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

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April 28, 2008

Robert Krol
Principal
Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School
775 Bay Road
South Hamilton, MA 01982

Dear Mr. Krol:

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools, at its March 30-31, 2008 meeting, reviewed the Special Progress Report of Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School and continued the school's accreditation, but placed the school on warning for concerns regarding its adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation on Curriculum and Community Resources for Learning.

The concerns prompting the warning status include:

Curriculum:

- the elimination of seventeen sections of regular education course offerings
- the reduction of three F.T.E. teaching positions
- the increase in class sizes, especially in science courses/labs
- the lack of any line-item monies in the operating budget to support professional development programs which have been funded through grants, contributions, and per pupil expenditures
- the limited level of budgetary funding to support the school's current technology plan which is being revised
- the institution of a 100% user fee for all athletic programs ranging from \$325 to \$1524 per sport which in the Commission's view may, in fact, be limiting students' equitable access to a component of the school's curricular offerings

Community Resources for Learning:

- the inadequate level of funding to support the school's staffing levels, course offerings, co-curricular activities, and technology resources and equipment as evidenced by the following:
 - o the number of years in which the budget has been level-funded
 - o the reduction of a .5 F.T.E custodial position

- the lack of funding to upgrade the auditorium, including the electrical system, and replace student lockers through a phased process for which requests have been made in previous fiscal year budgets
- the reliance on private funding and contributions to supplement the operating budget

School officials are reminded the required Two-Year Progress Report is due October 1, 2008. The report should include detailed responses to each of the thirteen (13) highlighted recommendation identified in the Commission's notification letter of April 27, 2007. The report should also include detailed responses to each of the following additional highlighted recommendations resulting from the Commission review of the Special Progress Report:

- report the status of the FY budgetary requests to reinstate the three F.T.E. regular education teaching positions
- report the number of course offerings that have been reinstated and assess their adequacy
- submit class sizes for all courses from both the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years
- submit the FY09 allocation for the school's professional development account and assess its level of adequacy
- report the status of the athletic user fees
- report the number of students who participated in interscholastic athletic activities for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years and for Fall of the 2008-09 school year
- report the status of the proposed Five-Year Capital Plan as it relates to the allocation of funding in the FY09 budget to support upgrades to the auditorium and the student locker replacement project
- report the status of the newly proposed Technology Improvement Plan Supporting Teaching and Learning as it relates to the allocation of funding in the FY09 budget to support the purchase of additional computers and software and other electronic resources for classroom learning activities as well as in the media center
- report the status of the FY08 budget request to fund an additional aide for both the library and the technology coordinator

Although the Commission has concerns about some aspects of the school, it was pleased to acknowledge the following:

- the progress implementing the senior project effective for the class of 2010
- the school's portfolio project which will include individual student progress in achieving the school's academic expectations as stated in the mission
- the appointment of a portfolio coordinator
- the in-service days during which all students and their teachers are engaged in discussing and identifying work to be included in their portfolios
- the updating of the job descriptions for the librarian and the technology coordinator
- the installation of a new telephone/communication system
- the electrical repairs in the science classrooms
- the professional development offerings in the area of curriculum mapping through Endicott College

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- the allocation of monies from local parent and community organizations to purchase computers, accompanying software, and other electronic resources

The school's warning status will be reviewed when the Commission considers the Two-Year Progress Report. Consistent with the Commission's follow-up procedures, the Two-Year 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.

Sincerely,



Pamela Gray-Bennett

PGB/pt

cc: Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Donald Gallant, Chair, Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Thomas R. Moore, Chair, Commission on Public Secondary Schools