



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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The Mission Statement of HPHS

The mission statement for our school—the document that outlines what we expect of ourselves as professionals and of our students—needs to be aligned with what we are currently doing, both in and out of our classrooms. Our current mission statement asserts that

We at Hartford Public High School strive for excellence in educating our diverse population of young men and women to become literate, logically-thinking, well-informed citizens. We dedicate ourselves to providing equal opportunity and to helping each student develop a positive self-image, a sense of individual responsibility, a commitment to community service, and an awareness that personal effort is the cornerstone of all achievement.

The word “asserts” reflects—as far back as the mid-nineties—that literacy is one of the several charges that should inform all of our lessons and activities.

Consider the following questions:

1. Have I made a good faith effort to include literacy—both reading and writing skills—into my daily lessons?
2. Have I discussed—frankly and openly—with my curriculum coordinators my concerns about the seemingly large conflict between incorporating literacy into my daily lessons and the requirements of a curriculum, which demands that I cover a certain amount of material in a certain timeframe?
3. Do firmly I believe that I should embed reading and writing skills into my daily lessons, rather than mumbling the cliché that literacy is

the responsibility of only the English department?

4. What will be your comments to the visiting team from NEASC, when you are asked to explain your use of literacy strategies in your daily lessons and to provide them with sample lessons, activities, and student work that reflect your use of literacy strategies?
5. What have you done to encourage other teachers to share the responsibility of developing the literacy skills of all of our students?

In the Words of NEASC...

Under Standard 2: Curriculum

Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.

Under Standard 3: Instruction

Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.

Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.

The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.

Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

Notice the use of the helping verb “shall”; it differs in formal writing from the use of the more common “will” in the third person. It denotes an imperative.