



TOLLAND HIGH SCHOOL

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January 12, 2010

George H. Edwards, Associate Director
New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc.
Commission on Public Secondary Schools
209 Burlington Road, Suite 201
Bedford, MA 01730-1433

Dear Mr. Edwards:

Enclosed you will find the Special Progress Report for Tolland High School requested by the Commission in the Five-Year Progress Report letter dated August 12, 2009. As noted in the report, we have begun to make ongoing progress on all recommendations that were cited by the Commission report. We have also responded to the request made by the Commission regarding our school's program to provide an adult member of the school community to personalize a student's educational experience. The indicator cited in the August letter is significantly different, and under a different standard from that on which we were evaluated in 2004. As further noted in our report, we have begun the process of incorporating a Scientific Research Based Intervention Program for our students that we believe will fulfill the requirements of Indicator nine when we are evaluated again in 2014.

We look forward to hearing from you and the Commission in the future as we work together to attain the highest educational standards for our students.

Sincerely,

Joseph P. Bacewicz, Jr.
Principal

cc: William Guzman, Superintendent, Tolland Public Schools ✓
Robert Pagoni, Chairperson, Tolland Board of Education
Victor D. Mercurio, Chair, Commission on Public Secondary Schools

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES SPECIAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 1, 2010

In the August 12, 2009 letter to Tolland High School from the Commission on Public Secondary Schools, the Commission requested that we address two topics. The first was to review recommendations that were still classified as No Action in our five year report (which was submitted in March, 2009). The second was to address the school's formal on-going program through which each student has a member of the school community to personalize their educational experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS PREVIOUSLY CLASSIFIED AS NO ACTION

Curriculum #2:

Use the results of a mission and expectations review process to guide the development of curriculum and future programs.

Classification: In progress

Our revised expectations for student learning and rubrics have been in place since the 2007-2008 school year.

Due to staff turnover, a new mission and expectation committee has been formed that will meet annually to review the mission and expectations. The committee will be comprised of one member from each of the subject areas, a counselor and an administrator. The committee will make recommendations as needed to the principal, who will then bring them to the faculty for consideration.

Teachers will be entering a score from the rubric that applies to their class at the end of each semester beginning in January 2010. The results will then be analyzed to pinpoint areas of concern for curriculum development.

Leadership and Organization #4

Address budget shortfalls that limit the principal's ability to implement plans for school improvement.

Classification: On-going

Each year, the principal develops School Improvement Goals for Tolland High School. For the 2009-2010 school year, there were two school goals, the first to improve student literacy competencies in all content areas and the second to improve school climate among all members of the THS community. The strategies developed to work towards these goals are not impacted by the school's operating budget for this year, as they involve data collection, the PLC process and professional development that is funded.

School Resources for Learning #8

Develop an orientation program and provide time for the library/media specialist to teach research skills and effective use of on-line and network resources.

Classification: In progress

The library/media specialist is in the process of developing a program that will be delivered through grade 9 health classes.

Community Resources for Learning #1

Provide increased and consistent funding for appropriate, space, furnishings, supplies, and equipment for all classes.

Classification: On-going

We have been in our current facility for four years. Space and furnishings are appropriate for our needs. In these difficult economic times, every attempt is made during the budgetary process to provide funding for supplies and equipment without jeopardizing programs and staffing.

Community Resources for Learning #8

Establish priorities for budget purchases in anticipation of future budget shortfalls.

Classification: On-going

The main budget priority for our school is to maintain programs and the staffing needed to appropriately deliver such programs. In order of priority, we then address materials needed to meet our school goals, most importantly literacy materials, technology, and then other supplies and equipment.

FORMAL PROCESS FOR PERSONALIZING STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Commission expressed concern regarding our school's ongoing program through which each student has a member of the school community to personalize their educational experience. The August 12, 2009 letter refers to indicator #9 of the Leadership and Organization standard. We have reviewed all previous reports submitted to the Commission, as well as responses from the Commission.

When we were evaluated in March, 2004, we responded to indicator #3 in the School Resources standard that stated: *"Each student shall have an adult member of the school community who serves to personalize that student's educational experience."*

Our concern is that the indicator cited in the August letter is significantly different than the indicator we addressed in our self-study. Below is the recommendation that came from the accreditation team, and to which we responded in our two year report of October 2006.

2. Provide a systematic method for ensuring that each student's educational experience is personalized.

Classification: Completed

Response: *As determined by the results of senior exit interviews, students continue to report that school counselors do an excellent job of monitoring students' progress both academically and personally. In addition, the implementation of the Eagle Group advising program provides another opportunity for students to develop positive relationships with adults.*

After this response, we have not been directed by the Commission to further address this issue, nor were we informed of the drastic change in the wording of the indicator and its movement to the Leadership and Organization standard.

Currently, our school is working on a plan to implement a Scientific-Based Research Intervention plan. As part of this plan, the SRBI committee is considering assigning all students to small groups that will meet regularly to provide time for students to receive necessary interventions. The committee has discussed using these groups in a similar way to our Eagle Groups. We must have a formal SRBI plan in place and ready for implementation for the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.