November 6, 2019

Marciel Sheets
Interim Assistant Superintendent
Lawrence High School
70-71 North Parish Road
Lawrence, MA 01843

Dear Ms. Sheets:

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools, at its October 21-22, 2019 meeting, reviewed the Accreditation report from the recent visit to Lawrence High School and voted to award the school continued 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 presence of challenging and observable 21st century learning expectations reflected in students’ behaviors and staff attitudes about serving students
- the sense of profound belonging that students associate with their school - a place they view as a caring home
- the development of the distributive leadership team model to ensure inclusive practices and to maximize input
- the sense of celebration and joy that is communicated through the "I Am Lawrence" initiative
- the integrated curriculum at the International High School Academy
- the strength and impact of the relationship-based approach curriculum at RISE
- the dedication to providing advisory/seminar and extended learning time which allows for increased opportunities to develop students’ knowledge, understanding, and application of the school’s 21st century learning expectations
- the establishment of Humanities and STEM Pathway coordinators to address curricular and vertical articulation in their respective content areas
- the commitment to dual enrollment and post-secondary access through an impressive variety of college-level courses and electives at Upper School Academy and Abbot Lawrence Academy
as well, the Committee was pleased to note the following:

- the unifying impact of the displays and the showcasing of visual and performing arts that builds a positive culture of shared ownership and pride
- the school's careful planning and master scheduling that creates reasonable class sizes and teaching loads which maximize student success
- the school’s dedication to creating and growing the advisory/seminar period that provides for an adult connection for each student beyond the guidance counselor
- the highly effective use by the campus leadership team of the DESE evaluation tool to focus on teaching improvements and promote student learning
- the high level of visibility of the headmaster and his deep commitment to the well-being of the students and staff
- the impressive level of content expertise and high level of true investment by teachers into providing outreach and support for students who greatly value and respect their teachers
- the excellent array of coordinated outreach efforts, and a common belief that the school will do everything that it can to help a student succeed
- the consistent budget for library/media center resources dedicated to support students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
- the wide variety of support services for English language learners, including highly specialized and accessible supports for students with the highest level of need
- the strong outreach and partnerships with local agencies to support the mental health and post-secondary planning needs of the community
- the employment of student custodians to help maintain cleanliness in the school
- the access, cleanliness, and welcoming school environment available to students and families beyond school hours including weekends and evenings
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- the presence of multiple bus runs, allowing students to become fully involved in school programs, clubs, and sports
- the provision of three meals per day at no cost to all students that make staying after school possible and enhance participation in sports and clubs
- the strong, consistent, and varied support emanating from partnerships with higher education, business, and other community organizations
- the partnerships with post-secondary institutions to provide an array of options for students including dual enrollment

All accredited schools must submit a required Two-Year Progress Report, which in the case of Lawrence High School is due on September 1, 2021. 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 https://cpss.neasc.org under the “Process” 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:

- expand and further develop specific criteria for measurement for monitoring and collecting data on student progress toward achieving the school’s academic, social, and civic expectations
- provide professional development for teachers to optimize extended periods of instruction with specific reference to increasing the level of student engagement in their learning for all students in all the academies
- create opportunities for LHS’s academies and the sending schools to discuss curriculum with the goal of strengthening vertical alignment
- develop and implement a plan to unify faculty across academies and to support curriculum alignment
- create continuity in advisory/seminar classes from grades 9 through 12
- ensure consistency in the implementation of systemized multi-tiered intervention strategies across all seven academies
- ensure that assistive technology needs of special education students are fully met
evaluate and reorganize school counselor structure, roles, and responsibilities to ensure sufficient staffing to deliver comprehensive services and a multi-tiered system of social-emotional supports
- develop and implement a school-wide, comprehensive, written, developmental school counseling plan across all seven academies
- ensure adequate staffing of and space for library/media services so that all students have equitable access to these resources
- effectively communicate the range of available supports to all stakeholders
- develop and implement both short- and long-term technology plans to increase training in and support for the use of technology tools to develop higher order thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills for all students across all academies
- develop and implement a plan to address pest control and related health and sanitation concerns associated with consumption of food throughout the building
- develop and implement outreach to foster more parent engagement, particularly regarding training for use of the parent portal on PowerSchool
- develop and implement both short- and long-term capital plans consistent with city-wide capital improvement planning and Lawrence Alliance for Education Strategic Plan

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 Commission's Accreditation Handbook provides information on follow-up procedures.

The school's accreditation status will be reviewed when the Committee considers the Two-Year Progress Report. The school's Two-Year Progress Report should be submitted only by the principal through the Accreditation Portal by clicking on the green "Mark Progress Report Complete" button. 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,

[Signature]

George H. Edwards
GHE/mv

cc: Cynthia Paris, Superintendent, Lawrence Public Schools
    Daniel Rivera, Mayor, President, Lawrence Public Schools
    Ellin Booras, Chair, Visiting Committee
    Gregory B. Myers, Chair, Committee on Public Secondary Schools