

Focused Visit Review

The Role of the Visiting Committee

The Commission on Independent Schools will, from time to time, request a small team of evaluators to visit a member school to obtain information or verify a report submitted by the institution. This focused visit is different from a regular comprehensive evaluation visit as follows:

- The visit is typically scheduled for one day
- The visiting committee is small in number
- The entire institution is not evaluated

Material to assist in preparation for a focused visit is in the form of a progress report submitted by the school, any communication between the Commission and the institution and the charge to the visiting committee by the Commission.

One member of the visiting committee is identified as the chair and that person is responsible for making necessary arrangements for the Committee and for all communications with the school to assure an efficient and meaningful visit. The chair is expected to be in contact with the other members of the Committee and with the chief administrative officer of the institution prior to the visit.

It is expected that team members will review all materials provided by the NEASC prior to the on-site visit. Upon arrival at the school, the chair will hold an organizational meeting and assign responsibilities to the members of the Committee.

The Visit

Because the visit is very brief, it is important that a schedule be established with opportunities to meet with appropriate school personnel and review necessary written material. It is expected that the Committee will be prepared to write a report and make a formal recommendation to the Commission on Independent Schools at the conclusion of the visit.

continued

The Visit – continued

Although it is not necessary to communicate all the findings of the Committee to the chief administrative officer, it is certainly appropriate to schedule an exit interview with him or her prior to departing. Care should be taken that the content and tone of the exit interview are consistent with the written Report.

The Focused Visit Report

Each *Focused Visit Report* should contain a narrative section describing the school and the issues that were identified as the focus for the work of the Committee. Strengths of the school and areas of concern should be mentioned, particularly as they relate to the charge by the Commission. Recommendations and suggestions may also be made which are intended to strengthen the school. It is certainly appropriate to relate any comments to the *Standards for Accreditation*. The report should conclude with a specific recommendation to the Commission.

The chair of the visiting committee is responsible for the preparation of the report. The completed report, the recommendation of the committee and any expense vouchers should be submitted by the chair within thirty days of the visit. All materials should be sent to the Director of the Commission on Independent Schools at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

When the *Focused Visit Report* is submitted to the Director of the Commission, the committee's assignment is complete.