

INTRODUCTION

**This section introduces
The New England
Association and the value
of the evaluation process.**

Regional Accreditation and the New England Association

There are six regional accrediting associations in the United States, each a private, non-profit organization which serves schools in a defined section of the country.

Founded in 1885, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is the nation's oldest regional accrediting association. It serves over 2000 public and independent schools, colleges and universities in the six states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont and international schools.

The Association is comprised of six Commissions:

- the Commission on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS),
- the Commission on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS),
- the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS),
- the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE),
- the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), and
- the Commission on American and International Schools Abroad (CAISA).

The Association's purpose is exclusively educational. It serves the public and the educational community by (1) establishing and maintaining high Standards of educational excellence and (2) utilizing evaluation processes which focus on self-improvement through effective peer review. Schools and colleges which voluntarily demonstrate through the Association's evaluation processes that they meet established Standards are accredited and thus become members in the Association.

Member schools and colleges must undertake an exhaustive self-study involving the participation of faculty, administrators, staff, students, community members, and board members. A committee of peers, comprised of professional educators who have volunteered to serve on the visiting committee, visits an institution to evaluate its adherence to stated Standards, a process that includes reviewing the findings of the self-study and identifying areas of strength, and making recommendations that will lead to better adherence to Standards and to school improvement. School and college personnel then respond to recommendations stated in the visiting committee report by designing and implementing short-term and long-range plans for improvement.

Accreditation is not a permanent status. Membership in the Association depends on schools and colleges demonstrating continued improvement and adherence to Standards through a regular cycle of routine and special progress reports. In addition, membership in the Association requires that all member institutions **(1) pay annual dues and (2) provide quality educators to serve on visiting committees for other member institutions.** This latter requirement is essential to the operation of the Association which depends on volunteers to staff teams.

Commissions within the Association are empowered to take action related to a school's continued accreditation. A Board of Trustees comprised of representatives from the Commissions within the Association as well as public members take action regarding granting candidacy and initial accreditation.

Regional Associations

School accreditation is awarded by the respective commissions of six regional accrediting associations which together cover the United States and its territories. The Associations also accredit certain international schools.

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Elementary Education
Commission on Secondary Schools
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680
Phone: 215-662-5600
Fax: 215-662-0957
www.css-msa.org

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Public Elementary and Middle Schools
Commission on Public Secondary Schools
Commission on Technical and Career Institutions
209 Burlington Road
Bedford, MA 01730-1433
Phone: 781-271-0022
Fax: 781-271-0950
www.neasc.org

North Central Association

Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement
NCA CASI Education Office
9115 Westside Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30009
Phone: 888-413-3669 x6964
www.ncacasi.org

Northwest Association of Accredited Schools

1510 Robert Street
Suite 103
Boise, ID 83705
Phone: 208-493-5077
Fax: 208-334-3228
www.northwestaccreditation.org

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Council on Accreditation and School Improvement
Commissions on Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033
Phone: 404-679-4500
Fax: 404-679-4541
www.sacscasi.org

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Accrediting Commission for Schools
533 Airport Boulevard, Suite 200
Burlingame, CA 94010-2009
Phone: 650-696-1060
Fax: 650-696-1867
www.acswasc.org

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS) serves over 650 K-12, middle/high, and high schools in New England. It is comprised of 26 Commission members who are elected by member school delegates at the Association's Annual Meeting. These include:

- 18 high school administrators, three from each of the six New England states
- 2 middle-high school administrators elected at-large
- 3 central office administrators, each member representing a specific state as determined on a rotating basis with each state represented in alphabetical order for a period of six years
- 1 non-administrator from a member school
- 1 public member who is from a district which has at least one member school and who is currently not an employee of an educational system
- 1 at-large educator

In addition, the Commission office has professional and support staff who work with member schools and the Commission with regard to the accreditation process.

The Commission meets four times per year to review evaluation and progress reports presented on behalf of member schools and those institutions seeking initial accreditation.

At the Association's 125th Annual Meeting in December 2010, the Commission on Public Schools was approved. The Commission, once established, will include the Commission on Public Secondary Schools, the Commission on Public Elementary and Middle Schools, and the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions. The transition to one Commission is being led by three Commission members representing the three Commissions in collaboration with the three Commission Directors. The CPSS Standards for Accreditation, the three phases of the accreditation process, and the established protocols will remain in place as documented in this Accreditation Handbook.

CPSS Mission Statement

CPSS MISSION STATEMENT

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools in partnership with member schools ensures, through an ongoing accreditation process, that all students experience an equitable, quality education vital to the success of a democratic society.

CPSS CORE VALUES

To achieve our mission CPSS commits to...

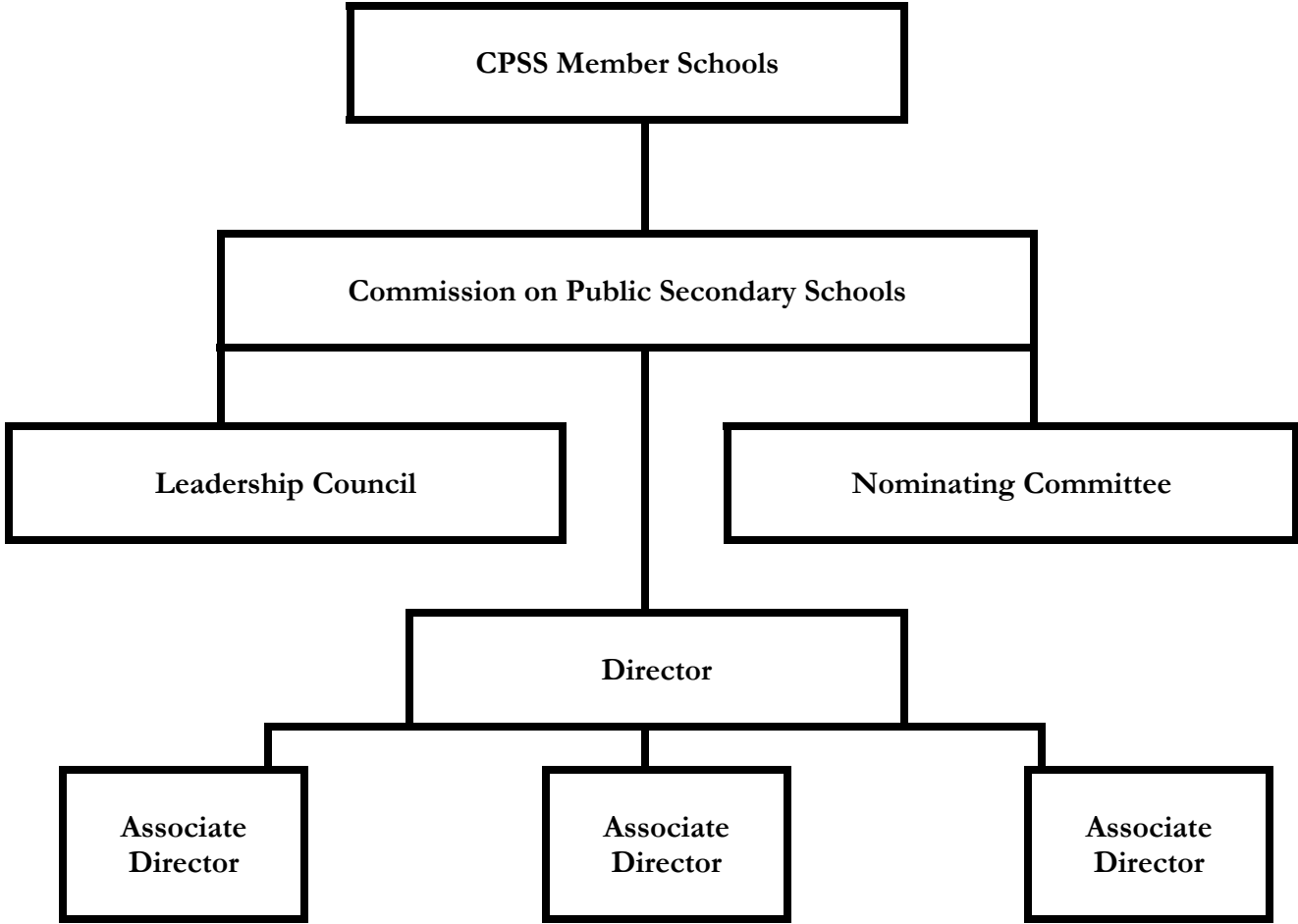
- maintain relevant and dynamic Standards of Accreditation which define a quality education;
- support member schools through self-evaluation, peer review, and ongoing monitoring;
- support research-based practices critical to continuous school improvement;
- model a culture of self-reflection, collaboration, and inquiry.

To support the CPSS mission, member schools agree to...

- participate actively in the accreditation process;
- demonstrate adherence to the Standards for Accreditation which fosters academic, social, civic growth for students, professional development for faculty, and continuous improvement for schools.

Revised June 2011

CPSS Organizational Chart



The Meaning and Value of Accreditation

Although public education is within the jurisdiction of some federal agencies such as the Department of Education and its Office of Education, this country has no centralized, national control over educational institutions. Within recent years state and local governments have increased their levels of supervision over education, but, in general, schools continue to operate with considerable independence. Professional educators, however, have recognized and addressed the need to measure school programs against mutually held Standards of excellence. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is one of six private, non-profit regional accrediting associations that offer programs and services which monitor school performance and school improvement efforts. The mission of the Commission on Public Secondary Schools, one of six Commissions within the Association, is to maximize student learning and to promote the Standards which articulate best practices about student learning and the support of learning.

The Meaning of Accreditation

Accreditation of public secondary schools by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges indicates that the educational institution has conducted a self-evaluation of all of its programs and hosted a visiting committee to evaluate the institution in terms of its own stated educational goals and the seven Standards for Accreditation of the Commission on Public Secondary Schools.

The Standards for Accreditation are a research-based set of practices and concepts that provide guidance to schools on all aspects of the education -- academic, civic, and social -- of the young people under their care. The Standards which are considered to be living documents are reviewed and revised, as necessary, every five years. The process of review includes surveys of all member schools, specific consideration of feedback provided by schools that have recently undergone an accreditation visit, an appraisal of recent, relevant educational literature, and in-depth discussions at the Commission level. As needed, third parties, including consultants, are contracted to conduct relevant research to inform the revision of the Standards. The Standards tend to be reflective of current trends in research on public education without espousing one particular mode of thought.

The awarding of accreditation signifies that the school has met Commission Standards at an acceptable level and is committed to both maintain those Standards and to improve its educational program by implementing the recommendations of the visiting committee and the Commission. Continued accreditation is dependent upon a school demonstrating ongoing, reflective progress to improve teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning.

Membership in and accreditation by the NEASC is similar to membership in professional organizations such as the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association. In each case, a commitment toward continual self-evaluation, a pledge to self-improvement, and a desire to maintain the Standards for Accreditation are necessary.

The Value of Accreditation through Different Perspectives

✓ Value to the Local Citizen and Taxpayer

Accreditation of a local public school by the New England Association assures that tax money is supporting a school facility and programs that have been judged worthwhile by an outside team of evaluators, both in terms of the school's stated mission and expectations and in terms of the school's adherence to the seven Standards for Accreditation. Through the process of evaluation, the citizen is advised of the strengths, needs, and long-range plans of the school. Finally, the reputation of the community benefits from accreditation since the retention or the loss of accreditation has a demonstrable effect on local property values. It is quite common for principals of member schools to receive inquiries from potential homebuyers or renters in a given community seeking information about the nature and quality of programs in that community's high school. In addition to requests for information about the breadth of curricular and co-curricular programs, and about standardized and state test results, those inquiries often include specific questions about a school's accreditation status. Assumedly, a lack of accreditation would discourage individuals so informed from pursuing residency in communities whose school lacked accredited status.

✓ Value to School Board Members

School board members are ultimately responsible for the quality of public education in their town. Accreditation assures the citizens that the board's educational policies and plans related to accredited schools are sound.

The self-evaluation phase of the accreditation process also provides an ideal opportunity for an individual board member to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the school as it undergoes the process of evaluation and accreditation. If changes are needed, the accreditation process highlights them.

The accreditation process also provides the school a process that involves the entire school community in an introspective analysis of the nature and quality of school programs. The Standards for Accreditation and the self-study process encourage the reflective behaviors that all organizations must embrace to be able to maintain their vibrancy and efficacy.

✓ Value to System Administrators

The Standards for Accreditation provide a template for school review and improvement that can be combined with local, state, and federal initiatives focused both on compliance with mandates and on restructuring efforts. The Standards themselves are reflective of "best practices." Although strongly based on core concepts of accountability, equity, collaboration, personalization, and student engagement, the Standards provide latitude for individual schools to design programs and services specific to the needs of their stakeholders.

The Standards provide a template that is adaptable to local use. They provide for a cyclical review of all aspects of school program and mandate both consistency with the school district mission and coordination of curriculum with other district schools.

The accreditation process provides a rich opportunity to integrate system programs and processes during the self-study phase of the decennial cycle, assess their effectiveness as part of the on-site accreditation visit, and continue to effect changes throughout the follow-up phase of the cycle.

✓ **Value to Building Administrators and Teachers**

The school's administration and teachers enjoy the professional pride of working in an accredited institution. Accreditation provides both a personal and professional opportunity to work in a collegial, reflective manner toward educational improvement. The evaluation experience affords the opportunity for the administration and faculty to conduct and to receive a rigorous analysis of present conditions with a specific emphasis on teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning so that needed changes may be carefully planned and implemented following a reasonable timeline. Not only do individuals develop a new perspective on their own positions, but also a view of the institution as a whole which affords a better understanding of their role in the operation of the school. The accreditation process affirms the efforts of teachers and administrators by virtue of their having voluntarily subjected their professional endeavors to review and judgment by a committee of their peers, using the demanding accreditation Standards to measure the quality of those endeavors.

Results of a NEASC survey involving schools that hosted visiting committees provided positive and thoughtful responses. Cited among the most significant findings related to the impact of accreditation on the quality of a school's educational program were: improved instruction; enhanced teamwork and collegiality; increased focus on current research and best practice; improved organization effectiveness and long-range planning; expanded professional development programs; and increased involvement of parents and community members in the school, including their support for school initiatives. Included among narrative findings from the respondents on the benefits of the accreditation process were: the positive impact of the Teaching and Learning Standards for Accreditation in transitioning a school to a Standards-based, student-centered educational program; the stimulation of professional dialogue engendering positive change; the commitment to increased levels of academic challenge and improved student achievement; and the provision of a system of continuity that promotes educational quality among member schools.

✓ **Value to Students**

Students are most affected by accreditation since they are the central focus of the educational process. Accreditation assures them that their needs are being met through a quality educational program, that a vehicle exists to correct deficiencies in the school program, that their transfer credits will more likely be accepted should their family move, and that college representatives have the assurance of the quality of their preparation. Their confidence in their school and teachers, their attitude toward academic work and their personal development are all fostered by seeing their school invite, and respond to, constructive criticism. Adherence to the Standards also ensures the singular focus of school resources on students' achievement of valued learning expectations that address academic, civic, and social competencies articulated in the school's public statement of core values and beliefs about learning.

The Value of the Accreditation Methodology

Accreditation is the oldest and most traditional of the Standards-based systems of accountability. A study (1999) of the regional accreditation process conducted by The LAB at Brown University found that the NEASC accreditation visit, the "signature event of accreditation," is built upon a legitimate and valuable methodology for learning how well a school functions. This methodology, which is centered on a dynamic of inquiry, involves a team of peers generating knowledge about practices in the school and then drawing conclusions about how well they meet the Standards for Accreditation. The team also identifies commendations and recommendations for what the school should do to improve.

The attendant follow-up procedures are designed to ensure that all valid recommendations are acted upon in a timely fashion. The Commission expects that within five years the vast majority of the recommendations in the evaluation report will be completed or have a program/plan in place that will bring them to completion within a reasonable time. The Commission's general expectation in judging all reports is that the school will continue to make "reasonable progress" toward meeting the recommendations. This process of self-renewal provides for continuous reassessment in light of both changing school and community needs and advances in pedagogy and school administration/organization.

Summary

In summary, the goal of accreditation is to maintain a quality education for the entire student population. Accreditation ensures that through a mutually agreed-upon process there has been a third-party examination and evaluation by peers of the extent to which a school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The results of that scrutiny are then made publicly available as an indication of the quality perceived and attested to by outside professional educators.

Introduction to the Standards for Accreditation

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools' mission statement requires each member school to adhere to Standards of educational practice that maximize learning for all students.

The seven Standards for Accreditation, effective for all schools in the year 2011, were written in support of the Commission's Mission and Core Values. These qualitative Standards are divided into two groups: (1) Teaching and Learning Standards and (2) Support Standards. The Standards are grouped in this manner to distinguish between those practices that directly affect teaching and learning and those that support teaching and learning.

The relationships of the Standards to each other are illustrated in the diagram on page 12. There are four Teaching and Learning Standards which affect student learning: Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations; Curriculum; Instruction; and Assessment of and for Student Learning. These four Standards directly impact student learning. At the base are the three Support Standards: School Culture and Leadership; School Resources for Learning; and Community Resources for Learning. These Standards support the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations; curriculum; instruction; and assessment.

Each of the Standards is presented with a *narrative paragraph* followed by a series of *indicators* that articulate the behaviors and practices in schools which define and explain the narrative paragraph. The accreditation process requires that schools demonstrate that they are meeting the Standards by exhibiting successful achievement of the indicators for the Standards.

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Standards for Accreditation

Teaching and Learning Standard

1

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Effective schools identify core values and beliefs about learning that function as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community. Decision-making remains focused on and aligned with these critical commitments. Core values and beliefs manifest themselves in research-based, school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Every component of the school is driven by the core values and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations.

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.
2. The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.
3. The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.
4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

Teaching and Learning Standard

2

Curriculum

The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes the school's 21st century learning expectations. The curriculum includes a purposefully designed set of course offerings, co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities. The curriculum reflects the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The curriculum is collaboratively developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on analysis of student performance and current research.

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
 - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
 - the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - instructional strategies
 - assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
 - inquiry
 - problem-solving
 - higher order thinking
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
 - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

Teaching and Learning Standard

3

Instruction

The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Instruction is responsive to student needs, deliberate in its design and delivery, and grounded in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Instruction is supported by research in best practices. Teachers are reflective and collaborative about their instructional strategies and collaborative with their colleagues to improve student learning.

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:
 - personalizing instruction
 - engaging students in cross disciplinary learning
 - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
 - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
 - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
 - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
 - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
 - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
 - strategically differentiating
 - purposefully organizing group learning activities
 - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
 - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
 - examining student work
 - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
 - examining current research
 - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

Teaching and Learning Standard

4

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. Assessment results are shared and discussed on a regular basis to improve student learning. Assessment results inform teachers about student achievement in order to adjust curriculum and instruction.

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
 - student work
 - common course and common grade-level assessments
 - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - standardized assessments
 - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
 - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

Support Standard

5

School Culture and Leadership

The school culture is equitable and inclusive, and it embodies the school's foundational core values and beliefs about student learning. It is characterized by reflective, collaborative, and constructive dialogue about research-based practices that support high expectations for the learning of all students. The leadership of the school fosters a safe, positive culture by promoting learning, cultivating shared leadership, and engaging all members of the school community in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).
3. There is a formal, on-going program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
 - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
 - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
 - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
 - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school..

Support Standard

6

School Resources for Learning

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of coordinated programs and services. These resources enhance and improve student learning and well-being and support the school's core values and beliefs. Student support services enable each student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - deliver a written, developmental program
 - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
 - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
 - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
 - use an appropriate referral process
 - conduct ongoing student health assessments
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
 - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
 - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
 - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
 - conduct ongoing assessment, using relevant data including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
 - perform ongoing assessment, using relevant data including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Support Standard

7

Community Resources for Learning

The achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
 - a wide range of school programs and services
 - sufficient professional and support staff
 - on-going professional development and curriculum revision
 - a full range of technology support
 - sufficient equipment
 - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
 - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
 - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
 - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
 - programs and services
 - enrollment changes and staffing needs
 - facility needs
 - technology
 - capital improvements.
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

Initial Accreditation

The Commission requires that a school seeking initial accreditation first apply as a Candidate.

In order to become a Candidate, a school must complete an Application for Candidacy and meet the criteria for candidacy as articulated in Commission Policy. The application must include a narrative assessment of the school's practices as they relate to those called for in the Standards. Such an assessment typically runs eight to ten pages. Upon receipt of that application, the school should contact the Director of the Commission to set a mutually convenient date when a Commission staff member will visit the school.

For that visit, the school should plan a tour of the facility and a meeting of school administrators and faculty with the Commission representative to discuss the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and the evaluation process. The fee for the Candidacy Visit is \$1,000 which must be submitted prior to the visit. In addition, the school must pay travel expenses for the Candidacy Visit.

A written report of the visit to the school is then submitted to the Commission along with the school's application. The Commission informs the school in writing of its decision to recommend to the Association's Board of Trustees that the school be awarded candidacy status in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Once granted candidacy status a school is assessed dues equal to those of member schools.

Candidacy status can be maintained for a maximum of three years during which time the school must prepare a self-study and host a visiting committee. Based on the report from the visiting committee, the Commission will make a recommendation to the Association's Board of Trustees regarding initial accreditation.