

**New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.  
Commission on Independent Schools**

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Founded in 1885

## **Substantive Change Report\***

**Based on 2007 Standards for Accreditation**

\*A school will use this form when one or more grades, an early childhood, residential, or post-graduate program are added.

# **Amending Accreditation Based on A Substantive Change**

## **Based on 2007 Standards**

### **Introduction**

A school already accredited by NEASC may find itself expanding and adding grades or a residential program to its existing structure. For example, it may be moving from a K-8 to a K-12 institution, or it may be adding an Early Childhood Center to already existing and accredited Primary and Secondary Departments.

The following protocol must be followed when a member school applies for a revision in its accreditation status to cover a wide range of changes without necessarily going through a comprehensive self-study and full visiting committee process.

### **Principles**

1. NEASC recognize the dynamic nature of its member schools and the fact that school communities go through major, sometimes rapid, changes.
2. NEASC will preserve the flexible, supportive nature of its accreditation process so as to ensure that schools have the opportunity to obtain accredited status for the substantive change without unnecessary work or expense.
3. NEASC will also preserve the integrity and status of its accreditation process. The substantive change will therefore require reporting and evaluation using the two sets of “bench marks” which apply to all NEASC accreditation processes, namely:
  - the school’s own mission
  - the NEASC Standards for Accreditation

4. NEASC requires the school to file a report when making a substantive change, following the attached form. Upon receipt of the report by the Commission on Independent Schools, the school's accreditation will be extended to include the new program. A focused visit from the Commission will follow within three years.
5. Once the substantive change is reviewed through the focused visit, subsequent procedures will automatically and immediately become synchronized with the accreditation processes applicable to the rest of the school.
6. If the effect of the substantive change is such that the general nature of the entire school is likely to be radically changed, NEASC reserves the right to require the whole school to submit itself to a complete evaluation. This would only be required in very special cases and after in-depth discussions between the school and NEASC.

### **Practical Steps**

The practical steps involved in extending accreditation to include a substantive change are as follows:

1. A school will contact the NEASC office to request initiation of the process.
2. NEASC will supply the school with the form for an initial written Report on Substantive Change to the Commission on Independent Schools.
3. The Commission will consider the information submitted by the school. There are two possible outcomes which are:
  - a. that the accreditation is extended to include the substantive change
  - b. that accreditation of the substantive change be granted with a Special Progress Report due to address specific issues.
4. After one year and before the end of three years of which the substantive change program has been in place, a one-day focused visit from the Commission will be scheduled. The visitor or visitors will submit a brief report to the Commission which will determine if the initial revision in the school's accreditation based on the Report on Substantive Change is to be confirmed or revised.
5. Once this final approval is made by the Commission, the substantive change will be the basis for any further accreditation or interim evaluation reports required.

## **Preparing the Report on Substantive Change**

The Head of School is responsible for submitting the completed Report on Substantive Change to the Commission. The work involved in completing the Report form and submitting the additional documents required will in some ways be a “mini-Self Study” based on the NEASC Standards for Accreditation, which is a valuable exercise in itself. However, it is anticipated that the process will not be too time-consuming, especially as the majority of the required documents will be copies of items already in use within the school.

While the Head of School has the overall responsibility for the submission of the Report, it is envisioned that other appropriate members of the school community will actively collaborate in the process. The members of the school’s administration and faculty most directly involved in supervising the proposed substantive change will certainly be expected to take part in the completion of the Report.

The Report will consist of the following:

1. Completing the following Report form and providing those documents or supporting materials that are required.
2. Completing a rating by the school of the Standards for Accreditation using the attached form. It will not be necessary to utilize the Suggested Indicators as in an initial or decennial accreditation process, unless a school finds this process useful