So what can I expect when I serve on a NEASC/CPSS Visiting Team?

A Primer for New Visiting Team Members
I volunteered to serve; now what . . .

• I returned the response form to the CPSS office agreeing to serve on a Visiting Team.

• I’d like to know what is involved during my four days away from home and school.
• I’ve heard the experience is very professionally rewarding and I will be very busy.

• What does the schedule look like?

• Your chair will provide you with a detailed schedule.
A typical Sunday at the school

10:00 am  Arrive at school or hotel for orientation (your chair will tell you which place) and meet with the visiting team

1:00 pm  Panel presentation by school representatives

2:30 pm  Meet with School Board or a group of parents (based on the chair’s assignment)

3:15 pm  Conduct two one-half hour conversations with teachers

4:30 pm  Attend reception at school
A typical Sunday evening at the hotel

6:00 pm  Dinner with visiting team

7:00 pm  Review Standards; review information gathered from teacher conversations and meetings; review school’s mission

8:00 pm  Review and discuss student work collected by school

9:30 pm  Review Monday’s schedule and Q and A
A typical Monday at the school

- Tour the school
- Attend several meetings depending upon the Standard to which I have been assigned
- Shadow a student for a half-day (or maybe on Tuesday)
- Meet with the Standards Committee from the school that prepared the Self-Study report
A typical Monday at the hotel

- Dinner with the visiting team
- Review and share information learned from meetings, tour, and shadowing
- Begin to write my report with my visiting team colleague
A typical Tuesday at the school

Morning:
- Student shadowing for half-day (if not on Monday)
- Meetings as assigned by the chair
- Classroom observations
- Continuation of report writing

Afternoon:
- Present a Standards report or listen to and discuss other Standards reports
A typical Tuesday evening at the hotel

- Continue writing
- Listen/discuss Standards reports
- Review schedule for Wednesday
Wednesday at the school

- Breakfast and check out of hotel; drive to school
- Listen to final Standards reports in workroom at school
- Participate in Advisory Rating of Standards
- Attend final meeting at close of school day with the visiting team to hear our Chair’s remarks to school
What can I expect from my chair?

- A letter of introduction
- A personal contact by email or phone prior to the evaluation visit
- A team list which tells me the Standard to which I will be assigned
- A schedule for the visit
- An Evaluator Guide and other materials to read
- Willingness to answer any questions I have prior to and during the visit
What must I do to prepare before the visit?

- Read carefully all the information I receive from the chair and from the school
- Make notes as I read
- Review Guide for Evaluator for my Standard assignment
- Call or email my chair or assistant chair with questions I might have
Online Portal

• All self-study documents are now prepared through an online portal.
• Once the materials have been completed by the school – you will receive an email from us with log in information.
• The portal will include the school’s self-study, the evaluator’s guides, and important information from the school and the chair of the visiting team.
What can I expect from the school?

- Hotel information and directions
- Basic information about the school
- A copy of the sections of the Self-Study I will need to read to prepare for my work during the visit
What can I expect at the hotel?

- A single room
- A workroom equipped with all the materials I’ll need including computers and printers
- Breakfast and dinner (lunch will be at school)
What should I bring with me?

- Professional dress for three days
- Comfortable clothing for evening meetings
- A laptop computer, if you can’t bring a laptop please let your chair know
- An open mind and willingness to help...
Sunday, busy Sunday

- It looks as if Sunday will be very busy and I want to be especially well-prepared
- What can I do?
Planning Ahead . . .

• Become very familiar with the Standard to which I have been assigned, the Self-Study section for my Standard, and the school’s Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

• Read my Evaluator Guide (available through the online portal) carefully and pay particular attention to the section that follows the actual Standard “What to Look For” and the prompts that follow (approximately page 8, depending on the Guide)
The Evaluator Guides

• Note the prompts that follow each indicator because they will form the basis of the report I will eventually write with the other visiting team member assigned to the standard.

• For example, in Curriculum, Indicator 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, and informed and ethical use of technology.”
Each of the following prompts address Indicator 3:

- What, if any, conditions (mandates, directions, and/or structures) are in place, which ensure the curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills in all courses and levels?
- Does the curriculum emphasize inquiry and problem-solving? Does it emphasize higher order thinking?
- What conditions are in place, which ensure the curriculum emphasizes application of knowledge through cross-disciplinary learning? What specific evidence is there in the curriculum documents themselves that illustrate connections are made from one content area to another?
- Does the curriculum emphasize cross-disciplinary learning? Does it emphasize authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school?
- What conditions are in place, which ensure the curriculum emphasizes informed and ethical use of technology? What specific evidence in the curriculum documents themselves illustrates students are taught these concepts?
- Does the curriculum emphasize informed and ethical use of technology?
Finally . . .

- Don’t forget to call or write your chair or assistant chair with questions

- Be prepared to work hard, learn a great deal, work collaboratively with the team, and have a new understanding of the Standards for Accreditation to assist your own school with improvement efforts!
All members of the Committee on Public Secondary Schools, the professional staff, and the committee coordinators extend our sincere appreciation for your service on a visiting team.