

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.**



**SELF-STUDY GUIDE**

**3**

***INSTRUCTION***

**FOR 2012 SCHOOLS  
COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**



# 3

## Instruction

*The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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

## Directions for the Committee on Instruction

This Standard Committee is charged with the responsibility of developing a document that demonstrates the extent to which the school is adhering to the Standard for Accreditation on Instruction. Committee members should remember that the process of determining adherence to the Standard is a dynamic one. As evidence is gathered and discussed, the Committee's conclusions may change and evolve, be altered and refined. Once the evidence has been fully discussed and conclusions have been finalized, the Committee will begin the writing of the Narrative. The final step in the process is for the Committee to write an Executive Summary and to assess the extent to which the school is adhering to the Standard using the Rating Guide. This rating, and the Committee's list of strengths and needs for the Standard, will become part of the Executive Summary.

### I. Gaining an Understanding of the Standard and Preparing to Begin

- A. Make a copy of this Self-Study Guide for each member of the Standard Committee from the website: <http://cpss.neasc.org>.
- B. Read and discuss the Standard for Accreditation on Instruction so that all members of the Standard Committee develop a common understanding of the effective practices in the Standard. The Standard is comprised of both the narrative portion and the numbered indicators. The concepts in the narrative portion are manifested through the indicators. As part of your discussion, use the guiding questions and glossary from the document, *Explanation of the Standards for Accreditation*, located at <http://cpss.neasc.org> under the "Getting Started" tab.
- C. Engage all members of the Committee in an activity to identify (imagine) what practices one would see for each indicator at a school which was meeting the Instruction Standard at the highest level. For example, with regard to Indicator #1, Committee members might suggest:
  1. teachers are clearly familiar with the school's core values and understand their meaning as they relate to instructional strategies;
  2. teachers' practices in all classes consistently and clearly support the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations;
  3. the school culture promotes teachers regularly examining their own instructional practices with an eye towards improvement with teachers serving as coaches and mentors for each other.
  4. once the practices have been generated, compare the practices to the Standard's Rating Guide in the acceptable and exemplary categories on page 13 of this booklet.
- D. Engage all members of the Committee in an activity to review the Rating Guide for the Standard on Instruction. Assess the extent to which the school is adhering to the Standard using the Rating Guide. Pay particular attention to the deficient rating. The Committee should report any and all areas of deficiency to the Steering Committee.

## II. Collecting Data Related to the Standard on Instruction

### A. Data Already Gathered:

#### 5. State Report

Examine your school's state report for implications related to the Standard on Instruction. Identify the indicators in this Standard for which the specific data in the report is relevant.

#### 6. Opinion Surveys

Review the results of the Endicott College opinion surveys administered to parents, students, and teachers with regard to this Standard.

### B. Data to be Gathered by Committee:

#### 1. Gather the following information as evidence you will need later in this process. You will eventually need to **attach this evidence to the self-study narrative essay**.

- a. Any documents that *direct* instruction related to the core values and beliefs about learning (3.1)

#### 2. Gather the following information as evidence you will need for each indicator in the Standard (as noted in parenthesis). You will eventually **make this evidence available in the workroom at the school**. Please note: *It is possible that you may not find evidence for all indicators.*

##### Indicator 1

*Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.*

- a. Any documents that provide instructional directions/directives for use with each 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectation (3.1)
- b. A description of the process(es) teachers use to *continuously* examine their instructional practices with regard to ensuring consistency with the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations (3.1)

##### Indicator 2

*Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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*

- c. Representative lessons from a range of content areas which illustrate personalization within a lesson (3.2) *(please note for all items: it is possible that some lesson examples will combine more than one of the items listed for Indicator 2.)*
- d. Representative lesson examples which make connections across disciplines, both formal and informal, especially with regard to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations (3.2)
- e. Representative lesson examples from a range of content areas in which teachers regularly engage students as active participants (3.2)
- f. Representative lesson examples from a range of content areas in which teachers regularly emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking (3.2)
- g. Representative lesson examples from a range of content areas in which teachers regularly ask students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks (3.2)
- h. Representative lesson examples from a range of content areas in which teachers ask students to self-assess and to reflect about their learning (3.2)
- i. Representative lesson examples from a range of content areas in which teachers integrate technology into instructional practices (3.2)

Indicator 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*
- j. Representative examples of teachers' use of formative assessment *especially during instructional time* (3.3)
  - k. Representative examples of teachers' strategic differentiation of instructional practices to meet individual student needs (3.3)
  - l. Representative examples of teachers' purposeful organization of group learning activities(3.3)
  - m. Representative examples of teachers' provision of additional support and alternative strategies *within the regular classroom* (3.3)

Indicator 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*

- n. A description of student achievement data from a variety of *formative* and *summative* assessments which teachers individually and collectively use to improve instructional practices (3.4) *Please note: the committee chair is urged to collaborate with the Curriculum and the Assessment committees.*
- o. Evidence of the time allotted and the processes teachers use to examine student work (over the past two years) (3.4)
- p. Examples of teachers' use of feedback from students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents to improve instructional practices (3.4)
- q. A list of some of the current research teachers individually and collaboratively use to improve their instructional practices (3.4)
- r. Evidence of teachers' engagement in professional discourse *focused on instructional practices* (3.4)

Indicator 5 -- *Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices*

- s. Evidence by curriculum area of ways teachers acquire knowledge and remain current *about instructional practices* (3.5)

### III. Analyzing the Evidence, Drawing Conclusions, and Providing Supporting Details

Once you have gathered the data requested, use the prompts that follow to analyze and discuss all the gathered evidence and information as it relates to the various indicators in the Standard on Instruction. Only after these steps have been completed should the Committee begin the process of writing the Narrative.

#### Prompts for Analyzing Evidence and Drawing Conclusions

##### 1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

###### Analyzing the Evidence:

- a. Based on an examination of the documents and processes, what does the evidence show about how teachers' instructional practices are examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations?

###### Drawing a Conclusion:

- b. In light of the committee's review, write a conclusion that states the extent to which teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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

**Analyzing the Evidence:**

- a. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lessons from various content areas, what does the evidence show about how teachers personalize instruction *within lessons*?
- b. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about how teachers make connections across disciplines, both formal and informal, *especially with regard to the connections to the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations*?
- c. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about how teachers *regularly* engage students *as active participants*?
- d. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about how teachers *regularly* emphasize *inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking*?
- e. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about how teachers *regularly* ask students to *apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks*?
- f. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about how teachers ask students to *self-assess* and *reflect about their learning*?
- g. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about how *teachers integrate technology into teaching and learning*?
- h. Based on an examination of the written curriculum with particular emphasis on content and skills for all subject areas, including vocational/technical courses and e-learning courses, what does the evidence show about how the written curriculum reflects the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations?

**Drawing a Conclusion:**

- i. State the extent to which teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> 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; and 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**

**Analyzing the Evidence:**

- a. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about teacher use of *formative assessment during instructional time*?
- b. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about strategic differentiation of instruction by teachers intended to meet individual student needs?
- c. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about the *purposeful* organization of *group* learning activities by teachers?
- d. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results and representative lesson examples from various content areas, what does the evidence show about the provision of additional support and the use of *alternative strategies* by teachers *within the regular classroom*?

**Drawing a Conclusion:**

- e. State the extent to which 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**

**Analyzing the Evidence:**

- a. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results, what does the evidence show about how teachers individually and/or collectively *use* student achievement data from a *variety of formative and summative* assessments?
- b. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results, what does the evidence show regarding the frequency and effectiveness of teachers' examination of student work?

- c. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results, what does the evidence show about how *teachers use feedback from students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents* for the purpose of *improving* instructional practices?
- d. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results, what does the evidence show about how teachers individually and collaboratively use current research to improve instructional strategies?
- e. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion surveys, what does the evidence show about how teachers engage in *professional discourse focused* on instructional practices?

**Drawing a Conclusion:**

- f. States the extent to which teachers *individually and collectively collaborate to 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; and 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**

**Analyzing the Evidence:**

- a. Based on an examination of the evidence, including opinion survey results, what does the evidence show about how teachers *acquire knowledge*, are reflective, and remain current *about instructional practices*?

**Drawing a Conclusion:**

- b. State the extent to which teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

**IV. Writing the Narrative**

- A. Write at least one paragraph for each indicator in the Standard; for some indicators with bullets, you may need to write several paragraphs.
- B. Write a conclusion for each indicator and underline the conclusion in the paragraph. For example, for indicator #5, “The school’s robust professional development program which is rooted in a collaborative spirit in the school and made possible by weekly time set aside in professional learning communities provides not only content-based learning for teachers but also content-based instructional practices which teachers share with each other.”
- C. Write sentences to complete your paragraph that justify or support your underlined conclusion. Your evidence in these sentences forms the details that justify or support your underlined conclusion.
- D. This Narrative Essay should be 8-12 double-spaced pages and should be written in the third person. Sample Narratives can be found on the CPSS website located at <http://cpss.neasc.org>.

## V. Writing the Executive Summary

Write the Executive Summary of the conclusions and evidence. Consult the Guidelines for Review of Standards Essays and Executive Summaries in the *Accreditation Handbook* (page 37).

### Content of the Executive Summary

- Identify and list the school's strengths in adhering to the *specific indicators* in the Standard on Instruction.
- Identify and list the school's needs in adhering to the *specific indicators* in the Standard on Instruction.
- Use the rating guide provided on page 13 to determine the school's level of adherence to the Standard on Instruction, based on the conclusions and supportive evidence in the Narrative Essay.
- Write a one-page summary of the evidence in the Narrative Essay to support the Committee's judgment of the school's level of adherence to the Standard on Instruction, making sure you include the rating, e.g., "acceptable."
- Attach a list of the names, positions, and signatures of the Committee members responsible for the preparation of this Narrative Essay and Executive Summary. Signatures of Committee members attest to the thoroughness of the Committee's work and to the veracity of the Narrative Essay and Executive Summary.

## VI. Using the Rating Guide

### Purpose

The Rating Guide which follows has been developed:

- To assist schools in assessing their level of adherence to the Standard and thus to further understanding of the important concepts in the Standards
- To assist visiting teams in assessing the school's level of adherence to the Standard
- To inform the Commission as it considers the school's evaluation report, adherence to the Standards, and accreditation status

**Please note:** The Rating Guide is a guide for helping the school to determine the extent to which it adheres to the Standard. The Rating Guide should be applied to the Standard as a whole, not to individual indicators. The Guide is not a rubric, and it should not be thought of in that manner nor should it be used as a rubric would be. The value and importance of individual indicators has been incorporated into the various parts of the Rating Guide.

### Directions

1. Begin with the *Deficient* category.
  - a. It is important to emphasize that every word in the Rating Guide has meaning, including transitional words and words such as *all, any, every, and, or*.
  - b. Because there are aspects within each Standard that are at the core of a school's ability to adhere to the Standard, those concepts are placed in the *Deficient* category and they are critical. This is the reason that *Deficient* is the starting place for use of the Rating Guide.
2. Read aloud the stem (the wording that begins, "A Rating of Deficient...") in the *Deficient* category and then move through each of the bulleted items that follow.
  - a. If the Committee members agree that each bulleted item is present, move on to the *Limited* category.
  - b. If the Committee members believe that the school has not met all (or most or a majority, depending on the language used in the Rating Guide) of the bulleted items, the school will then assign a rating of *Deficient* to this Standard, and its work is complete.
3. Read aloud the stem (the wording that begins, "A Rating of Limited...") in the *Limited* category and then move through each of the bulleted items, paying careful attention to the guiding words provided at the end of the stem, e.g. "but lacks:"
  - a. If the participants agree that each bulleted item is present, move on to the *Acceptable* category.
  - b. If the Committee members believe that the school has not met all of the bulleted items, the school will then assign a rating of *Limited* to this Standard. If the participants agree that each bulleted item is present, move on to the *Acceptable* category.
  - c. If the Committee members believe that the school has not met all (or most or a majority, depending on the language used in the Rating Guide) of the bulleted items, the school will then assign a rating of *Limited* to this Standard, and its work is complete.
4. Continue the process through the *Acceptable* category and to the *Exemplary* category, if appropriate.

# RATING GUIDE

## Instruction

A rating of **DEFICIENT** is appropriate if any of the following exist:

- Instructional practices on the whole are not consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
- Instructional strategies on the whole fail significantly and broadly to personalize instruction; engage students in cross-disciplinary learning; engage students as active and self-directed learners; emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking; provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills; engage students in self-assessment and reflection; and integrate technology
- The school's level of adherence to Indicator 5 in Standard 7, Community Resources for Learning, fails to sufficiently support instructional practices

A rating of **LIMITED** is appropriate if teachers at least, minimally, employ instructional strategies that are consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations; at least, minimally, employ instructional strategies that personalize instruction, engage students in cross-disciplinary learning, engage students as active and self-directed learners, emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills, engage students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrate technology; and at least, minimally, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices; but fail to:

- use formative assessment, especially during instructional time
- strategically differentiate
- purposefully organize group learning activities
- provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom

A rating of **ACCEPTABLE** is appropriate if teachers: employ instructional strategies that, on the whole, are aligned with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations; employ instructional strategies that, on the whole, personalize instruction, engage students in cross-disciplinary learning, engage students as active and self-directed learners, emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engage students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrate technology; and

- on the whole, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices
- generally, use formative assessment, especially during instructional time, strategically differentiate, purposefully organize group learning activities, and provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom

A rating of **EXEMPLARY** is appropriate when the descriptors in the **ACCEPTABLE** rating are met on a consistent level and:

- 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; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice
- teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices