

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

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December 1, 2016

Shirley Lundberg
Principal
Watertown High School
50 Columbia Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Dear Mrs. Lundberg:

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools, at its October 23-24, 2016 meeting, reviewed the decennial evaluation report from the recent visit to Watertown High School and voted to award the school continued accreditation in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The Committee commends the school on the following:

- the engagement of the faculty and staff in a dynamic and collaborative process to identify its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
- the culture of the school community which supports, respects, and empowers students to take educational and social risks
- the use of project-based learning that emphasizes inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills
- the common format of the written curriculum that includes essential questions, content, concepts, and skills
- the personalized instruction across all subject areas and grade levels
- the numerous opportunities for students to engage as self-directed learners
- the teaching practices that apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
- the integration of technology into instructional practices
- the use of a variety of formative assessments
- the use of differentiated instruction to help individual students to learn new concepts and skills
- the use of grouping strategies designed to promote in-depth learning and problem solving
- the communication by teachers of unit-specific learning goals to students prior to each unit of study

- the practice of providing corresponding rubrics to students prior to summative assessments
- the employment by teachers of a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, in each unit of study
- the many co-curricular activities which support and continually create a safe, positive, and respectful school climate
- the variety of opportunities for students to explore, challenge themselves, and take responsibility for their own learning
- the heterogeneously grouped English classes for all 9th grade students and the heterogeneously grouped elective courses offered for all students
- the instructional leadership provided by the principal that is rooted in the school's core values and beliefs
- the number of timely, coordinated, directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students
- the provision of information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services
- the installation of the Makerspace/FABLab for creative collaboration among library/media services, the innovation specialist, students and teachers
- the efforts of the custodial staff to keep the facilities clean on a daily basis
- the efforts of the maintenance staff to address continuous issues with the failing building infrastructure
- the creative use of limited space by faculty, staff, and school leadership to deliver quality educational experiences to a diverse student population
- the efforts of the professional staff to engage parents and families as partners in each student's education
- the efforts by the school to develop productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships to support student learning

Nevertheless, the Committee expressed concern regarding the school's adherence to the Standard on Community Resources for Learning. Concerns include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the school site and plant do not support the delivery of high quality school programs and services, including:
- the science labs, which do not ensure adequate space for both lab and classroom activities
- the lack of gas in science classrooms
- the need for additional storage space for both the music program and the drama program
- the lack of classroom space for the band, orchestra, and choral programs to accommodate all students who want to enroll
- the lack of conference space for teacher and parent meetings
- the need for upgrades to Victory Field, the track, tennis courts, parking lot, locker rooms, and the trainer's room
- the lack of a handicap accessible bathroom in the nurse's suite
- the leaky ceiling in the teachers' lunch room
- the broken water fountains
- the aging bathroom infrastructure
- the broken and missing window shades
- the windows that do not stay open or are missing screens

- the inadequate parking for school staff
- the peeling paint and falling debris from ceilings in the building
- the warped or broken floor tiles due to water damage
- the need for additional space for student seating during lunches
- the old equipment in the school kitchen
- the lack of sufficiently sized classroom spaces for all classes

Given these concerns, the Committee voted to place the school on warning for the Standard on Community Resources for Learning.

The Committee requests that school officials submit a Special Progress Report by September 15, 2017 indicating how the following recommendations have been addressed:

- provide an update on the status of the facilities issues as listed in the decennial report
- develop and implement a plan to engage the school community in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning
- develop specific and measurable criteria for success for each school-wide learning expectation
- develop and implement a plan to measure student achievement of the school-wide learning expectations based on the stated specific and measurable criteria for success

All accredited schools must submit a required Two-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Watertown High School is due on October 1, 2018. Information about the proper preparation of the Two-Year Progress Report was provided to school representatives at the Follow-Up Seminar and can be found at <http://cpss.neasc.org> under the "Ongoing Accreditation" tab, *Two-Year Progress Report*. In that report school officials are required to respond to two types of recommendations: (Section I), highlighted recommendations from this notification letter and (Section II), general report recommendations from the school's decennial evaluation report. As well schools are reminded to provide the requested information in Sections III - IX.

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:

- create and implement a plan to further integrate the school's 21st century learning expectations into curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- ensure that the common curriculum format is used in all curriculum areas

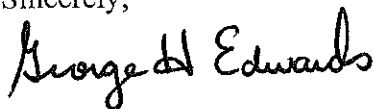
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- develop and implement a plan to ensure that the facilities are sufficient to support the curriculum
- provide sufficient time, personnel, and financial resources for the ongoing and collaborative development, revision, and evaluation of the curriculum using assessment results and current research
- develop and implement a formal process by which the professional staff is able to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
- develop and implement a plan to ensure courses throughout the curriculum provide access to challenging academic experiences for all students that support achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations
- develop and implement a plan to review and revise the advisory curriculum
- develop and implement a plan to provide structured protocols and expectations for common planning time
- develop and implement a plan to provide support for the increased numbers of ELL students
- develop and implement a plan to provide support for the increased number of mental health referrals
- ensure that the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services

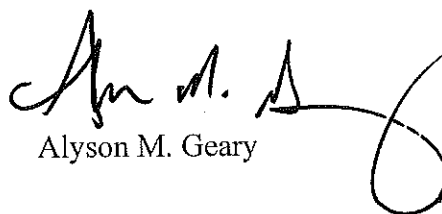
The Committee congratulates the school administration and faculty for completing the first two phases of the accreditation program: the self-study and the evaluation visit. The next step will be the follow-up process during which the school will implement valid recommendations in the evaluation report.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

The school's warning status will be next reviewed when the Committee considers the Special Progress Report. Consistent with the Committee's follow-up procedures, the Special 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.

Sincerely,



George H. Edwards



Alyson M. Geary

GHE/AMG/rm

cc: Jean Fitzgerald, Superintendent, Watertown Public Schools
Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Chair, Watertown School Committee, Watertown Public Schools
Joseph A. Damplo, Chair of the Visiting Committee
Francis T. Kennedy, Jr., Chair, Committee on Public Secondary Schools