



Founded in 1885

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

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April 11, 2013

Kevin Wells  
Principal  
Oxford High School  
495 Main Street  
Oxford, MA 01540

Dear Mr. Wells:

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools, at its January 27-28, 2013 meeting, reviewed the Two-Year Progress Report of Oxford High School and continued the school's accreditation.

While the report featured many positive aspects of the school, the Committee was particularly pleased to learn of:

- the appointment of a K-12 curriculum coordinator and the addition of five department heads who together will ensure that all curriculum documents are reviewed, revised, and aligned with the mission and expectations for student learning
- the initiation of curriculum mapping across the district
- the development of a common curriculum format
- the numerous and varied opportunities provided to staff to grow professionally
- the training of a number of teachers to conduct Learning Walks
- the development of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee
- the use of IPASS and IPARENT to provide parents with access to student information in a timely manner
- the installation of SmartBoards in classrooms, the upgrading of computer labs, and the increased number of wireless access points
- the catalogue of all equipment including a record of maintenance and replacement
- the repairs to the boys' locker room floor and showers, the repair work on interior bleachers, the replacement of two sets of outdoor bleachers, the upgrades to the HVAC system, and the lighting upgrade
- the expansion of the work-study program

- the partnership with Nichols College enabling high school students to earn college credit
- the district capital improvement plan
- the expansion of resources in the library media center including 18,000 new books, 21 new desktop computers, 30 iPads with portable cart, and a 52 inch portable flat screen for multimedia presentations
- the new print resources in the library media center that were selected based on MCAS scores, curriculum, and professional recommendations
- the hiring of a new full-time library media specialist
- the extended hours of the library after-school on some days
- the reinstatement of previously eliminated teaching positions, the addition of two permanent substitute teachers, and the institution of a dean of students/athletic director position
- the increase in student participation in Advanced Placement courses and the offering of new additional elective courses
- the recently formed clubs – Volunteer Club, Guitar Club, Ping Pong Club, Photography Club, and Virtual Vacation Club
- the strong participation in Special Olympics
- the large number of awards received by Concert Band, Concert Chorus, and visual arts students, and the national and international awards received by the NJROTC
- the full-time supervisor for in-school suspension
- the credit recovery program which provides curriculum and support for at-risk students
- the relocation of the guidance office near the main office to facilitate communication between the guidance department and staff, students, and parents

The Committee requested that school officials submit a Special Progress Report by December 1, 2013 providing detailed information on action taken to address the following highlighted recommendations:

- confirm the alignment of all curriculum documents with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
- confirm that a common curriculum format that includes: units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; the school's learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course specific rubrics has been implemented
- provide examples that demonstrate the increased focus on higher order thinking for all students
- ensure the consistent use of the school-wide rubrics by all teachers in all courses
- adopt a formal system to measure achievement of the civic and social expectations
- identify acceptable levels of performance for students in the school's academic, civic, and social expectations

All accredited schools are required to submit a Five-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Oxford High School is due March 1, 2015. The report should provide detailed responses to the highlighted recommendations listed below:

- develop and implement a process to assess individual student progress and whole-school achievement of the school's expectations for learning

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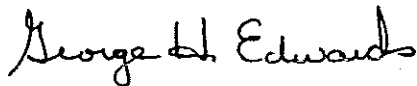
- define and implement a process to report individual student progress on achieving the expectations to their families and whole-school progress to the community
- develop a plan for the regular formal review of the mission statement and expectations for student learning and the development of a core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations document

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.

The Committee expects that schools will achieve reasonable progress carrying out all valid recommendations in the evaluation report. As a result, the Committee noted with concern that eighty-six percent of the recommendations have been classified as In Progress or Planned for the Future despite the fact that it has been two years since the school was evaluated. 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. The school should review all recommendations to ensure that they have been assigned the appropriate status in the 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 no later than sixty (60) days following their occurrence. For your convenience, we have enclosed a copy of the Substantive Change Policy. 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 electronically to [cpss-air@neasc.org](mailto:cpss-air@neasc.org).

The Committee will review the school's accreditation status when it 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,



George H. Edwards

GHE/mv  
Enclosure

cc: Allen W Himmelberger, Superintendent, Oxford Public Schools  
Brenda Ennis, Chairwoman<sup>3</sup>, Oxford School Committee  
Robert E. Littlefield, Chair, Committee on Public Secondary Schools



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

**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
- grade level responsibilities of the principal
- 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

(09/08)