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

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December 19, 2013

Paul Branagan  
Principal  
Middleborough High School  
71 East Grove Street  
Middleborough, MA 02346

Dear Mr. Branagan:

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools, at its October 27-28, 2013 meeting, reviewed the decennial evaluation report from the recent visit to Middleborough High School and voted to award the school continued accreditation in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges but to remain on warning for the Standards for Accreditation on Curriculum and Community Resources.

The Committee wishes to commend the following:

- the use of the SACHEMS acronym which plays a significant role in communicating the school's core beliefs
- the development of school-wide analytic rubrics that are posted in every classroom
- the commitment of the school to identifying values, beliefs, and learning expectations to reflect the school's expectations focused on preparing students to be successful 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens
- the development of a common format for written curriculum
- the appointment of 6-12 directors for the STEM and humanities programs
- the release time allotted monthly for the purpose of professional development
- the availability of Advanced Placement courses which contribute to students acquisition of higher order thinking skills
- the willingness of faculty to incorporate core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into instructional practices
- the faculty members who have taken advantage of the technology available and have started to integrate its use into instructional practices
- the teachers' collaboration in the development of common lessons and assessments

- the plan to fully implement the Aspen X2 online grade reporting software in the 2013-2014 school year
- the efforts by some teachers to provide opportunities for students to revise their work

The Committee was equally pleased to commend the following:

- the professional staff who work tirelessly in order to create opportunities for students to feel involved with the school community
- the principal's strong instructional leadership resulting in the increased empowerment of other building leaders, teachers, and students
- the efforts to develop a heterogeneously grouped course in the school
- the commitment by the administration, board, and central office to improve the communication among all stakeholders
- the planned piloting of a student advisory program
- the low student-to-teacher ratios in the special education program and the quality of services provided by special educators
- the range of support services for identified students
- the cleanliness and safety of the school achieved given the budgetary constraints
- the extensive involvement of administrators in the budgetary process
- the productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships developed by the school which provide multiple learning opportunities

The concerns expressed by the Committee for continuing the school on warning include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### Curriculum

- the curriculum which is not yet purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
- the impact of limited funding on instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center to fully implement the curriculum
- the reductions in budgetary allocations for co-curricular programs and activities resulting in the implementation of user fees
- the negative impact of the facility on the delivery of the curriculum

#### Community Resources for Learning

- the limited and inadequate level of funding by the community and the district's governing body to support a wide range of school programs and services; the delivery of the curriculum, including co-curricular activities; an adequate number of textbooks, instructional materials and supplies; professional and support staffing levels; the implementation of technology and equipment and its maintenance
- the unreliability of Internet connections
- the presence of ceiling tiles in need of replacement, worn stair treads, damaged interior and exterior doors; the poor condition of blinds and curtains; leaks in ceilings, walls, and windows
- the outdated electrical system
- the lack of cleanliness in the boys and girls restrooms
- the lack of proper ventilation resulting in classrooms with stale, stagnant

- the bubbling and peeling gymnasium floor
- the lack of equipment storage for physical education classes
- the poor condition of the locker rooms that are in disrepair
- the antiquated lighting on the theater stage
- the current practice of the sharing of the center between the nurse, the adjustment counselors and the school psychologist resulting in a serious lack of a private health care space and confidentiality
- the lack of space for teacher collaboration
- the outdated electrical systems in the science laboratories

The Committee requests that school officials submit a Special Progress Report by October 1, 2014 providing detailed information to address/resolve the following recommendations:

- report the results of the school's resubmission to MSBA seeking approval of funding for a building renovation project to address identified longstanding facilities, space, and health and safety issues, including timelines and funding sources
- ensure adequate funding for textbooks, instructional materials, equipment, and supplies to support the delivery of a 21<sup>st</sup> century education for all students
- ensure that the operational budget provides appropriate levels of funding to allow for the provision of in-building and in-district professional development and off-site professional development activities

All accredited schools must submit a required Two-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Middleborough 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 recommendations from within 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:

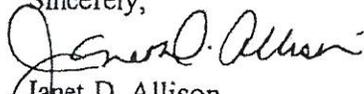
- complete and refine the school-wide rubrics used to measure the school's social and civic expectations
- integrate the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into the curriculum while ensuring the consistent and ongoing use of the common curriculum format

- provide professional development to incorporate core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into instruction in all curricula
- develop and implement a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
- provide regularly scheduled time for teachers to collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments including common assessments
- ensure that the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations
- establish and implement a process for regular, ongoing evaluation and revision of curriculum
- provide a private space for to ensure confidentiality in the nurse's office
- ensure that guidance counselors meet regularly with students to formulate a plan for graduation as well as a post-graduate plan
- detail specific progress in resolving the facilities issues within the current infrastructure to support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations through a variety of technology and facility upgrades and ensure a healthful learning environment for all students and faculty

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](mailto:cpssreports@neasc.org).

Sincerely,



Janet D. Allison

JDA/mms

cc: Roseli S. Weiss, Superintendent, Middleborough Public Schools  
Sara Cederholm, Chair, Middleborough School Committee  
Richard Kraemer, Chair of the Visiting Committee  
Robert E. Littlefield, Chair, Committee on Public Secondary Schools