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

Director

JANET D. ALLISON
direct line (781) 425-7718
jallison@neasc.org

Executive Assistant to the Director

DONNA M. SPENCER-WILSON
direct line (781) 425-7719
dspencerwilson@neasc.org

Deputy Director

GEORGE H. EDWARDS
direct line (781) 425-7735
gedwards@neasc.org

Associate Director

EDWARD J. GALLAGHER, III
direct line (781) 425-7722
egallagher@neasc.org

Associate Director

ALYSON M. GEARY
direct line (781) 425-7736
ageary@neasc.org

January 8, 2013

Mario Almeida
Principal
Rocky Hill High School
50 Chapin Avenue
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear Mr. Almeida:

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools, at its October 28, 2012 meeting, voted to accept the Two-Year Progress Report of Rocky Hill High School and to continue the school's accreditation. While the Committee acknowledges that progress has been made as noted below, until all cited concerns have been satisfactorily resolved, the school remains on warning for the Standards for Accreditation on Curriculum and Community Resources for Learning.

The Committee first wishes to commend the school on the following:

- the support by voters of a referendum allocating \$ 45 million for a high school renovation project with groundbreaking scheduled for the summer of 2013 and completion anticipated to be 18 months afterward
- the initiatives started by the principal, including placing faculty on data teams and establishing professional learning communities, that indicate he has sufficient autonomy to lead the school
- the increased involvement of teachers in the review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum including Balanced Curriculum documents
- the focus of the Balanced Curriculum on significant tasks that integrate higher order thinking skills with student-centered tasks
- the planned survey that will elicit student and parent feedback regarding effectiveness of instruction
- the increased opportunities for teacher collaboration
- the increase of co-taught classes that are heterogeneous in nature
- the scheduling of PLC time for teachers of the same course
- the increased opportunities for interdisciplinary learning through the 9th grade PLC group

- the professional development focused on the use of technology
- the options to assist students who are not meeting the school's academic expectations including referral to the Targeted Intervention Program team, Tier I and II reading, math, writing, and biology classes and structured study halls
- the move to have remote access to the library media center's electronic catalog
- the installation of LCD projectors in all classrooms and Smart Boards in all science, family and consumer science, and business classrooms along with some foreign language and art rooms
- the implementation of the Alert Now message system to help with formal attendance tracking procedures
- the effort to address safety concerns in the physical plant that are unrelated to the building renovation

The Committee requests that school officials submit a Special Progress Report, due August 1, 2013, describing action taken to complete the highlighted recommendations which are listed below:

- report on the status of ground breaking on the high school renovation project
- demonstrate the mechanism by which the school's core values and beliefs about learning are used to guide school-wide decision-making
- expand the data teams to upper grades
- develop and implement a structured program of professional development for all teachers that focuses on best teaching practices
- dedicate specific time and protocols, using existing structures, to ensure all teachers are involved in the regular review of student work for the purposes of improving curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment practices

All accredited schools are asked to submit a required Five-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Rocky Hill High School is due on March 1, 2015. The report should address the highlighted recommendations listed below:

- create a formal plan for the regular review and revision of the core values, beliefs, and expectations for student learning beyond thinking about how to advertise and make the document public
- demonstrate, using a newly developed Balanced Curriculum unit, that the curriculum includes alignment to school-wide academic expectations and rubrics, teaching strategies, and assessment techniques along with enduring understandings and essential questions through the significant tasks and other curriculum components
- complete and implement the planned survey that will elicit student and parent feedback regarding effectiveness of instruction
- report on the progress toward reopening the alternate school

Directions for preparing the Five-Year Progress Report are available at <http://cpss.neasc.org> under the "Ongoing Accreditation" tab. One of the required components of the Five-Year Progress Report is the submission of the school's current core values, beliefs, and learning expectations to reflect the 2011 Standard. Information related to the development/revision of the school's document is available at <http://cpss.neasc.org> under the "Getting Started" tab.

Mario Almeida
January 8, 2013
Page Three

School officials are reminded that all valid recommendations in the evaluation report should have been completed or be in the final stages of implementation when the school submits its Five-Year Progress Report. Inadequate progress to complete valid recommendations could result in a request for additional Progress Reports or a downgrading of the school's accredited status. The Committee requests that it be kept apprised of any substantive changes in the school before that date. For your convenience, we have enclosed a copy of the Substantive Change Policy.

The school's warning 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.

Sincerely,



Janet D. Allison

JDA/mms
Enclosure

cc: Mark F. Zito, Superintendent, Rocky Hill Public Schools
Raffaella Coler, Chair, Rocky Hill Board of Education
Scott Leslie, Chair, Committee on Public Secondary Schools