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

Director

PAMELA GRAY-BENNETT, Ed.D.
direct line (781) 541-5425
pgraybennett@neasc.org

Deputy Director

JANET D. ALLISON
direct line (781) 541-5418
jallison@neasc.org

May 21, 2008

Joseph Bacewicz, Jr.
Principal
Tolland High School
1 Eagle Hill
Tolland, CT 06084

Dear Mr. Bacewicz:

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools, at its March 30-31, 2008 meeting, reviewed the combined Special Progress Report and Report of Substantive Change of Tolland High School and continued the school's accreditation.

The Commission was pleased to commend the following:

- the development and implementation of rubrics for the revised academic expectations for student learning
- the professional learning communities initiative in the district which is currently focused on improved student learning through curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices and processes
- the revisions to the teacher supervision/evaluation process which focus on improved instruction
- the increased level of involvement of the media specialist in curriculum processes

However, the Commission expressed its serious concern upon learning of budgetary reductions and their impact on the school's programs and services. Of particular concern were: staffing reductions in the areas of special education, world languages and the paraprofessional position assigned to the media center; the elimination of a number of interscholastic athletics, clubs, and student activities; and the decreases in the textbook, instructional materials and supplies budgets over the past several years. Of equal concern was the lack of any budgetary increase in the technology budget in the past five years. Accordingly, the Commission requested an additional Special Progress Report due September 1, 2008 which provides detailed responses to the following recommendations:

- submit the line item FY10 budget allocations in the following areas: professional and support staff positions, including the reinstatement of the positions eliminated

Associate Director

CHARLES J. MC CARTHY, JR.
direct line (781) 541-5417
cmccarthy@neasc.org

Associate Director

ANN L. ASHWORTH
direct line (781) 541-5441
ashworth@neasc.org

Executive Assistant to the Director

DONNA M. SPENCER-WILSON
direct line (781) 541-5419
dswilson@neasc.org

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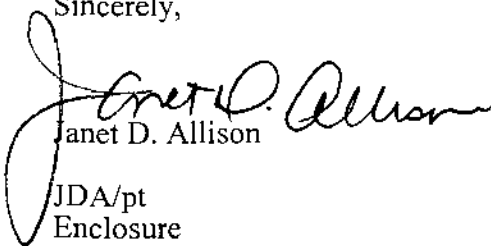
- in the FY09 budget; textbooks; instructional material and supplies; and interscholastic programs, student clubs and activities
- assess the adequacy of each line item allocation
- report the number of students who participated in school clubs, activities, and athletic programs during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years
- report the number of students scheduled to participate in school clubs, activities, and interscholastic programs in Fall 2008
- confirm that the media center is open throughout the school day, including before and after school hours
- report any increases in the technology budget which has not been increased in the past five budgets and assess its level of adequacy

School and system officials and members of the local governing body are reminded of the school's responsibility to meet the Standards for Accreditation throughout the decennial cycle. In the Commission's view these reported substantive changes may, in fact, be limiting the school's ability to meet fully the Standards for Accreditation on Curriculum, School Resources for Learning and Community Resources for Learning. Failure to resolve identified concerns may prompt the Commission to place the school on warning.

The Commission will review the school's accreditation status when it 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.

The Commission requests that it be kept apprised of any substantive changes in the school no later than sixty (60) days following their occurrence. For your convenience, we have enclosed a copy of the Substantive Change Policy.

Sincerely,


Janet D. Allison
JDA/pt
Enclosure

cc: William D. Guzman, Superintendent, Tolland Public Schools
Robert Pagoni, Chairperson, Tolland Board of Education
Thomas R. Moore, Chair, Commission on Public Secondary Schools



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SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has a *negative impact* on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of a substantive change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact on the school's ability to meet the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding
- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services
- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees
- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency

(8/06)