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

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Louis J. Gabordi III
Principal
Ledyard High School, CT
24 Gallup Hill Road
Ledyard, CT 06339

Dear Mr. Gabordi:

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools, at its September 28-29, 2008 meeting, reviewed the evaluation report from the recent visit to Ledyard High School, CT and continued the school's accreditation in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The Commission wished to commend the school on the following:

- the visibility of the school's mission and academic expectations
- the varied opportunities for students to extend learning beyond normal course offerings and the school campus
- the efforts of teachers to update curriculum guides and to make connections to the expectations in the mission
- the development of a formal curriculum evaluation and review cycle
- teachers' efforts to discuss and apply current and varied instructional strategies
- opportunities provided for students to apply knowledge and skills
- the ready availability of faculty to students and the personalization provided by many faculty members
- the use of a variety of assessment strategies and course-specific rubrics
- the multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills
- the principal's collaborative relationships with all stakeholders
- the effective leadership and continued vision by the principal for the school which focuses on individual student learning
- the multiple opportunities for teacher leadership
- the safe, respectful, positive and supportive learning environment that results in a sense of pride and ownership

- the regular acknowledgement and celebration of student success
- the comprehensive health services provided for students
- the collaboration and communication between staff, students, parents, and community
- the many services provided by the guidance program for students
- the strong relationships established between the school and families which include multiple opportunities for parents to participate in their students' education
- the numerous efforts made to include parents in the school
- the support of community members and local businesses

Nevertheless, the Commission expressed concern regarding the school's adherence to the Standards on Curriculum, Assessment of Student Learning, and Community Resources for Learning. Concerns include, but are not limited to, the following:

Curriculum:

- the lack of integration into the curriculum of the academic expectations in the mission, thus the failure of the curriculum to ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve the priority learning expectations identified by the Ledyard community
- the failure of the curriculum to ensure that all students, at all levels and in all courses, are exposed to content that promotes higher order thinking, problem-solving, inquiry, and the authentic application of knowledge and skills
- limited articulation and coordination of the curriculum between academic areas and across the grade levels K-12
- limited and un dependable technological resources and the lack of an adequate infrastructure to support the delivery of the curriculum
- the lack of use of data by the majority of departments to guide curriculum revision and evaluation
- limited availability of instructional materials and texts for some courses
- science labs which do not support the delivery of a 21st century science curriculum
- inadequate time, financial resources, and personnel committed to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum
- the lack of scheduled time and formal professional development committed to the development and implementation of the curriculum
- increased class loads and decreased elective offerings resulting in an increase in study hall enrollment

Assessment of Student Learning:

- limited use of the school-wide rubrics to assess achievement of the academic expectations and growth over time
- the absence of a process to assess individual students, using the school-wide rubrics, on achievement of the academic expectations
- the absence of a process to communicate individual student progress to students and their families on achievement of the academic expectations, based on the use of the school-wide rubrics
- the lack of clarification by teachers of the academic expectations for each learning activity
- limited time and a formal process for teachers to collaborate around assessment practices, including the review of student work

Community Resources for Learning:

- significant areas of the building which do not adequately support teaching and learning, including poorly configured and outdated science labs which pose safety issues with respect to effective supervision of lab activities and which lack functioning eye-wash stations, adequate lighting and adequate wiring
- air-quality issues and limited ventilation in an area used for physical education
- roof leaks resulting in damaged ceilings, furniture, and equipment and creating problems with mold
- peeling floor tiles which pose danger
- outdoor bleachers without risers, posing immediate danger
- lack of compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations
- lack of funding to support the long-term and short-term equipment, maintenance, and capital needs
- overwhelming volume of maintenance and repair issues due to aging facilities and limited personnel
- cleanliness issues in the building, with the exception of the new Vo-Ag Center
- numerous budget cuts and zero-based funding which have seriously impacted the ability of the school to support teaching and learning needs, including programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning

Given these concerns, the Commission voted to place the school on warning for the Standards on Curriculum, Assessment of Student Learning, and Community Resources for Learning.

The Commission requests that school officials submit a Special Progress Report by May 1, 2009, indicating how the following recommendations have been addressed:

- increase funding to provide adequate texts and instructional materials for all programs and courses and assess its adequacy
- increase funding to upgrade technology throughout the building, including hardware in the library/media center, to support teaching and learning and assess its adequacy
- immediately address all health and safety issues including repair or replacement of eye-wash stations, repair of bleachers, peeling floor tiles, and roof leaks
- submit the school's short-term plans to improve the adequacy of the facility to support teaching and learning until such time as there is a permanent resolution to the concerns identified
- describe steps taken to develop, fund, and implement a long-term plan to fully address all facilities needs of the school as identified by the Commission
- describe efforts taken to increase the use of data to inform the development and revision of the curriculum

As well, the Commission requested an additional Special Progress Report due November 1, 2009, indicating how the following recommendations have been addressed:

- provide increased time and a formal process for teachers to collaborate around instructional and assessment practices for the purpose of improving student learning
- develop and begin to implement a process to ensure the school-wide rubrics for the academic expectations in the mission are widely used with all students

- ensure that for each learning activity all teachers clarify for students the relevant academic expectations in the mission
- provide adequate staffing to ensure all teachers have a student load that allows them to meet the individual learning needs of students
- describe the school's plan to assess and report individual student achievement of the academic expectations in the mission based on assessments using school-wide rubrics

Consistent with Commission policies, the school's warning status will not be removed until the school can demonstrate that it has satisfactorily completed these and other evaluation report recommendations related to the cited Standards areas of concern.

All accredited schools must submit a required Two-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Ledyard High School, CT is due on October 1, 2010. 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, among other things, to two types of recommendations: (1) highlighted recommendations from notification letter(s) and (2) 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:

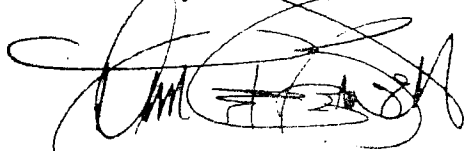
- complete the alignment of the curriculum guides with the academic expectations in the mission
- describe steps taken to ensure the core values and beliefs in the mission guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and are evident in the culture of the school
- provide time and training to assist teachers in implementing the use of the school-wide rubrics into daily practice so that students have regular opportunities to practice and achieve the academic expectations in the mission
- provide evidence to illustrate how the written and taught curriculum in all courses promotes higher order thinking, problem-solving, inquiry, and authentic application of knowledge and skills for all students
- review, revise, if necessary, and implement an effective supervision and evaluation model that provides meaningful feedback to teachers to improve instructional strategies and support student learning
- develop and implement a professional development program which includes input from teachers and is based on teacher needs to support improvement in instruction, including the use of higher order thinking and problem solving for all students

- provide formal time and a process for teachers to collaborate for the purpose of reviewing student work in order to inform instructional and assessment practices
- ensure the library/media specialist is regularly involved in curriculum development and planning in order to improve the ability of the library to support teaching and learning needs
- develop and implement regular evaluation of support service programs, including guidance services, library/media services, and health services in order to make improvements in these programs
- submit sample reports to students of their achievement of the academic expectations in the mission based on assessments using school-wide rubrics

The Commission 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 Commission'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.

The school's warning status will be next reviewed when the Commission considers the Special Progress Report. Consistent with the Commission's follow-up procedures, the Special Progress Report should be signed by the principal and chair of the Follow-Up Committee and sent to the Commission office in duplicate by certified mail, return receipt requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pamela Gray-Bennett', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Pamela Gray-Bennett

PGB/mv

cc: Michael H. Graner, Superintendent, Ledyard Public Schools
Sharon Hightower, Chairperson, Ledyard
Denise M. Boule, Chair of the Visiting Committee
Thomas R. Moore, Chair, Commission on Public Secondary Schools