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

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January 10, 2014

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Dear Dr. Nixon:

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools, at its December 17, 2013 meeting, reviewed the decennial evaluation report from the recent visit to Vineyard Regional 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 establishment of a clear set of beliefs about learning through a largely inclusive and collaborative process.
- the challenging and measurable learning expectations for social and civic competencies that are available on school and department websites and therefore used by faculty members on a regular basis
- the vocational school programs that actively reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
- the standard curriculum template across disciplines that supports the use of 21st century learning expectations for teachers and students and ensures that all students have consistency and academic challenge in each discipline
- the faculty members who have developed lessons that provide their students with opportunities to use 21st century skills such as inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking in authentic learning assignments
- the initiatives related to aligning the curriculum with the Common Core to position the school to support students in their attempts to meet the 21st century learning expectations
- the frequent use of authentic tasks in the elective areas and higher-level courses to give students multiple opportunities to apply their knowledge and develop their skills

- the wide varieties of work study, mentoring, and independent study programs through which students are encouraged to explore all avenues of their educational experience
- the administration for the support provided to new teachers through the New Teacher Academy and peer mentoring
- the initial steps of the professional staff to review grading practices in the light of the school-wide rubrics
- the identification of learning gaps and efforts to close those gaps by the Freshman Team and the alternative education program
- the practice of giving common preparation periods to freshman teachers and the alternative education teachers so that they have time to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments, including common assessments

The Committee was equally pleased to commend the following:

- the school culture that provides a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive climate
- the willingness of teachers to provide support in the core curriculum in heterogeneously grouped classrooms to meet the needs of all learners.
- the principal's leadership in the development, execution, and monitoring of the school improvement plan
- the development and implementation of intervention strategies for identified and at-risk students
- the strong collaboration between school adjustment counselors, guidance counselors, and social workers to identify the needs of students and to work in partnership with other island social services, medical, and mental health services
- the availability (before, during, and after school) of library/media resources and personnel to students and teachers, including a wide range of materials, technology, and information services
- the wide range of programs and services available to students
- the dependable funding provided by the community and district's governing body that attempts to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff
- the numerous and productive partnerships with local businesses, neighboring islands, and community members that is acknowledged as part of a student's academic program

The Committee requests that school officials submit a Special Progress Report by September 1, 2014 providing detailed information on action taken to address the following:

- develop and implement strategies to ensure that all students are held to high expectations and that all barriers to self-nomination for enrollment in classes be removed to achieve equity
- engage in formal, cross-disciplinary planning and collaboration to ensure that the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations
- confirm the installation of a new roof and the formal evaluation of the school's HVAC system

All accredited schools must submit a required Two-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Vineyard Regional High School is due on October 1, 2015. 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:

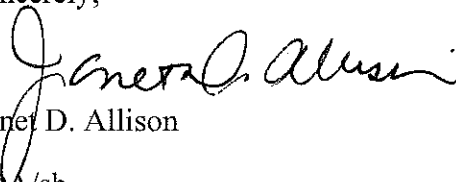
- ensure that the school has developed school-wide analytic rubrics and identified targeted high levels of achievement that are aligned with the 21st century learning expectations
- implement a formal process for oversight of the implementation and alignment of curriculum as well as for the review of data from student achievement on common assessments
- implement a process to complete those remaining curriculum documents that have not been updated in the common format
- provide multiple opportunities for all students to engage in assessments that are challenging, require higher order thinking, and require students to apply their knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
- develop and implement a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations and communicate that information to the individual students and their families
- review and revise the current advisory model to provide adult/students relationships that will assist and support students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
- address the need to improve a shared vision, trust, and mutual respect among building and district level administration currently at VRHS and MVPS in order to support the staff's efforts in increasing their students' engagement in learning and the attainment of the 21st century learning expectations

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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 accreditation status will be 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. 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/sb

cc: James H. Weiss, Superintendent, Martha's Vineyard Regional School District
Priscilla Sylvia, Chair, Martha's Vineyard Regional School Committee
Janet Garagliano, Chair of the Visiting Committee
Robert E. Littlefield, Chair, Committee on Public Secondary Schools