



State of Rhode Island and Providence
Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street

Peter McWalters
Commissioner

January 29, 2008

Robert Pilkington, Director
Beacon Charter School
320 Main Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895

Dear Mr. Pilkington,

The High School Regulations were enacted in 2003 with subsequent guidance communicated to all districts and schools in 2004 and 2005. Frequent and progressive technical assistance, provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education, was made available to all districts/schools from 2004 to the present. The regulations specify that the Commissioner reviews the level of implementation of each district's/school's High School Diploma System. Beginning with the November 2005 peer review, high schools have submitted evidence of the level of their implementation a total of five separate times. Following each submission, detailed feedback was provided. For additional information regarding the regulations, guidance, and review criteria, go to www.ride.ri.gov and select the Office of Middle School and High School Redesign page.

As you are aware, preliminary approval for 2008 is primarily based upon alignment, access and opportunity, literacy, and personalization. In 2010, the Commissioner's Review will result in districts receiving full approval if they meet the criteria for the 2010 review. Full approval will require further implementation of the structures and programs of High School Diploma Systems, beyond the requirements for 2008.

The Commissioner's Review held during the fall of 2007, reviewed each district's/school's evidence of implementation of its High School Diploma System. At this time, Beacon Charter School's High School Diploma System is granted *preliminary approval* based on submission of adequate evidence.

Review teams summarized their findings regarding progress and issues still needing attention in the implementation of districts'/schools' High School Diploma System. To obtain the full summary of the review contact the Office of Middle and High School Redesign at 222-8461.

Beacon Charter is commended for developing a personalized learning environment that supports and helps each student reach his or her goals. Additionally, the district is commended for the full implementation of a scaffolded literacy program that supports all students achieving proficiency.

Telephone (401) 222-4600 **Fax** (401) 222-6178 **TTY** 800-745-5555 **Voice** 800-745-6575

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The following items represent key areas that need continued attention under *preliminary approval*:

- Complete alignment of all courses and assessments with associated rubrics (citing specific GSEs being assessed) to the GSEs
- Revise gap analysis (full school-wide accounting of all GSEs)
- Further analysis of disaggregated student course taking patterns relative to full alignment
- Calibration and collection of annotated benchmarked student work to ensure consistency of expectations across the school community

In order to progress toward full approval for 2010, it will take continued hard work and commitment from the Beacon Charter educational community to further implement a coherent set of programs and structures to support its High School Diploma System. Districts that have been granted *preliminary approval* should plan to participate in appropriate technical assistance sessions or networks to support their work in addressing the above areas.

Finally, enclosed is a copy of a parent/guardian letter from the Commissioner to use in your communications with key stakeholders regarding the results of the Commissioner's Review. If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, contact the Office of Middle and High School Redesign at 222-8461.

Sincerely,



Peter McWalters, Commissioner

Cc: Patricia Hawkdriges

Enclosure (1)