



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

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October 31, 2017

Sarah Mallory
Principal
Arts at the Capitol Theatre
896 Main Street
Willimantic, CT 06226

Dear Ms. Mallory:

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools, at its October 23-24, 2017 meeting, reviewed the initial evaluation report from the recent visit to Arts at the Capitol Theatre and voted to award the school initial 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 commitment of the school to establishing core values and beliefs that reflect the nature of the school
- the respectful and enthusiastic interactions between students and teachers which demonstrate the school's core values and beliefs
- the inclusive process used in the development of the original core values, beliefs, and the 21st century learning expectations
- the course offerings that enable students to experience a wide variety of learning opportunities that are engaging and individualized for student needs
- the commitment to develop curriculum that emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills, and provides cross-disciplinary and authentic learning experiences both in and out of school
- the efforts of teachers to examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
- the commitment of teachers to personalize instruction for students across disciplines
- the efforts of many teachers to adjust their instructional practices to meet the individual needs of students in their classrooms

As well, the Committee was pleased to note the following:

- the support of school leaders in encouraging teachers to pursue professional development opportunities to maintain expertise as adult learners and reflective practitioners and to seek opportunities to research best practices for instruction
- the use of the school-wide rubric in the assessment of the senior capstone project
- the use of STAR assessment for reading and mathematics to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement
- the implementation by some teachers of a range of assessment strategies including formative and summative assessments
- the safe, positive, respectful and supportive environment and the enthusiasm of students for learning
- the meaningful connection to an adult for each student through the arts advisory and enrichment program
- the small class sizes that enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students
- the transparent and inclusive leadership of the principal that is rooted in the school's core values and beliefs
- the collaborative, reflective, and constructive relationship that exists between the principal and the directorship of EASTCONN
- the variety of community resources available to students to ensure support in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
- the collaboration between student support services staff and teachers
- the ongoing communication between the school and the families
- the financial support and the opportunities for professional development provided by EASTCONN
- the efforts of the facilities personnel to provide a clean and well-maintained school
- the extensive community partnerships, business partnerships, and higher education partnerships which support student learning

The Committee requests that school officials submit a Special Progress Report, which is due October 1, 2018, providing detailed information on action taken to address the following:

- develop and implement a plan to ensure that all school-wide rubrics are regularly used with all students
- develop and implement a plan to provide appropriately staffed library/media services
- develop and implement a plan to complete formal curriculum documents for all course offerings

All accredited schools must submit a required Two-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Arts at the Capitol Theatre is due on October 1, 2019. Information about the proper preparation of the Two-Year Progress Report was provided to school representatives at the Follow-Up Seminar and can be found at <http://cpss.neasc.org> under the "Ongoing Accreditation" tab, *Two-Year Progress Report*. In that report school officials are required to respond to two types of recommendations: (Section I), highlighted recommendations from this notification letter and (Section II), general report recommendations from the school's decennial evaluation report. As well schools are reminded to provide the requested information in Sections III - IX.

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:

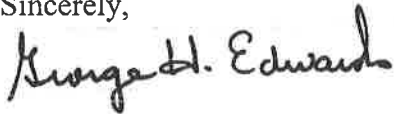
- develop and implement a formal process to review and revise the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and learning expectations on a regular basis
- develop and implement a plan using current research and assessment data for the regular review and revision of all curricula
- develop and implement a plan to address facilities needs including a science laboratory, a designated cafeteria, a private nursing area, and research/information services
- develop and implement a plan to ensure equity in access to technology for staff and students
- develop and implement a formal means to communicate individual student and whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
- develop and implement a professional development plan to ensure staff in all content areas are engaging in opportunities to research best practices for instruction in their content specific domain
- develop and implement a formal process to ensure grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning
- develop and implement a plan for professional development focused on curriculum development and assessment of student learning

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.

Sarah Mallory
October 31, 2017
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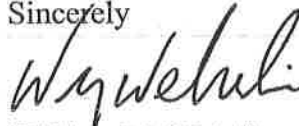
The school's accreditation status will be reviewed when the Committee considers the Special Progress Report. Consistent with the Committee's follow-up procedures, the Special Progress Report should include an electronic signature of the principal and chair of the school's Follow-Up Committee and be sent 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,



George H. Edwards

Sincerely



William M. Wehrli

GHE/WMW/sb

cc: Thomas Cronin, Director of Educational Services, Eastconn
Dr. Carlee Drummer (Governing Board Chair), President of Quinebaug Valley
Community College, Quinebaug Valley Community College
Pamela M. Burke, Chair of the Visiting Team
Francis T. Kennedy, Jr., Chair, Committee on Public Secondary Schools