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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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June 10, 2013

Andrew G. Stephens
Principal
Duxbury High School
130 St. George Street
Duxbury, MA 02332

Dear Mr. Stephens:

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools, at its April 7-8, 2013 meeting, reviewed the decennial evaluation report from the recent visit to Duxbury High School and voted to award the school continued accreditation in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The Committee was impressed with many of the programs and services and wishes to commend the following:

- the creation of a set of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations that is clear, easily understood, and has become part of the fabric of the entire school community
- the inclusive process, informed by current research, that was used to develop the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
- the high degree to which core values, beliefs, and learning expectations drive the curriculum, instruction, and decision-making processes at Duxbury High School
- the purposefully designed curriculum which allows students to practice and achieve the 21st century learning expectations
- the emphasis on depth of understanding and application of knowledge in the curriculum including opportunities for higher order thinking and authentic learning
- the common format developed for curriculum writing and mapping using the *Understanding by Design* model
- the alignment between the written and taught curriculum

- the ongoing process to ensure continuous examination of instructional practices that are consistent with the school's 21st century learning expectations
- the extensive evidence of personalization and differentiated instructional techniques
- the use of creative formative assessment during instructional time
- the integration of 21st century learning skills throughout the school and across the curriculum
- the use of school-wide rubrics at the department level
- the pervasive use of content-specific rubrics throughout the school
- the communication between teachers and students relative to the use of rubrics and their application

The Committee was equally pleased to commend the following:

- the positive and constructive individual relationships between and among faculty, administration, and individual students
- the principal who serves as the educational, curricular, and instructional leader of the school
- the leadership roles assumed by teachers
- the heterogeneous course experience for every student over the course of his/her high school experience
- the expansion of supervision responsibilities to allow for more frequent and immediate supervision and feedback
- the consistent support by the entire high school community of a safe, positive, and respectful school environment
- the overwhelming pride and academic focus of the students
- the reflective and constructive collaboration between the superintendent, school committee, and principal
- the comprehensive intervention strategies and referral process for at-risk students
- the well staffed and collaborative school support services team which benefits all students
- the response to collected data from the student support team to improve student support services
- the library services that are used across the curriculum to assist students and teachers with research and writing assignments
- the generous and consistent support of parent and community groups
- the continued dedication of the building administration and professional staff to provide exemplary educational services despite limited funding and resources
- the community's approval of the construction of a new middle/high school to provide its students with a high quality 21st century educational environment

All accredited schools must submit a required Two-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Duxbury High School is due on October 1, 2014. Information about the proper preparation of the Two-Year Progress Report was provided to school representatives at the Follow-Up Seminar and is included in *Directions for the Preparation of the Two-Year Progress Report* which can be found at <http://cpss.neasc.org>. In that report school officials are required to respond to two types of recommendations: (1) highlighted recommendations from notification letter(s) and (2) general report recommendations from the school's decennial evaluation report

With regard to the reporting of action taken on evaluation report recommendations school officials should indicate the status of each recommendation by classifying it in one of five categories: Completed, In Progress, Planned for the Future, Rejected, or No Action. In addition, for each valid recommendation in the evaluation report there should be a brief description of the action that has been taken to address the recommendations, including anticipated dates of completion where applicable. Special care should be taken to include appropriate information to justify the Rejected or No Action status of any recommendation.

In addition to providing information on action taken to address each evaluation report recommendation, the Two-Year Progress Report should also provide detailed explanations regarding the manner in which each of the following highlighted recommendations has been addressed:

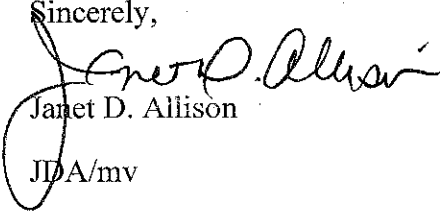
- establish a process with prescribed timelines, research and data sources, and identified stakeholders to guide the regular review and revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations in keeping with school and community priorities
- develop a consistent review process to revisit and examine the effectiveness of the school-wide rubrics
- provide adequate and dependable funding for sufficient staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies to fully implement the curriculum, co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities
- provide adequate funding for curriculum development
- reduce financial dependence on parent and community support for essential elements of the budget
- provide consistent common planning time for departments and cross-departmental coordination of curricular initiatives
- develop a formal method for collecting data on and reporting achievement of all the school-wide learning expectations to students, parents, and the school community
- develop a formal process to collaborate regularly on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments
- clarify the goals of the advisory program to increase effectiveness for all students
- ensure subject supervisors' roles and responsibilities are clarified so that all teachers understand them
- formalize the integration of library services across all departments
- report progress on the new middle/high school construction project

The Committee congratulates the school administration and faculty for completing the first two phases of the accreditation program: the self-study and the evaluation visit. The next step will be the follow-up process during which the school will implement valid recommendations in the evaluation report. The Committee's Follow-up Seminars should help you and your faculty develop a schedule for implementing valid recommendations. In addition, the Commission's *Accreditation Handbook* provides information on follow-up procedures.

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The school's accreditation status will be reviewed when the Committee considers the Two-Year Progress Report. Consistent with the Committee's follow-up procedures, the Two-Year Progress Report should include an electronic signature of the principal and chair of the school's Follow-Up Committee and be sent electronically to the Committee office at the following address: cpssreports@neasc.org. As well, please notify the Committee office immediately of any changes in the names of the principal and/or superintendent along with their corresponding e-mail addresses by submitting this information electronically to cpss-air@neasc.org.

Sincerely,



Janet D. Allison

JDA/mv

cc: Benedict Tantillo, Superintendent, Duxbury Public Schools
John Heinstadt, Chair, Duxbury School Committee
Alyson Geary, Chair, Visiting Committee
Robert E. Littlefield, Chair, Committee on Public Secondary Schools