the Business & Technology curriculum, which is required for all students. Information technology curriculum is increasingly being embedded across the curriculum. *However, there is no longer a formal connection between the library and curriculum regarding the teaching of independent inquiry.*

The library/information services program does enable students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies. CHS students and faculty effectively use a wide variety of information resources and technologies. CHS has had a school-wide goal to promote twenty-first Century skills and to provide increased access to technology across the curriculum. Equipment for classrooms (e.g., upgraded computers, LCD projectors, Smartboards) shifted from library-housed equipment to permanently installed classroom equipment managed by the Technology Department. *CHS students and faculty need access to more online databases and ebooks and formal training on how to use these and other technological resources.*

6.15 Policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet. The library follows the district policy that addresses the selection and review of resources.

Beginning in 2009, the Colchester School District implemented new procedures for monitoring and limiting online content. A number of filters were put in to restrict access to certain online content. The filters initially proved very cumbersome and limiting, so the principal worked with the Technology Department and a faculty committee to revise the filters for the high school and create an ongoing program for approving online content.

An “Acceptable Use Policy” (AUP) is in place for CHS students, faculty and staff to access computers and the Internet. Students may not use Internet resources at school until they and their parent/guardian have read and signed the policy. These computer privileges are revoked when students do not comply with the policy. The policy is available in the student handbook.

6.16 Colchester High School provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. Eight special educators serve 110 students in all three of Colchester High School's special education programs: Consulting, Crossroads, and CAP. The practice of including students in mainstream classes is done on an individual student basis. Having a variety of programs to meet their needs helps to best maximize learning for students with disabilities. Most students in all three programs are mainstreamed for at least portions of their day. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written in compliance with state and federal statute to best meet each student's unique learning profile. These plans are distributed to classroom teachers with a compliance cover letter. After being signed by the classroom teacher, this document is returned to the special education secretary. This indicates to the case manager that the classroom teacher is ready to implement the IEP. If the teacher is not ready to implement the IEP, then the case manager provides that teacher with further training.

Student referrals for special education services are made by a member of EST, parents or students. All referrals are brought initially to the attention of the Director of Student Support Services, unless the referral originated in EST. The Director then brings the referral to EST. The EST then discusses if it is appropriate for the referral to go to a planning meeting. If the referral is made by a parent, the Director assigns a special educator to the evaluation immediately (outside of EST) and the planning meeting is held to determine whether an evaluation is warranted. For all other evaluations, the Director will make initial contact with the family to explain the rules and laws surrounding an evaluation. A special educator is then assigned to conduct the process. The evaluation, testing and writing of plans is done in compliance with

state and federal laws. In 2006, the Colchester school District was last monitored and asked to make a few minor corrective actions. Those corrections were made, and on March 6, 2006, the monitoring team stated that no corrective actions were left and that the District was in compliance. Colchester School district is scheduled to be monitored again this year. That process has not yet happened.

School Resources for Learning

Executive Summary

CHS meets and exceeds the standards for school resources in many areas. Consistent with the school's mission, support services address the academic, civic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students through a variety of resources and programs. The full range of supports are designed to meet the individual needs of all students and to help them achieve their goals in school and for life after graduation.

The school allocates resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's Essential Expectations. School staff work cooperatively with each other and with community resources to meet student needs and interests. From special education to dual enrollment to alternative education, opportunities abound for students to pursue their needs and interests while also meeting school expectations for learning.

CHS has a variety of means to keep students, parents, and staff informed about student support services. Daily announcements, The Laker View, the school Web site, parent outreach nights, automated dialer calls, and letters home communicate important information about support services and school resources.

All student records are maintained in a secure and confidential manner consistent with state and federal law. All support services are staffed by certified/licensed personnel and support staff. Across the range of support services informal evaluation is a part of a continuous improvement model of service. However, there is currently no formal evaluation process for any of these resources.

CHS offers comprehensive guidance, health, and special education services. CHS provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. In March 2006, the Vermont Department of Education found Colchester School District in compliance with no corrective actions remaining.

Library services are in transition and there is currently little integration of library services with curriculum and instruction. The library's hours offer access before, during, and after school and policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and for the use of technology and the Internet.

Based on the evidence gathered, the School Resources for Learning Committee finds that CHS meets the standard at an **Acceptable** level.

School Resources for Learning

Executive Summary

Strengths:

- The variety of options available to students to earn credit/diploma.
- The variety of support services available to students.
- The strong connections between support services personnel and outside agencies and resources.
- The transition process for incoming students.
- The variety of home/school communication resources.
- The developmental supports for career and life planning administered through Teacher Advisory.
- Excellent crisis response and wraparound services.

Needs:

- Create and implement systems for formal evaluation of support services that include students, parents, faculty and staff.
- Complete the EST revision process.

- Create and implement a formal guidance connection with ninth- and tenth-grade students.
- Re-establish the mission and goal of Teacher Advisory.
- Increase integration of library services and curriculum/instruction.
- Improve library resources and implement a system for determining what those resources should be.
- Increase access for students, faculty, and staff during and outside of school hours.
- Increase access to and training on library online resources for students, faculty, and staff.
- Improve supervision and ongoing classroom training of paraprofessionals.