

The Maynard Public Schools are committed to high academic standards that encourage students, teachers, and community members to achieve their personal best through lifelong learning.



## MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parents:

I wanted to share with some facts around Maynard High School Accreditation, since several people have brought rumors and concerns to my attention.

*Will Maynard HS lose its Accreditation next fall?*

No.

*What is Accreditation?*

Hospitals, museums, many colleges, many private schools, and almost all public schools voluntarily join a regional accrediting association and submit themselves to periodic peer-reviews against predetermined standards. Massachusetts public schools are reevaluated for Accreditation every 10 years by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, known colloquially by its acronym, 'NEASC'.

*Where is MHS in the process?*

In the spring of 2002 MHS hosted a site visit by a team of educators from accredited school members of the New England Association of Schools & Colleges. The Visiting Team identified a series of 'commendations'; and placed MHS on 'Warning' status with 'recommendations' in several standards, not in itself unusual. Following the site-visit report, the MHS Principal and faculty must study the recommendations and develop corrective actions to address *each* recommendation. Schools then must report progress back to NEASC on a yearly, a two year and a five year schedule. In the 10<sup>th</sup> year the process begins all over with another site-visit to maintain Accreditation. The Maynard HS Principal has just filed his Five Year Report. **All** the academic recommendations have been addressed; MHS has met all the NEASC standards based on curriculum alone.

*Why then is MHS now on 'Probation'?*

In the initial '02 report a series of facilities issues were identified, e.g. inadequacies in Science labs and the library. Some corrective action was taken to address these facilities recommendations. There were some renovations in science rooms and some resources, i.e. a full-time librarian, computers, were added to the library. Four years after the 2002 site visit, NEASC notified the District in a January '06 letter that facilities progress was inadequate; MHS was placed on 'probation' for facilities inadequate to support curriculum delivery.

*Then What?*

Within a month of the NEASC notification, the Superintendent proposed a Facilities Study plan to the School Committee because several of the identified facilities problems required architectural and engineering analysis to correct. The SC approved that plan; added Green Meadow to the study, and immediately advanced a warrant to the May '06 Town Meeting. In the summer of '06 the SC formed a Facilities Advisory Council of citizens to work with Tappe Associates. This group spent months, guided by architects and informed by engineers' reviews, studying both facilities.

*Where are we now?*

Following a January NEASC presentation, School Committee, Selectmen, Fin Com and anyone who saw the WAVM tape understands that Maynard must make HS facilities improvements for its current generation of students, or lose Accreditation. The Facilities Advisory Council gave its final report to the School Committee on March 1. Given the immediate press of NEASC standards and a need to work with the Massachusetts School Building Authority, MSBA, to obtain State funding, the School Committee is advancing HS facilities issues on two fronts, simultaneously. First the May Town warrant will include a request for a new HS boiler and new library resources, e.g. computers, on-line references, research materials, etc. The library additions were chosen because they are current, essential needs, and like the boiler are portable capital investments. Next year's students will enjoy a new, expanded, HS library, and everyone can be confident of heat! Secondly, the School Committee has filed an MSBA application to begin a collaborative process to seek State assistance to build a new HS facility.

*So what about Accreditation?*

These short term 'portable' investments will satisfy immediate NEASC expectations for progress towards fulfilling standards for Accreditation. Long-term planning for a new HS facility is ultimately critical for continuing Accreditation. Only if the District were to ignore critical facility issues would we lose our Accreditation. These issues will be addressed in more detail at the May Town Meeting.

We will be sponsoring some information meetings this spring to keep you informed of our ongoing efforts. For more detail go to <http://www.maynard.k12.ma.us/mps/supt/fac/default.aspx>

Sincerely,  
Dr. Mark Masterson  
Superintendent of Schools