



Founded 1885

New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Independent Schools

Mission: *We are dedicated to fostering educational excellence and institutional improvement in New England independent schools and to honoring their diversity. To this end, we shepherd each of our schools through a voluntary accreditation process that is structured around carefully considered standards, self-evaluation, peer review, and follow-up by the school.*

2007 Standards for Accreditation and Indicators

Accreditation of an institution by NEASC indicates that it meets or exceeds NEASC standards and criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer group review process. An accredited school is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation has two faces: quality assurance and school improvement. Attention to the former has proved essential in defending the independence of schools and providing relief from external regulation. The primary function of accreditation, however, is school improvement.

Independent schools must meet all fifteen Standards for Accreditation that are published here. If a school is found not to be in compliance with one or more, the Commission on Independent Schools will set a date by which the Standard(s) must be met if the school is to retain its accreditation.

The Commission has established lists of “suggested indicators” for each Standard that it feels represent good practices and that it encourages schools to meet. Schools are not required to comply with all indicators, however, and are welcome to submit other data and information to document their compliance with the Standards.

Standard 1 (Mission): There is congruence between the school’s stated mission and core values and its actual program, policies, planning, and decision-making at both the operational and governance levels.

Suggested Indicators:

- 1.a. The mission of the school is stated clearly.
- 1.b. The mission of the school is embraced by all constituencies.
- 1.c. The mission statement is reviewed regularly, using a process that involves representatives of major constituencies of the school, as appropriate.
- 1.d. The school’s climate and culture support an effective educational program, consistent with its stated mission.
- 1.e. Requirements and expectations of students, parents, faculty, trustees, and employees clearly reflect the values and mission of the school.
- 1.f. The culture of the school reflects a commitment to implementing the mission of the school.

Standard 2 (Governance): The school has an appropriate system of governance that assures that the school remains true to its mission and that it has the necessary resources to support its present and prospective operations.

Suggested Indicators:

- 2.a. The governance of the school is clearly defined, understood by all constituents, and provides for:
 - continuity of mission
 - stability and ethical process in transitions of leadership
 - a comprehensive, multi-year planning process
 - assurance of adequate financial resources
 - institutional advancement/development
 - evaluation of and support of the professional growth of the head of school
 - a model of inclusive behavior and integrity for the school community
 - establishing and monitoring needed school policies
 - self-evaluation of individuals and groups with governance responsibilities
 - defined orientation and evaluation procedures
- 2.b. Provision is made for participation of all constituencies in the policy-making process, as appropriate.
- 2.c. The school has a current Multi-Year Plan that integrates all school plans and addresses finances, as well as timelines for implementation.
- 2.d. Operational and educational functions of the school are delegated to the head of school.

Standard 3 (Enrollment): The admissions process assures that those students who enroll are appropriate, given the school's mission, and are likely to benefit from their experience at the school.

Suggested Indicators:

- 3.a. The school in its public relations materials presents an accurate description of its mission, organization, staff, program, and facilities.
- 3.b. The school has clearly stated procedures for the admission of students, which are developmentally appropriate at different levels.
- 3.c. The school has developed a profile of its student body that defines the range and type of students suitable for admission.
- 3.d. If tuition assistance is offered, there are clearly stated policies and procedures for the application for and award of grants which are consistent with the mission of the school.
- 3.e. The school uses information concerning the performance of students and graduates in evaluating admissions procedures.
- 3.f. The school undertakes an analysis of the reasons students depart prior to graduation and uses the results to inform admissions procedures and program revisions.
- 3.g. Those responsible for admissions communicate with those responsible for the program of the school to assure that necessary resources are available to meet the needs of individual students who are admitted.
- 3.h. The admissions staff communicates regularly with the teaching faculty about the specific talents/strengths/skills/needs of newly enrolled students.

Standard 4 (Program): The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that stems from the school's beliefs about teaching and learning, is appropriate to support its mission and core values, and is consistent with the needs of the range of students admitted.

Suggested Indicators:

- 4.a. Professional development time is used for faculty to discuss issues of teaching and learning.
- 4.b. The school programs demonstrate consideration for the appropriate intellectual, social, physical, aesthetic, emotional and ethical development of students in all aspects of school and student life.
- 4.c. The curriculum demonstrates continuity from year to year.
- 4.d. The school has a policy for regularly reviewing the academic program and has completed a recent, written Curriculum Plan outlining desirable and/or necessary improvements.
- 4.e. Attention is paid to transitions between grade levels and/or divisions of the school so as to facilitate passage of students from one level/division to another.
- 4.f. The program offers a variety of cultural experiences to reflect (a) the diversity of students enrolled and (b) the multicultural nature of the region, country, and world.
- 4.g. The school recognizes developmental levels of children and takes them into consideration in planning programs and teaching methodologies.

Standard 5 (Experience of the Students): The school actively considers individual students and has developed plans, policies, programs, and pedagogy to nurture, support, and encourage all students to reach their potential and to participate in the life of the school.

Suggested Indicators:

- 5.a. The school recognizes differences within the student body such as gender, learning style or ability, race, age, ethnicity, family background, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and religious practice, and actively responds to students' and adults' positive or negative experiences.
- 5.b. Time is made available on a regular basis for teachers to plan together and to discuss students (both individuals and groups).
- 5.c. Time is made available on a regular basis for teachers to learn ways in which their cultural backgrounds help or hinder their ability to plan together to work with students, parents, and other adults in the community.
- 5.d. There is a procedure in place to assess and report on how individual students are meeting the goals of the program with regard to both personal and academic growth.
- 5.e. There is a process in place to see how the school's programs need to change to reflect the diversity of cultural experiences and to identify adults and/or students who will need additional support to function effectively in a pluralistic environment.
- 5.f. Resources are available to faculty (in-school or through outside consultants) to assist in identifying and meeting the needs of individual students.
- 5.g. There is a process in place to identify students who might benefit from a modification of the program.
- 5.h. There is a process in place to identify students for whom the school is inappropriate and a supportive process for counseling those students.
- 5.i. Counseling, advising, and guidance procedures and personnel address the needs of the students.
- 5.j. College or school placement counseling, as applicable, addresses the needs of the students.
- 5.k. Information is systematically gathered regarding students' experience at the school and is used to inform program planning.
- 5.l. The school promotes an equitable, just, and inclusive community that inspires students to respect and value diversity and to be active and responsible citizens and has ways to insure that this objective is met.

Standard 6 (Resources to Support the Program): Given the school's mission, there are adequate resources (space, equipment, technology, materials, and community) to support the school's program.

Suggested Indicators:

- 6.a. Instructional facilities (including space, furnishings, and play/recreation areas) are adequate for the instructional program and are age appropriate.
- 6.b. There are instructional materials and equipment in sufficient quality, quantity, and variety to give effective support to the aims and methods of the program.
- 6.c. The school has a Library Plan which is integrated with the curriculum and which provides students with age appropriate experiences in research and reading and supports the broad purposes of the educational program.
- 6.d. The school has a written Academic Technology Plan, developed by teachers and academic leaders, covering the integration of technology into the various components of the program and providing for the professional development of teachers in the implementation of this plan.
- 6.e. The school has in place an Acceptable Use Policy of which students and families are informed and the school provides information to students and families on the appropriate and ethical use of technology.
- 6.f. There are procedures in place to assure that teachers have a leading role in planning the use of technology in their teaching.
- 6.g. Non-academic programs, if available, are consistent with the school's mission and are well organized, supplied, and staffed.
- 6.h. The schedule is planned by day and year to provide for the total program.
- 6.i. The school interacts with the community in which it is located and avails itself of community resources.
- 6.j. The school strives to be a positive member of the community in which it exists, is sensitive to the interests of its neighbors, and takes appropriate advantage of the character of its setting.
- 6.k. The financial aid resources committed to students and their families reflect the goals and mission of the school.

Standard 7 (Early Childhood Program): The early childhood program meets the social, intellectual, and developmental needs of its students by providing appropriate programs, adequate staffing, and sufficient resources and facilities. (The Early Childhood Program refers to 3 and 4 year olds.)

Suggested Indicators:

- 7.a. The school communicates and collaborates with parents of children in its early childhood program in a manner which addresses the needs of this community.
- 7.b. Staff who work directly with children in the early childhood program are trained in the field of early childhood education/child development. Their numbers are sufficient in relation to numbers and ages of children in each early childhood grouping to perform tasks effectively and safely.
- 7.c. The school has curricular and extra-curricular programs in place which specifically and effectively address intellectual and developmental needs of children in the early childhood program and are consistent with the school's stated mission.
- 7.d. Facilities provided for the early childhood program, including instructional, activity and play spaces, and supporting resources such as lavatories and dining areas, are adequate in construction, space provided per child, and maintenance to meet the needs of the children in the program.
- 7.e. Materials, routines, and procedures are so organized as to protect the health and safety of young children enrolled in the early childhood program.
- 7.f. Those sections of the early childhood program that serve children under the age of three meet state health and safety guidelines for approval of child care facilities.

Standard 8 (Residential Program): The residential program provides for an intentional curriculum, appropriate facilities, engaging activities, and adequate supervision to meet the needs of each student.

Suggested Indicators:

- 8.a. Residential staff are qualified to meet the needs of students under their care and supervision.
- 8.b. The residential program is integrated into the total life of the school, especially with regard to the interaction with day students.
- 8.c. Evening, weekend, and vacation activities are actively planned, as part of the residential curriculum, to meet the needs of the students.
- 8.d. The school provides for the needs of international students, students with limited financial resources, and students who have difficulty adjusting to being away from home.
- 8.e. If technological services, such as computers, Internet access, email, and/or telephones, are included in residential areas, there is a process to ensure that policies and procedures are consistent with the school's overall Technology Plan and Acceptable Use Policy.
- 8.f. Through a well-defined process involving students, parents, and staff, a regular review of the residential program is accomplished which is intended to lead to revisions and/or improvements.
- 8.g. There are clearly-stated, written, and understood expectations for residential students and staff.
- 8.h. Students are included in planning and developing policies, expectations, and programs.

Standard 9 (Faculty): There is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified faculty to carry out the mission of the school.

Suggested Indicators:

- 9.a. The school has a procedure for recruiting professional staff who are the best available for the tasks to be performed and for the mission of the school; and also has a procedure for screening and interviewing candidates and providing them with necessary background information about the school.
- 9.b. Academic personnel are qualified by education, training, or experience in the areas to which they are assigned.
- 9.c. Academic personnel are regularly trained in the areas of skills, content, and the context of a multicultural society.
- 9.d. Personnel practices provide ethical treatment among all faculty, administration, and staff with respect to compensation, workloads, and working conditions.
- 9.e. The school demonstrates a commitment to staff development by providing opportunity for and expecting participation in professional growth and development.
- 9.f. The faculty are treated with respect and the school sets clear expectations for their professional behavior.

Standard 10 (Administration): The administration provides leadership and maintains a structure to facilitate the effective functioning of the school, including the participation of faculty in decision-making.

Suggested Indicators:

- 10.a. The administration is effective in carrying out the program of the school and the policies established by the governing body or school board.
- 10.b. Administrative personnel and support staff are qualified by education, training or experience to serve in the areas to which they are assigned.
- 10.c. The administration assures review and evaluation of the educational program and provides that a current Curriculum Plan is in place.
- 10.d. The school involves faculty in decision-making about the program of the school.
- 10.e. The school demonstrates a commitment to administrator development by providing opportunity for and expecting participation in professional growth and development.

Standard 11 (Evaluation and Assessment): The school engages in forms of programmatic assessment consistent with fulfilling its mission and core values. This data is used to inform decision-making and planning.

Suggested Indicators:

- 11.a. The school conducts annual program review and revision based on assessment of student performance.
- 11.b. The school uses some form of longitudinal assessment of student performance (such as portfolio assessment).
- 11.c. The school conducts exit interviews of students and faculty and uses the data to inform admissions and program planning.
- 11.d. The school has procedures to follow-up on the experiences of alumni/ae and uses the data to inform admissions and program planning.
- 11.e. The school brings in consultants and/or visitors from other schools to participate in the periodic evaluation of programs.
- 11.f. The school participates in state sponsored learning results activities, as appropriate.
- 11.g. The school carries out programs for supervision and evaluation of all personnel that are understood by all concerned.
- 11.h. Those responsible for leadership engage in periodic self-evaluation of their performance.
- 11.i. The school develops and publishes a policy and plan on diversity and difference, derived from its mission and core values, that it uses to evaluate the status of the school in this regard and to guide planning to achieve goals.

Standard 12 (Health and Safety): The school is a safe and healthy place for students and faculty.

Suggested Indicators:

- 12.a. The school has a comprehensive written Crisis Response Plan that is clearly understood by faculty, staff, students, and parents.
- 12.b. The physical facilities and staffing for health care are adequate to meet the needs of the student body, whether residential or day.
- 12.c. Facilities and staff for food services are adequate and the quality of the food meets reasonable nutritional requirements.
- 12.d. The school has necessary support services and programs to meet the emotional needs of students.
- 12.e. The school periodically conducts a safety audit of its facilities.
- 12.f. There is a procedure in place to identify and monitor compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
- 12.g. There is a person or committee with responsibility for reviewing safety provisions for any off-campus activity, including field trips, athletic events, wilderness expeditions, etc.
- 12.h. The school has a reporting procedure in place to record and follow-up on any incidents regarding the health and safety of students or staff.
- 12.i. The school is a safe, clean, well-organized place that nurtures learning and mutual understanding among students and faculty. Concerns for safety include physical and emotional well-being.

Standard 13 (Communication): The school maintains effective systems of external and internal communication and record keeping that inform all constituents and facilitate participation where appropriate.

Suggested Indicators:

- 13.a. The school maintains complete and accurate records for both current and former students that are protected against loss by fire or theft and are available only to authorized persons.
- 13.b. The school publishes current school policies and procedures in handbooks or makes them readily available in other forms to the affected constituencies.
- 13.c. The school has a mechanism in place for input from staff into decision-making regarding personnel policies, budget preparation, and other areas, as appropriate.
- 13.d. Information regarding the financial responsibilities of the parent/guardian or student to the institution is clearly stated in writing and is made available prior to enrollment.
- 13.e. There is a procedure for determining equitable adjustments in tuition and other financial obligations existing between the parent/guardian and the institution.
- 13.f. Appropriate channels are available for parents to reflect their concerns and interests to school personnel.
- 13.g. Student progress is reported regularly to parents in a clear and comprehensive manner.
- 13.h. The school structures ways to work with parents/guardians proactively. The school is aware of the ways in which families from diverse background and socio-economic status are affected by school policies and programs.
- 13.i. The school maintains complete and accurate records for staff and faculty members that are available only to authorized persons and are protected against loss by fire or theft.
- 13.j. There is an internal communication system to distribute minutes of meetings, give notice of decisions, and inform the school community of events and other news.

Standard 14 (Infrastructure): There are adequate resources (personnel, finances, facilities, equipment, and materials) to provide for the overall institutional needs of the school.

Suggested Indicators:

- 14.a. The school has appropriate procedures for accounting and for auditing the accounts of the school.
- 14.b. The school has adequate financial resources for the needs of the school.
- 14.c. The school has adequate provision for insurance coverage.
- 14.d. The physical facilities of the school are appropriately maintained.
- 14.e. There is a recent, written Facilities Plan covering future needs, improvements, and additions.
- 14.f. The school has a clear picture of its long and short-term development needs and the plans, organization, and staffing to meet those needs.
- 14.g. The school has a written, institutional Technology Plan that provides for the coordination of academic and administrative functions, defines the technological services available, projects needs and directions, and describes the management system.

Standard 15 (The Accreditation Process): The school is fully committed to institutional improvement and to the process of accreditation. The school completed an inclusive self-study, conducted in a spirit of full disclosure and following Association guidelines; responds to Commission recommendations and the requirement to meet all Standards; and participates fully in the peer review process, hosting a visiting committee and sending personnel to serve on visiting committees to other institutions.

Suggested Indicators:

- 15.a. The school has completed a thorough self-study in accordance with NEASC policies.
- 15.b. Administration, professional staff and those with governance responsibilities have actively participated in and are familiar with the self-study and its findings.
- 15.c. The school has in place a procedure for follow-up on plans and strategies found in its own self-study and on recommendations in the visiting committee report and to integrate improvement plans resulting from the self-study into the school's Multi-Year Plan.
- 15.d. The school participates in the Association's peer based accreditation process and is represented on visiting committees to other schools.

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