



2020 - A VISION FOR LEARNING

# ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

for Public Elementary, Middle and High Schools seeking Accreditation in 2021

REVISED FOR 2021 SCHOOLS

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
Commission on Public Schools

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# Overview of the Redesigned Accreditation Process

The NEASC Accreditation process is a 10-year cycle intended to serve as a guide for schools to meet their own goals for student learning based on alignment with research-based Standards for Accreditation. Secondly, it serves as an important exercise for assessing the systems in place for self-reflection on an ongoing basis, the school's capacity for continuous growth, and the ability to be an effective learning organization.

## **Guiding Principles for the Redesigned Accreditation Process**

Over the past several years, the Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS) has been involved in a purposeful effort to reflect on the value of Accreditation and redesign the Accreditation process to better meet the changing needs of member schools. Numerous regional meetings were held to gather feedback from member schools and districts about what is working and what needs to be improved. Multiple advisory committees with representatives from accredited schools and districts were convened to help us brainstorm new ideas and revise current practices. A Standards review committee recommended a new set of Standards for Accreditation, which were accepted by CPSS and accepted as a working draft by CPEMS. Throughout this collaborative process, a set of principles guided the redesign work. These principles were developed based on input from member school representatives about what they want the Accreditation process to provide for their schools. The principles are as follows:

The Accreditation process:

- ensures a growth-oriented and inquiry-based approach
- promotes capacity building
- allows for creativity and differentiation
- emphasizes student learning outcomes.

The Accreditation process:

- encourages a vision for growth and development in schools
- fosters school improvement by encouraging schools to self-reflect, set, and work towards goals, and act on feedback for continuous progress toward its vision for growth
- supports schools to create or maintain structures and collaborative cultures for systemic learning for both students and adults that result in sustainable growth
- supports schools in developing manageable priorities that are complementary to other initiatives or obligations.

The Accreditation process:

- integrates more fully with school and district priorities and state requirements
- corresponds with the time schools allocate for ongoing school improvement efforts
- provides flexibility for schools to determine who should be a part of the Accreditation process and in what capacity
- responds to and allows for differentiation among schools
- leverages technology to make the Accreditation process more streamlined and efficient.

By using these principles, in addition to the CPSS/CPEMS mission and core values, as a guide, it is the hope of CPSS/CPEMS that a new Accreditation process is adaptable to individual school needs and ensures every school has ongoing support from NEASC to move forward on its journey toward growth and improvement.

# The New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Founded in 1885, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is the nation's oldest regional accrediting association. It serves over 1,600 public, independent, and international schools and colleges in the six states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, and countries around the world.

The Association is comprised of three Commissions:

- the Commission on Public Schools (CPS)
- the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS)
- the Commission on International Education (CIE).

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has recently completed a corporate restructuring to align with the US Department of Education's requirement that our higher education commission (CIHE) operate as a "separate and independent" entity. CIHE will now operate as the New England Commission on Higher Education, Inc. (NECHE). The restructuring will enable both entities to pursue their unique missions as well as to collaborate across the K-16 continuum in ways that serve the interests of our entire membership.

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 Accreditation processes which focus on self-improvement through effective peer review. Schools and colleges, which voluntarily demonstrate through the Association's Accreditation processes that they meet established Standards, are accredited, and thus become members in the Association.

Member schools and colleges must undertake a reflective self-reflection involving the participation of faculty, administrators, staff, students, community members, and board members. A team of peers, comprised of professional educators who have volunteered to serve on the visiting team, visits an institution to evaluate its alignment to stated Standards, a process that includes reviewing the findings of the self-reflection and identifying areas of strength, and making recommendations that will lead school improvement. School and college personnel then respond to recommendations stated in the visiting team 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 alignment 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 teams 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.

## The Commission on Public Schools

At the Association's 125<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in December 2010, the Commission on Public Schools was approved. The transition to one Commission is being led by the Executive Council. The Commission on Public Schools includes three Committees:

- the Committee on [Public Secondary Schools \(CPSS\)](#)
- the Committee on [Technical and Career Institutions \(CTCI\)](#)
- the Committee on [Public Elementary and Middle Schools \(PEMS\)](#)

## The Committee on Public Secondary Schools

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS) serves over 630 K-12, middle/high, and high schools in New England. It is comprised of 26 Committee 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 CPS office has professional and support staff who work with member schools and the Committee with regard to the Accreditation process.

The Committee meets four times per year to review Accreditation reports and progress reports presented on behalf of member schools and those institutions seeking Initial Accreditation.

## The Committee on Elementary and Middle Schools

The Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS) serves over 40 elementary, middle, and K-8 schools in New England. It is comprised of 6 Committee members who are elected by member school delegates at the Association's Annual Meeting. These include:

- 2 central office administrators
- 2 principals representing elementary and middle schools
- 1 teacher
- 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

In addition, the CPS office has professional and support staff who work with member schools and the Committee with regard to the Accreditation process.

The Committee meets two times per year to review Accreditation reports and progress reports presented on behalf of member schools and those institutions seeking Initial Accreditation.

## CPSS/CPEMS Mission Statement and Core Values

### **Mission Statement**

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools and the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle 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.

### **Core Values**

To achieve our mission CPSS/CPEMS 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/CPEMS mission, member schools agree to...

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

# The Meaning and Value of Accreditation

## **The Meaning of Accreditation**

Accreditation of public schools by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) indicates that the educational institution has conducted a self-evaluation of all of its programs and hosted a visiting team to evaluate the institution in terms of its own stated educational goals and the Standards for Accreditation.

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 its' care. The Standards are considered to be living documents and are reviewed and revised as necessary. 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. 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 the Standards for Accreditation 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 team 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 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-assessment, a pledge to self-improvement, and a desire to maintain the Standards for Accreditation are necessary.

## **The Value of Accreditation**

### **Value to Students and Families**

Students are most affected by Accreditation because 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. Alignment 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, beliefs about learning, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

### **Value to Local Citizens and Taxpayers**

Accreditation of a local public school by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges assures that tax money is supporting a school facility and programs that have been judged worthwhile by a visiting team, both in terms of the school's stated core values, beliefs about learning, and student learning expectations, and in terms of the school's alignment to the Standards for Accreditation. Through the process of Accreditation, 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 schools. 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 schools lack 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-reflection 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 assessment 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-reflection process encourage the reflective behaviors that all organizations must embrace to be able to maintain their vibrancy and efficacy.

### **Value to Building Administrators and Teachers**

The school's administrators 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 Accreditation experience affords the opportunity for administrators 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 team of their peers, using the demanding Accreditation Standards to measure the quality of those endeavors.

Results of a NEASC survey involving schools that hosted a visiting team 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 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 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 programs 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.

### **Accreditation Methodology**

Accreditation is the oldest and most traditional of the Standards-based systems of accountability. A study of the regional Accreditation process conducted by the LAB at Brown University<sup>1</sup> 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 visiting team of peers generating knowledge about practices in the school and then drawing conclusions about how well they align with the Standards for Accreditation. The visiting 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 Initial or Decennial Accreditation 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.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas A. Wilson. *Visiting Accreditation: Strengthening the Regional Accreditation Process*. Providence, RI: Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, 1999.

## 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 by peers of the extent to which a school aligns with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The results of that assessment are then made publicly available as an indication of the quality perceived and attested to by objective professional educators.

### About NEASC/CPS

Founded in 1885, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has been working to establish and maintain high standards for all levels of education — from pre-kindergarten to the doctoral level — longer than any other accreditation agency in the United States.

NEASC is an independent, voluntary nonprofit membership organization which connects and serves over 2,000 public and independent schools, technical/career institutions, colleges and universities in New England, plus International Schools in more than 65 nations worldwide. A globally recognized standard of excellence, NEASC Accreditation attests to a school's high quality and integrity.

The mission of the Commission on Public Schools (CPS), as one of the Commissions within the NEASC, is to maximize student learning and to promote the Standards which articulate best practices about student learning and the support of learning.

For a printer friendly version of The Meaning and Value of Accreditation see the CPS website:

<https://cpss.neasc.org/about-accreditation/meaning-and-value>

## 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 the 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 8 to 10 pages. Upon receipt of the application, the school should contact the Director of the Commission to set a mutually convenient date for a CPS staff member to 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 CPS representative to discuss the Standards for Accreditation and the Accreditation process. The fee for the Candidacy visit must be submitted prior. 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 award Candidacy status within 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 an Initial Accreditation report and host a visiting team.

# Standards for Accreditation

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges Committee on Public Secondary Schools and Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools require member schools to demonstrate alignment with the Standards for Accreditation. The new Standards for Accreditation, effective for all schools in 2020, are streamlined into five core Standards intended to promote an effective learning organization with the capacity to meet the needs of all students through continuous reflection and growth.

## Standards for Accreditation

Standard 1 <b>LEARNING CULTURE</b>	Learning Culture promotes shared values and responsibility for achieving the school's vision.
Standard 2 <b>STUDENT LEARNING</b>	Student Learning practices maximize the impact of learning for each student.
Standard 3 <b>PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES</b>	Professional Practices ensure that practices and structures are in place to support and improve student learning.
Standard 4 <b>LEARNING SUPPORT</b>	Learning Support ensures that the school has appropriate systems to support student learning and well-being.
Standard 5 <b>LEARNING RESOURCES</b>	Learning Resources ensure that the school has the resources necessary to meet the learning needs of all students.

In the 2020 Standards for Accreditation, each Standard includes Principles of Effective Practice, which define the expectations for that Standard. Schools will be asked to reflect on and report progress in aligning with the Principles for each Standard. At a minimum, Accredited schools must align with each of the Foundational Elements. The Foundational Elements represent essential building blocks for each Standard. Schools that are not yet aligned with the Foundational Elements are expected to prioritize work to ensure alignment with those Elements. To assist schools in aligning with the Standards there are Descriptors of Effective Practice, which serve as examples of what each Principle looks like in practice in a school. Descriptors are guidance or benchmarks to assist schools in aligning with each Principle.

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The full text of the Standards for Accreditation can be found on the NEASC website.

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## Foundational Elements

Standards for Accreditation	Foundational Elements
Standard 1 <b>LEARNING CULTURE</b>	The school community provides a safe environment.  The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
Standard 2 <b>STUDENT LEARNING</b>	There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school.
Standard 3 <b>PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES</b>	The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.
Standard 4 <b>LEARNING SUPPORT</b>	The school has intervention strategies designed to support learners.
Standard 5 <b>LEARNING RESOURCES</b>	The school site and plant support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.



## Rubrics for the Standards for Accreditation

Schools will assess alignment to each of the Foundational Elements and Principles in the Standards for Accreditation, based on evidence, using the following rubric.

### Foundational Elements Rubric

Use the criteria in the rubric to determine whether the school is meeting each of the Foundational Elements in the Standards.

Meets	Does Not Meet
All criteria of the Foundational Element are evident in the school.	Some criteria of the Foundational element are not yet evident in the school.

### Principle Rubric

Use the following continuum to determine the school’s current phase of implementation which best describes the school’s alignment to each Principle in the Standard.

<b>Not yet evident</b>	Elements of the Principle are not yet evident in the school.
<b>Initiating</b> “Thinking About It”	The ideas and concepts in the Principle are being considered by the school community, but not yet in action
<b>Developing</b> “Working on It”	Some elements of the Principle are in place and the school has developed plans and timelines for full implementation.
<b>Implementing</b> “Living It”	All elements of the Principle are firmly in place in the school. Organizations or systems have been formed to support and sustain these practices.
<b>Transforming</b> “Shifting the paradigm”	The Principle is driving innovative and transformative practices to achieve the school’s vision of the graduate.

## Step 1 – Planning Ahead

### **A NOTE ON WHAT'S NEW:**

- ✓ *Schools are no longer required to assign all staff members to a Standard committee during the Self-Reflection phase. Schools now can differentiate the use of their staff, assigning a representative number of staff members to participate on the committee(s) that best meets the needs of the school.*
- ✓ *The Self-Reflection phase has been streamlined so that schools will be able to reduce the length of time for this step to no longer than 2 - 6 months.*

### **Overall Purpose of the Self-Reflection**

In year one of the Accreditation cycle, the school reflects on its alignment to the NEASC Standards. The purpose of the Self-Reflection is to gather and examine sufficient evidence to evaluate the school's alignment to the Standards. The Self-Reflection phase and related data collection informs the school's plan for growth. It should be viewed as a research and reflection step to help the school sharpen its vision and action steps for continuous improvement.

### **Length of the Self-Reflection**

Based on a number of variables such as the size of the professional staff, the allocation of release time, and the amount of time needed to complete existing initiatives, the Self-Reflection will take approximately 2 to 6 months.

### **Opinion Surveys**

Prior to beginning the Self-Reflection, the school will conduct an online survey of students, parents, and faculty members. The survey provides an external perspective to help assess the school's alignment to the Standards for Accreditation. The survey tool will be provided to schools from NEASC at no cost. This external survey data is used as evidence during the Self-Reflection phase. The school should administer the survey in the fall or spring prior to beginning the Self-Reflection process. It is important to ensure a valid response from all those surveyed and the Committee expects a response rate of 95 percent or more from professional staff and students, and 25 percent or more from parents. The survey will also be available for use annually by schools interested in identifying areas of growth.

## The Steering Committee

The school establishes a steering committee to lead them through the key steps of the Accreditation process.

- The steering committee has oversight of the Accreditation process and will determine how the Self-Reflection phase will progress.
- The steering committee is responsible for communicating consistently about the progress and next steps throughout the Accreditation process to keep the full faculty and all school stakeholders informed and engaged.
- The steering committee consists of 3-8 faculty members, depending upon the size of the school, and includes the principal.
- The steering committee includes 2 Accreditation Coordinators, who are selected by the principal from the faculty.

### **Formation of the Steering Committee**

The principal forms a steering committee to oversee all aspects of the Accreditation process. The principal serves as a member of the steering committee. The principal should have an in-depth understanding of the Standards for Accreditation. While the principal does not have specific assignments, he/she provides guidance on school policies and procedures as well as additional assistance where needed, as in arranging release time to work on the Self-Reflection, and in securing funds for the Accreditation budget. The principal should attend all steering committee meetings.

The steering committee should be a representative group of individuals who have the ability to work well with others and have effective leadership skills. While most schools limit the committee to the professional staff, it need not be limited to the teaching faculty. The principal should appoint two members of the professional staff as Accreditation Coordinators, who lead the steering committee. The Accreditation Coordinators must have excellent leadership ability with the talent to coordinate the work of many people. An Accreditation Coordinator may be an administrator (not the principal), a department head/coordinator, or a teacher. The Accreditation Coordinators must have in-depth understanding of the Standards for Accreditation.

The size of the steering committee may vary with the size of the faculty and size and grade span of the school. Most committees will include between three and eight members. The committee should reflect the grade span of the school. Steering committee members act as support for the Self-Reflection committee and, in general, should not serve on other committees, unless the size of the school necessitates more help on those committees. The steering committee need not be a new and/or special ad hoc committee. It may be a standing committee.

The CPS staff strongly recommends that steering committee members as well as representatives of the Self-Reflection committee serve on visiting teams to other schools being accredited as a way to broaden their understanding of the Accreditation process.

## **Purpose of the Steering Committee**

The purpose of the steering committee is to:

- design and oversee the Accreditation process
- develop a comprehensive understanding of the *relationships* between each of the Standards for Accreditation to help all staff understand the Standards and process
- ensure preparation of the School and Community Summary (*the steering committee itself will write this brief document*), and the Self-Reflection report
- coordinate efforts to collect evidence
- provide state report information
- involve school personnel in the Self-Reflection process
- include parents, students, and community members (where appropriate) in the Self-Reflection process
- ensure that requirements and timelines are met
- ensure that all evidence and documentation are available for the collaborative conference team when it is on-site
- ensures that all components of the Self-Reflection report and other information is complete in the portal
- complete the arrangements for the collaborative conference.

## The Self-Reflection Committee

The school develops a committee to conduct the Self-Reflection and write the Self-Reflection report.

The Self-Reflection committee:

- determines the extent to which the school is aligned to the Standards for Accreditation through a reflective process based on evidence.
- is made up of various members of the school community, reviews all the Standards or, alternately, several smaller subcommittees can be formed to assist in completing the Self-Reflection.
- is representative of multiple stakeholders in the school community, such as administrators, teachers, other professional staff, support staff, parents, students, community members, etc.
- engages school faculty in the Self-Reflection phase through involvement in the collection of evidence, providing input and feedback, and through regular progress updates.

The Self-Reflection committee is primarily responsible for completing the Self-Reflection report. However, the committee should find ways to include and draw information from faculty, administrators, students, families, and other stakeholders as it completes the Self-Reflection.

The Self-Reflection committee should start its work by completing Parts 1 and 2 of the Self-Reflection report. The committee should enlist additional help from faculty and administration in sections where evidence or background knowledge is needed. The committee should have a thorough discussion about information in all parts of the report and ensure that all committee members are in consensus that the report reflects the school accurately.

## Steering Committee Checklist – Steps 1 - 3

### **Getting Started**

1. The principal selects Accreditation coordinators
2. Attend the Accreditation seminar – the principal and Accreditation coordinators
3. Establish the steering committee
4. Establish the Self-Reflection committee
5. Contact CPS staff person assigned to the school and schedule site visit
6. Develop Self-Reflection schedule/timeline after meeting with the CPS staff liaison
7. Submit press release on Self-Reflection
8. Order and administer the NEASC opinion surveys
9. Ensure the inclusion of parents, students, faculty and support staff members in the process
10. Apprise central office professional staff of their role(s) in the Self-Reflection
11. Prepare budget in collaboration with the principal
12. Make preliminary plans for the Collaborative Conference
13. Write the School and Community Summary and share with faculty

### **Self-Reflection**

1. Monitor evidence gathering and check for quality and quantity of evidence
2. Monitor analysis of evidence by the Self-Reflection committee
3. Monitor development of the Self-Reflection Committee's report
4. Distribute the Part 2 of the report to professional staff seeking comments/questions
5. Conduct a formal presentation(s) and vote of Part 2 using the established protocol
6. Develop a process for gathering faculty input to develop priority goal areas
7. Leadership team establishes priority goal areas
8. Distribute draft report to faculty
9. Make final edits to the report to ensure completeness and accuracy
10. Ensure that all elements of the report are entered in the portal using the Self-Reflection checklist

## **Collaborative Conference**

1. Review all components of the on-site visit with the chair of the Collaborative Conference including the schedule using the Collaborative Conference checklist
2. Finalize hotel, meals, and other logistical arrangements
3. Prepare list of teacher's individual daily schedules
4. Provide materials for the workroom at the school
  - Self-Reflection documents, including materials identified in the Self-Reflection that have not been entered in the portal and need to be made available in the workroom
  - laptops/printers/LCD projector (consult with chair)
  - clerical supplies
5. Prepare list of school activities occurring during the on-site visit
6. Prepare list of rooms and times for small-group meetings with the visiting team based on the schedule prepared by the chair
7. Prepare emergency information for the visiting team
8. Make name tags for visiting team members, professional and support staffs
9. Ensure professional and support staffs, other school system personnel, parents, students, and community members are available to meet with members of the visiting team based on the schedule for the visit

## School and Community Summary

The steering committee is responsible for writing the School and Community Summary. The School and Community Summary is 2-4 pages (750-1,500 words) narrative, which provides general information about the school, its location, and its place within the community. A sample description is included in the Appendix.

1. Gather the information/data for the each of the following:
  - location of the town/city/district in the state
  - the socio-economic profile of the community
  - racial/cultural/ethnic makeup of the school district
  - number of district families living below the poverty level
  - number of schools in the system/district (public and independent)
  - grade configuration of the school
  - current student population
  - enrollment stability
  - expenditure per pupil for students assigned to the school in relation to state average
  - percentage of local resources spent on public education
  - percentage of local taxation spent on schools
  - annual dropout rate, stated as a percentage
  - graduation rate, stated as a percentage
  - attendance rate of students
  - attendance rate of teachers, excluding professional days
  - percentage of students who attend four-year colleges, attend two-year colleges, enter directly into the work force, and enter the military
  - local educational opportunities available to students and the community
  - school/business partnerships
  - school/college partnerships
  - student recognition programs
2. Review the information to ensure its accuracy.
3. Write a narrative summary which incorporates the items in number 1 above and limit your narrative to 750-1,500 words. See the appendix for a sample.
4. Make the School and Community Summary available to the professional staff for their review. While the summary does not have to be approved by the professional staff, the staff should have the opportunity to review it and to provide clarification and input.

## Developing an Accreditation Budget

Many of the expenses of an on-site visit relate to the size of the visiting teams, which will vary depending on the school. The school should discuss the size and makeup of the visiting teams with the school's CPS liaison.

### **Training Seminars for School Personnel**

CPS sponsors regional Self-Reflection Seminars for principals and Accreditation Coordinators of schools about to commence with the Self-Reflection. The purpose of the seminar is to acquaint the school with the procedures of the Accreditation process.

Additionally, there are Decennial Accreditation Visit Seminars in the spring and fall for member schools that will host visiting teams in the following season. These seminars provide some last-minute suggestions and an opportunity to ask questions. The seminars also give schools an opportunity to share reactions to the Self-Reflection process with members of the CPS staff and to discuss the events/schedule of the visiting team. Schools find these meetings helpful in assuring that everything is in place for the visiting team's arrival and work.

Finally, there are Follow-Up Seminars in the spring and fall of each year for member schools that have hosted decennial teams the previous season. The purpose of these seminars is to help schools organize and monitor their follow-up programs as well as to explain the requirements for completion of Progress Reports and responses to highlighted recommendations.

Schools are charged \$200 for a team of three to attend each seminar: Accreditation, Decennial Accreditation Visit, and Follow-Up.

### **Re-evaluation Fee**

Each school is assessed this fee which is equivalent of a year's membership dues. The school will receive an invoice at the time of the on-site visit.

### **Accommodations**

Schools will need to budget for hotel rooms for the Collaborative Conference and for the Decennial Accreditation visits. Schools should reserve a single hotel room for each visiting team member which provides basic amenities such as private bath, phone, television, and complementary Wi-Fi. It is recommended that the school request the hotel's corporate or governmental rate for the visiting team and retain the right to return any rooms which are not used by the visiting team.

### **Conference Room at Hotel for Decennial Visit**

The conference room should be adequate in size and provide appropriate privacy and security for the visiting team. Please consult with your CPS staff liaison to help determine the appropriate size.

### **Meals**

Breakfast and dinner should be provided in the hotel with lunch served at the school. Approximate meal costs at the hotel can be determined by consulting the hotel staff.

### Visiting Team Travel Expenses

Only those travel expenses, such as mileage at the federal rate per mile and tolls, incurred by visiting team members traveling to and from the school site should be paid by the school. Personal expenses are not reimbursable. Some schools require that persons receiving reimbursement provide personal information such as social security numbers. If this is required, the school should notify the school's CPS liaison. If this is the case, all reimbursement requests will then be submitted to the NEASC office through the visiting team chair and the school will be billed by NEASC for the cost of the reimbursement.

### Chair's Travel Expenses

The visiting team chair and the assistant chair will travel to the school for a preliminary visit approximately one month prior to the Initial or Decennial Accreditation visit.

### Editor's Expenses

The host school is responsible for the expense of the work of the Commission's professional editor.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Seminars</b>	
Accreditation Seminar (fall 2017)	\$200
Evaluation Seminar (fall 2019/spring 2020)	\$200
Follow-Up Seminar (fall 2020/spring 2021)	\$200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$600</b>
<b>Collaborative Conference (spring 2018 or fall 2018)</b>	
Cost of rooms (4 guests for 1 night)	\$600
Cost of meals at hotel and school	\$200
Travel expenses for team members	\$400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1200</b>
<b>Decennial Accreditation Visit</b>	
Cost of rooms (8 visitors: 6 for 3 nights and 2 for 4 nights)	\$3900
Cost of conference room at the hotel (3 days)	\$600
Cost of meals at hotel and school	\$1650
Travel expenses for team members	\$1500
CPS editor	\$400
Equivalent of one year's membership dues charged (will vary based on enrollment)	\$3,365
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,415</b>

Note: These cost estimates do not reflect regional differences. Estimates will also vary with team size.

## Scheduling a CPS Staff Visit

A visit from a member of the professional staff of the Commission on Public Schools is a crucial part of the Accreditation process. Each school has a Commission staff liaison assigned to work with the school throughout the Accreditation process.

The principal should contact the CPS staff liaison assigned to the school (identified in a letter from the director) to arrange a convenient time to visit. Meeting prior to the start of the Self-Reflection is helpful in guiding the school to make the best use of its time throughout the Accreditation process.

The staff liaison meets with the principal or leadership team, then the steering committee for approximately one hour to highlight major points in the organization and planning of the Accreditation process. The CPS staff liaison meets with the Self-Reflection committee for one hour to discuss their responsibilities and answer questions concerning the Accreditation process. The CPS staff member also typically addresses the entire faculty for approximately an hour to explain current procedures, the importance of the Self-Reflection, the role of the faculty and visiting teams, and the Standards for Accreditation. This service is provided at no additional cost to member schools. The CPS staff liaison will schedule visits to spring 2020 schools in the fall of 2017. Schools scheduled for fall 2020 visits are visited in the spring of 2018, but it may be possible to schedule a visit in the late fall to mid-winter.

It is strongly suggested that central office administrators, interested parents, students, and school board members be invited to attend the meeting with the faculty as involvement of these groups may occur in the Self-Reflection.

In preparation for the CPS staff visit, steering committee and Self-Reflection committee members should read the Self-Reflection Guide and Accreditation Handbook available on the NEASC website. In addition, the faculty should read and discuss the 2020 Standards for Accreditation.

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[Materials for 2020 schools are on the NEASC website](#)

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## Accreditation Timeline

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Spring 2021 Schools</b>	<b>Fall 2021 Schools</b>
Fall/Winter 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Self-Reflection</li> </ul>	
Winter/Spring 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Collaborative Visit</li> <li>• Develop Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Self-Reflection</li> </ul>
Fall/Winter 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Collaborative Visit</li> <li>• Develop Growth Plan</li> </ul>
Winter/Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>
Fall/Winter 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> <li>• Write Summary Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>
Winter/Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Decennial Visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> <li>• Write Summary Report</li> </ul>
Fall/Winter 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Decennial Visit</li> </ul>
Winter/Spring 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update Growth Plan</li> </ul>
Fall/Winter 2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Spring 2021 Schools</b>	<b>Fall 2021 Schools</b>
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-Year Progress Report</li> <li>• Update Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-Year Progress Report</li> <li>• Update Growth Plan</li> </ul>
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>
2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Growth Plan</li> </ul>
2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six-Year Progress Report</li> <li>• Update Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six-Year Progress Report</li> <li>• Update Growth Plan</li> </ul>
2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for Continued Accreditation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for Continued Accreditation</li> </ul>

## Sample Schedule for Spring 2021 Schools

<b>June 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submit Application for Accreditation</li> <li>- Draw up tentative budget for Accreditation</li> </ul>
<b>August 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Receive letter from CPS with date for the Decennial Accreditation visit</li> <li>- Finalize selection of Accreditation Coordinators and steering committee</li> </ul>
<b>September 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solicit interest in Self-Reflection committee</li> <li>- Select members of the Self-Reflection committee</li> <li>- Schedule date for a visit by CPS staff liaison</li> <li>- Attend Accreditation Seminar (principal and Accreditation Coordinators)</li> </ul>
<b>October 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Order and administer required NEASC parent, teacher, and student opinion surveys</li> <li>- Begin work on School and Community Summary and collection of evidence</li> </ul>
<b>October 2018 to March 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share School and Community Summary with professional staff</li> <li>- Distribute opinion survey data</li> <li>- Collect and analyze data</li> <li>- Begin plans for the Collaborative Conference visit</li> <li>- Accreditation Coordinators contact CPS staff liaison to update progress</li> <li>- Draw conclusions based on analysis of evidence and write Self-Reflection report</li> <li>- Make available Parts 1 and 2 of the Self-Reflection report for review by professional staff</li> <li>- Professional staff vote to accept Part 2</li> <li>- Self-Reflection committee completes parts 3-5 of the Self-Reflection report</li> <li>- Professional staff gives input regarding areas for growth in Part 5</li> <li>- Leadership team completes Part 5 of Self-Reflection report</li> <li>- Complete entry of Self-Reflection report and evidence in portal</li> <li>- Submit press release on completion of Self-Reflection</li> <li>- Accreditation Coordinators contact CPS staff liaison to report completion of the Self-Reflection</li> </ul>
<b>March to May 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact Collaborative Conference chair to discuss topics on the Self-Reflection and Collaborative Conference checklists</li> <li>- Make preparations for the Collaborative Conference visit</li> <li>- Conduct Collaborative Conference visit</li> </ul>
<b>April to June 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair submits draft of Collaborative Conference visit report to CPS staff liaison</li> <li>- CPS staff liaison reviews draft and discusses it with chair; chair sends revised draft to principal; principal reviews for factual accuracy and other concerns and communicates with chair; chair prepares final Collaborative Conference visit report</li> <li>- CPS office sends completed report to principal within six weeks of Collaborative Conference visit</li> </ul>

<b>June to October 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership team develops School Growth Plan</li> <li>- School begins implementation of School Growth Plan</li> <li>- Principal distributes Collaborative Conference report and School Growth Plan to the school board, central office administrators, faculty, and public</li> </ul>
<b>November 2019 to December 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of School Growth Plan</li> </ul>
<b>January to March 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete Summary Report</li> </ul>
<b>March to May 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decennial Accreditation visit</li> </ul>
<b>June to October 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with team chair to finalized Decennial Accreditation visit report</li> <li>- Receive final Decennial Accreditation report and distribute to school community and release publicly</li> </ul>
<b>November to December 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notification to principal, superintendent, and board chair of CPS action on report</li> </ul>

## Sample Schedule for Fall 2021 Schools

<b>June 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submit Application for Accreditation</li> <li>- Draw up tentative budget for Accreditation</li> </ul>
<b>August 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Receive letter from CPS with date for the Decennial Accreditation visit</li> <li>- Finalize selection of Accreditation Coordinators and steering committee</li> </ul>
<b>October to November 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solicit interest in Self-Reflection committee</li> <li>- Select members of the Self-Reflection committee</li> <li>- Schedule date for a visit by CPS staff liaison</li> <li>- Attend Accreditation Seminar (principal and Accreditation Coordinators)</li> </ul>
<b>October to December 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Order and administer required NEASC parent, teacher, and student opinion surveys</li> <li>- Begin work on School and Community Summary and collection of evidence</li> </ul>
<b>January to June 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share School and Community Summary with professional staff</li> <li>- Distribute opinion survey data</li> <li>- Collect and analyze data</li> <li>- Begin plans for the Collaborative Conference visit</li> <li>- Accreditation Coordinators contact CPS staff liaison to update progress</li> <li>- Draw conclusions based on analysis of evidence and write Self-Reflection report</li> <li>- Make available Parts 1 and 2 of the Self-Reflection report for review by professional staff</li> <li>- Professional staff vote to accept Part 2</li> <li>- Self-Reflection committee completes parts 3-5 of the Self-Reflection report</li> <li>- Professional staff gives input regarding areas for growth in Part 5</li> <li>- Leadership team completes Part 5 of Self-Reflection report</li> <li>- Complete entry of Self-Reflection report and evidence in portal</li> <li>- Submit press release on completion of Self-Reflection</li> <li>- Accreditation Coordinators contact CPS staff liaison to report completion of the Self-Reflection</li> </ul>
<b>August to October 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact Collaborative Conference chair to discuss topics on the Self-Reflection and Collaborative Conference checklists</li> <li>- Make preparations for the Collaborative Conference visit</li> <li>- Conduct Conference visit</li> </ul>
<b>October to November 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair submits draft of Collaborative Conference visit report to CPS staff liaison</li> <li>- CPS staff liaison reviews draft and discusses it with chair; chair sends revised draft to principal; principal reviews for factual accuracy and other concerns and communicates with chair; chair prepares final Collaborative Conference visit report</li> <li>- CPS office sends completed report to principal within six weeks of Collaborative Conference visit</li> </ul>

<b>November 2018 to January 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership team develops School Growth Plan</li> <li>- School begins implementation of School Growth Plan</li> <li>- Principal distributes Collaborative Conference report and School Growth Plan to the school board, central office administrators, faculty, and public</li> </ul>
<b>January to June 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of School Growth Plan</li> </ul>
<b>March to August 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete Summary Report</li> </ul>
<b>September to November 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decennial Accreditation visit</li> </ul>
<b>December to March 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with team chair to finalized Decennial Accreditation visit report</li> <li>- Receive final Decennial Accreditation report and distribute to school community and release publicly</li> </ul>
<b>February to April 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notification to principal, superintendent, and board chair of CPS action on report</li> </ul>

## Step 2 – School Self-Reflection

The Self-Reflection phase and related data collection informs the school’s plan for growth. It should be viewed as a research and reflection step to help the school sharpen its vision and action steps for continuous improvement.

### **Survey and Evidence Collection**

Prior to beginning the Self-Reflection, the school will conduct an online survey of students, parents, and faculty members. The survey provides external perspective to help assess the school’s alignment to the Standards for Accreditation. The survey tool will be provided to schools from NEASC at no cost. This survey data is used as evidence during the Self-Reflection phase.

In addition to the survey data, the school will collect other existing evidence to help determine its alignment with the Standards. The purpose of collecting evidence for the Self-Reflection is to assess the school’s alignment with the Standards and to provide documentation for the Self-Reflection report. As evidence is gathered and discussed, the Self-Reflection committee may change, evolve, alter, or refine its conclusions. Use the Self-Reflection Guide with key questions to help guide the discussion and development of the Self-Reflection report.

### **School and Community Summary**

The steering committee is responsible for writing the School and Community Summary.

### **Self-Reflection Report**

The Self-Reflection committee begins by reviewing the parts of the Self-Reflection report and looking at evidence. Once the evidence has been fully deliberated and conclusions have been drawn, the Self-Reflection committee develops the Self-Reflection report and enters the information into the NEASC Accreditation Portal. The portal is used to document the school’s Self-Reflection report. The committee can use the portal to draft, save, and update work over time as information is finalized.

### **Part 1 – Look Back**

In Part 1, provide a brief look back at recent milestones, improvements, and existing priorities for the school.

### **Part 2 – Current Conditions**

In Part 2, assess and review the school’s current alignment to each Principle of Effective Practice in the Standards. As part of this review of current conditions, determine the school’s strengths and areas for growth in each Standard. See the Self-Reflection Guide for complete instructions for Part 2.

The Self-Reflection committee can upload or provide links to the evidence necessary to support the school’s rating on each Principle in the portal. Artifacts and other evidence should represent the school’s best evidence and do not need to be exhaustive. Schools are encouraged to use evidence developed or collected for other reasons, such as state or federal requirement.

### **Part 3 – Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization**

In Part 3, evaluate the school’s capacity for continuous growth and improvement as a learning organization. A learning organization consistently facilitates the learning of its members and is continuously evolving. Schools whose cultures, structures, and processes facilitate ongoing student, adult, and organizational learning are working toward becoming learning organizations.

### **Part 4 – Goals and Vision for the Future**

In Part 4, based on the school’s vision of the graduate, describe the school’s short-term and long-range vision and goals.

### **Part 5 – Priority Areas for NEASC School Growth Plan**

To identify Priority Areas for the NEASC School Growth Plan, the Self-Reflection committee first solicits input from the faculty. The faculty should have the chance to prioritize which areas for growth identified for each Standard in Part 2 are the most needed in the school.

Using the Self-Reflection findings, the school will assess its strengths and needs for improvement as it relates to each Standard for Accreditation and then identify priority areas within the Standards that it wants to emphasize for further growth and improvement. These priority areas should be any area the school needs to address to more fully align with the Standards and/or those areas the school wants to focus attention on based on school and district initiatives. It is recommended that the school identify three to four priority areas within the Standards on which to focus growth and improvement efforts. At least one of the priority areas must be related to student learning.

The Self-Reflection committee should use the information from the faculty’s vote to inform their recommendations for Priority Areas for Growth to the school principal. The principal then makes the final determination for the school’s Priority Areas for Growth and documents them in the NEASC Accreditation Portal. The final agreed-upon Priority Areas for Growth are used to develop the NEASC School Growth Plan.

The school’s full faculty must review and approve the results of the school’s Self-Reflection. This full-faculty engagement provides checks and balances for the process and ensures the faculty is involved. A 2/3 majority vote is required to approve the Self-Reflection, but the school is encouraged to work toward consensus with a minimum of 80 percent. The completed Self-Reflection must also be shared with the superintendent.

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[Complete instructions for the Self-Reflection can be found in the Self-Reflection Guide on the NEASC website.](#)

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## Self-Reflection Checklist – Step 2

The following checklist should be used by the steering committee to ensure that the appropriate materials are prepared and finalized. This checklist should be reviewed with the chair of the Collaborative Conference visit to ensure that all materials are available and meet the needs of the Collaborative Conference team.

If the Self-Reflection materials are not available for timely distribution to the members of the Collaborative Conference team or are of a quality that precludes their effective use by the visiting team, the Collaborative Conference will be postponed or canceled.

### **School and Community Summary**

1. School and Community Summary uploaded in the portal
2. Core values, beliefs, and vision of the graduate uploaded in the portal

### **Self-Reflection Report**

1. Part 1 – Look Back
2. Part 2 – Current Conditions
3. Part 3—Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization
4. Part 4 – Goals and Vision for the Future
5. Part 5 – Priority Areas for NEASC School Growth Plan
6. All parts completed and uploaded in the portal

### **Other Documents to Upload in the Portal (or provide to the chair)**

1. NEASC Opinion survey
2. Defined criteria for success (such as rubrics) for the school's learning expectations
3. Program of studies
4. Bell and daily class schedule
5. Master schedule of all classes
6. Complete staff list with roles
7. Letter of welcome from the principal
8. Floor plan of the building
9. List of emergency phone numbers (school, local hospital, emergency services, etc.)
10. Directions to the school and hotel

## Step 3 – Collaborative Conference Visit

### **A NOTE ON WHAT'S NEW:**

- ✓ *The Collaborative Conference visit is a new step in the Accreditation cycle introduced to help gather information about the schools' current conditions and intended to help schools apply their Self-Reflection findings to the development of the School Growth Plan.*

The purpose of the Collaborative Conference visit is to gather information about the current conditions of the school; to collaboratively review and refine the school's Self-Reflection findings and the identified priority areas for growth and improvement; and to support the school in the development of its goals for growth. The Collaborative Conference visiting team will also check the school's alignment to the Foundational Standards. The school will be scheduled for a Collaborative Conference visit in the spring or fall of 2018 depending on their decennial visit date. Schools will have the opportunity to choose from a window of available time and give input into when their conference is scheduled.

The Collaborative Conference team will work with the school to ensure that the identified goals for growth reflect the priority areas that have the greatest impact on student learning and that there are not obvious omissions or other needed improvement areas.

### **Collaborative Conference Visit Outline**

- The Collaborative Conference visit will take two days. The team will consist of 2-4 visitors, depending on the size of the school. The team will include a chair and assistant chair and 2 other educators representing CPS.
- The first day of the Collaborative Conference visit will include a school tour, classroom visits, and meetings with representative groups of various stakeholders including the principal, superintendent, teachers, students, other personnel as requested, and the Self-Reflection committee. The second day will include additional meetings, if necessary, time for the team to complete its report.
- Costs for the Collaborative Conference visit (meals, hotel rooms, and travel expenses) will be paid by the school. If there is a problem paying for this expense, please contact your CPS liaison.

### **Collaborative Conference Report**

Once the conference is complete, the Collaborative Conference team will share its report with the school and submit the report to CPS. CPS reviews the information, responds to the school with any additional questions or concerns, and provides feedback as needed. However, the school should begin developing its School Growth Plan as soon as the Collaborative Conference visit is complete.

Schools will be required to release the Collaborative Conference report to the public within 60 days of receiving it. Only ratings for the Foundational Elements will be included in the Collaborative Conference report. Ratings for the Principles of Effective Practice will be given at the time of the Decennial Accreditation visit.

## Required Elements of the Collaborative Conference

Tour of the school building

Classroom visits (at least 90 minutes)

Meeting with the Self-Reflection committee\* to discuss the Self-Reflection report

Meeting with a representative group of students

Meeting with a representative group of parents

Meeting with a representative group of teachers

Meeting with central office administrators

Meeting with building administrators

Meeting with department leaders or other school leaders

Meeting with support staff personnel such as school counselors, nurse, librarian, and special education personnel

Note: All meetings should be 45 minutes, depending on the school bell schedule. Visitors may be asked to attend different meetings during the same block of time at the discretion of the chair.

\*May be selected members of the committee depending on how the school structured the Self-Reflection process.

# Sample Collaborative Conference Work Schedule

## Day 1

7:30 a.m.	Team arrival at the school
7:45 – 8:15 a.m.	Tour of the building and grounds
8:20 – 9:00 a.m.	Review report with Self-Reflection committee
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Observe classes
10:30 – 11:25 a.m.	Meeting with central office administrators/Meeting with support staff
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:00 – 12:45 p.m.	Meeting with parents/Meeting with students
12:50 - 1:50 p.m.	Meet with a representative group of teachers
1:55 – 2:40 p.m.	Meet with department heads or other school leaders
2:45 – 3:30 p.m.	Meet with building administrators
3:45 p.m.	Leave school and check in to hotel
6:00 p.m.	Dinner and evening meeting to debrief findings

## Day 2

6:30 a.m.	Breakfast and check out of hotel
7:30 a.m.	Arrival at school
7:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Work on collaborative conference report in team room and other meetings as requested by the chair
12:00 – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Debrief with principal
1:45 p.m.	Depart

**Note: The Collaborative Conference schedule will be developed by the chair in consultation with the principal and/or Accreditation Coordinators and will be adjusted based on the school's bell schedule. Team members may split up between scheduled meetings.**

## Collaborative Conference Checklist – Step 3

The following checklist should be used by the chair during planning with the school to ensure that the appropriate materials are prepared and finalized and that all necessary plans for the Collaborative Conference team are in place.

1. The level of understanding of the faculty, staff, students, and community of the Accreditation process and purpose of the Collaborative Conference visit
2. Completion of all Self-Reflection materials
  - review the Self-Reflection checklist
3. Collection, availability, and access to evidence (through the online portal and at the school)
4. The Collaborative Conference visit schedule (prepared by the chair)
  - students to lead facility tour
  - meeting of the Self-Reflection committee
  - small group meetings of students, parents, central office administrators, teachers, and leadership team
5. Arrangements for technology use during the visit including Wi-Fi access and assistance as needed
6. The workroom at the school
  - size, location, and furniture
  - supplies
  - name tags
  - easel with paper and markers
  - a complete master schedule
  - student publications
  - LCD projector, screen, and printer
  - access to a copier and shredder (at the school)
7. Arrangements for lodging and meals as needed
8. Parking at the school
9. Plans for reimbursement of travel expenses
10. An overview of how the Self-Reflection report was developed
11. Press releases about the visit
12. Distribution of the Collaborative Conference visit report

## Step 4 – School Growth Plan

The school leadership is responsible for creating the School Growth Plan. The purpose of the School Growth Plan is for the school to outline a vision for continuous improvement and growth with specific, measurable goals targeting priority areas identified by the school through the Self-Reflection.

Schools may use an existing district or state model template for the plan and it can be similar to or integrated with an existing school improvement plan if it meets the criteria set forth for the NEASC School Growth Plan.

### **Elements of the School Growth Plan**

The School Growth Plan (See Appendix for references and sample) is developed using the priority areas identified through the Self-Reflection phase. The priority areas should be refined based on feedback from the Collaborative Conference Visit and may also include other school or district initiatives.

Each goal in the School Growth Plan should be evidence-driven, based on identified gaps, growth opportunities, and the school’s desired direction for learning. The plan should also clearly demonstrate how the achievement of each goal will impact and improve student learning through increasing alignment with the Standards. Additionally, as part of the action steps under each goal, there should be a method designed for creating and communicating informed collaboration to achieve goals.

The School Growth Plan should include, but is not limited to:

- measurable goals that can be adjusted after assessment and reflection
- at least one goal focused on curriculum, instruction, or assessment (i.e. student learning)
- alignment with the school district’s strategic plan (if there is one)
- connections to the mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations of the school
- each goal should include:
  - rationale (including educational research and theory of action)
  - outcomes (including process and impact benchmarks)
  - connections to the Standards
  - action steps
  - person(s) responsible for each action step
  - time and resources necessary to achieve action steps
  - methods to measure both outputs and outcomes of each goal and the evidence required to show progress/completion of the goal.

### **Plan Review and Implementation**

The school leadership provides faculty members an opportunity to review and give input on the proposed School Growth Plan. The final School Growth Plan must also be shared with the superintendent.

When the School Growth Plan is complete, the school uploads it to the NEASC Accreditation Portal. The school implements its plan over the next 12–18 months.

## Step 5 – School Summary Report for the Decennial Visit



**This section of the Handbook will be completed by September 2018.**

Prior to the Decennial Accreditation visit, the school will prepare a Summary Report for the visiting team to explain the school's progress, outcomes, and next steps as a result of implementing the School Growth Plan.

As school personnel implement their School Growth Plan, they will simultaneously collect data and evidence to document the school's achievements as a result of the plan. Schools have the option of administering a follow-up survey to students, parents, and faculty members to assess growth in the identified priority areas, similar to the survey conducted during the Self-Reflection phase. This survey data could be used as additional evidence of progress and outcomes for the Summary Report.

The Summary Report can be prepared by the steering committee or by a separate committee formed for this purpose. See Table 2 below for key questions to help guide the development of the Summary Report.

### **Summary Report**

#### **Part 1 – Look Back**

In Part 1, provide a brief look back at the changes, improvements, and challenges since the Self-Reflection:

- What has changed in the current conditions of the school since the time of the Self-Reflection report? What has improved?
- What, if any, unforeseen challenges were encountered?

#### **Part 2 – Progress on the School Growth Plan**

In Part 2, evaluate progress on the School Growth Plan. For each of the goal areas, please answer the following questions:

- What has the school achieved related to this goal in the School Growth Plan?
- How has student learning or the student environment changed?
- What is the evidence of student outcomes?
- Does the goal set need to be adjusted?

#### **Part 3 – Looking Ahead**

In Part 3, describe what's next and the steps that will be taken for each of the goal areas within School Growth Plan.

#### Part 4 – Capacity for Continuous Growth and Change as an Organization

In Part 4, evaluate the school’s capacity for continuous growth and improvement:

- What structures are in place within the school to support continuous growth?
- In what types of regular reflection and ongoing assessment does the school engage?
- What additional structures will help the school implement the updated School Growth Plan?

## Step 6 – The Decennial Accreditation Visit and Feedback



**This section of the Handbook will be completed by September 2018.**

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### A NOTE ON WHAT'S NEW:

- ✓ *The Decennial Accreditation visiting teams are no longer one size fits all; teams will be tailored to meet the needs of the school and scope of the work to be reviewed.*
- ✓ *The visit is designed to increase focus on classroom work and observing teaching and learning.*
- ✓ *The scope of recommendations emphasizes feedback on school growth goals.*

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The Decennial Accreditation visit is an opportunity for the visiting team to assess the school's progress on the implementation of the School Growth Plan and their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation. The purpose of the Decennial Accreditation visit is to assess how the implementation of the School Growth Plan is proceeding and to be present for and observe firsthand the day-to-day workings of the school.

The Decennial Accreditation visiting team will receive the school's Self-Reflection and Summary Reports via the NEASC Accreditation Portal prior to the visit. The size of the Decennial Accreditation visiting team and the length of the visit will be determined by the size of the school and the needs of the school related to the scope of work to be reviewed. In general, visiting teams will be 6–8 visitors for 3–4 days.

### Decennial Visit Goals

- Assess the implementation of the School Growth Plan and observe teaching and learning
- Learn about the impacts or outcomes of the stated plan, not just outputs of the plan
- Evaluate the school's capacity to be an effective learning organization, including how the school ensures continual improvement and what structures the school has in place to examine its progress on an ongoing basis.

**Observation and Recommendations**

During the Decennial Accreditation visit, the team members will meet with parents and other stakeholder groups, shadow students, observe classes, and review evidence related to the implementation of the School Growth Plan and other areas of the Standards for Accreditation as necessary.

The Decennial Accreditation visiting team will provide recommendations related to elements of the School Growth Plan as aligned with the Standards. The visiting team may also make recommendations based on other areas within the Standards that are not included in the School Growth Plan if there is significant evidence of additional priority areas for growth.

## Step 7 – Accreditation Decision and Continuous Improvement



**This section of the Handbook will be completed by September 2018.**

### **Decennial Report**

Following the Decennial Accreditation visit, the visiting team chair sends a draft Decennial Accreditation report to the school. The school will have a specified amount of time to review the draft and give feedback. Once the Decennial Accreditation report is finalized, the chair sends the report to CPS and a decision about Continued Accreditation is made.

### **Revised School Growth Plan**

The school develops a new/revised School Growth Plan based on the feedback and recommendations from the Decennial Accreditation visiting team. The revised School Growth Plan is due to CPS no later than one year after the Decennial Accreditation visit.

### **Continuous Improvement and Progress Reports**

The process of reflection, planning, and implementation is cyclical and does not end with the Decennial Accreditation visit. Schools should be actively monitoring evidence, assessing progress, identifying changing priorities or school needs, and adjusting their school plans as necessary for continuous growth and improvement.

Schools will provide updates to CPS about the implementation of and progress on the revised School Growth Plan three years and six years after the Decennial Accreditation visit. More information about the follow-up process and NEASC events and resources will be provided to the school following the Decennial Accreditation visit.

# Appendix

## Collection of Evidence

### **Collection of Evidence**

Evidence is essential to the Accreditation process. Schools are encouraged to use existing evidence in the Self-Reflection process to be as efficient as possible. Schools that have existing review of student work protocols, classroom observation protocols, professional learning communities, department meetings, and other existing structures are encouraged to use these to facilitate the gathering and analysis of evidence.

### **Student Work**

Student work is essential to the Self-Reflection and Collaborative Conference process and should be incorporated into the collection of evidence. Student work collected should include:

- Work from each grade level
- Work from each department
- Work from each course level (e.g. developmental, college prep, honors, AP, etc.)
- Work which reflects the school's vision of the graduate
- Work which reflects the elements of the Standards (see "Look-fors in classrooms and student work")

The sample cover sheet asks for information which helps to understand the sets of student work submitted in light of the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate, as well as the local context. Each teacher submitting a set of student work should complete a cover sheet and ensure that each set meets the expectations outlined on the cover sheet.

The teacher's reflection is an important part of the review of student work. The teacher's reflection puts student work into context. In the reflection, teachers should identify the extent to which the student work represents proficiency. In addition, the teacher should consider which of the elements of the Standards for Accreditation is evident in the student work.

# Student Work Set Cover Sheet

Teacher / Course / Grade / Level
Type of Assignment (e.g. homework, group work, essay, test, project, etc.)
Skills and Knowledge (e.g. learning expectation, essential question, curriculum standards, etc.)
Describe the activity or assessment and context (or attach unit or lesson plan/overview)

Attach:

1. Handout(s) given to students
2. Assessment criteria, such as a rubric
3. Three examples of student work
  - including work that is developing, meeting, and exceeding expectations
  - scoring and feedback to students

Identify the Learning Look-fors*	Identify the Teaching Look-fors*
----------------------------------	----------------------------------

\*Use the Look-fors list

Reflection

- To what extent does the student work set represent students' proficiency?
- To what extent does the work set reflect elements of the Standards for Accreditation?

## Look-fors in Classrooms and Student Work

<b>Learning</b>	
<p>skills and competencies necessary to attain the school’s vision of the graduate</p> <p>knowledge, understandings, transferable skills, and dispositions necessary for future success</p> <p>dispositions, such as independence, flexible thinking, and persistence</p> <p>disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge</p> <p>deep understanding</p> <p>higher order thinking</p> <p>inquiry</p> <p>application of knowledge and skills to authentic tasks</p>	<p>questioning, analysis, and understanding impacts</p> <p>analysis, synthesis, creativity, making connections, and understanding relationships</p> <p>critical and creative thinking</p> <p>using technology in informed, effective, and ethical ways</p> <p>communicate clearly and creatively</p> <p>construct knowledge</p> <p>create</p> <p>problem-solve</p> <p>share work with an audience</p> <p>collaboration</p>
<b>Teaching</b>	
<p>interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning, and authentic learning experiences</p> <p>strategic differentiating and individualizing</p> <p>purposefully organized group learning</p> <p>connections to prior knowledge across disciplines</p> <p>additional support and alternative strategies</p> <p>organizational, grouping, and tiered intervention strategies</p> <p>learning that is personalized, relevant, and authentic</p> <p>opportunities for students to determine learning outcomes, set goals and reflect upon the results</p> <p>student discourse and reflection on learning</p> <p>student choice, pursuit of personal interests, and opportunities for creative expression</p> <p>opportunities to learn in and out of school</p> <p>experiences that are cognitively challenging</p> <p>a wide range of assessment strategies, including formative, summative assessments, and common assessments</p> <p>specific and measurable criteria for success provided to learners prior to assessments</p>	<p>regular and consistent checks for understanding</p> <p>presentation of learning to authentic audiences</p> <p>multiple and varied opportunities over time to demonstrate learning</p> <p>consistent, systematic, specific, and timely corrective feedback</p> <p>opportunities to revise and improve work</p> <p>teacher feedback as well as peer feedback and self-reflection</p> <p>separate grading/reporting and feedback for work habits and academic skills</p> <p>technology to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ access, support, document, and supplement learning</li> <li>○ broaden perspectives locally and globally</li> <li>○ personalize the pace of learning</li> <li>○ share work with an audience beyond the school community</li> <li>○ collaborate digitally to support learning</li> <li>○ engage in learning beyond the constraints of the school building and school day</li> </ul>

# Evidence Gathering Worksheet

Context: e.g. student work, observation, interview, meeting.

In the conclusion section describe the principle or descriptors observed

Literal Notes	Conclusions

## Sample School and Community Summary

Bristol High School, located in Bristol, Maine, serves the communities of Bristol, Oyster Bay, and Rockport. Located equidistant from Portland and Augusta, the towns are traditional seacoast communities, with tourism and fishing as primary industries.

With a combined population of 17,230, the communities are economically, racially, culturally, and ethnically similar. No identifiable minority group comprises more than 0.7 percent of the population, and English is the primary language spoken by 99 percent of the student population; a few students have parents who speak Portuguese at home. Bristol has the slightly larger population with 7,629, with Oyster Bay (5,012) and Rockport (4,589) somewhat smaller. The median family income is \$53,309 in Bristol, \$63,044 in Oyster Bay, and \$60,412 in Rockport.

The majority of the population in all three communities is employed in the fishing industry, tourism, services, trade, and government. In 2011, the unemployment rate was 3.9 percent for Bristol, 4.5 percent for Oyster Bay, and 3.8% for Rockport. In 2011, five percent of the school population lived below the low-income level. Seacoast College, also located in Bristol, is a major employer for all three towns. Rockport is also home to Genetics Corporation, a biotechnical research company, and Oyster Bay is home to two assisted living facilities. All three towns have experienced considerable growth in the past five years. While there has been a slight decline in the fishing industry, at the same time new housing starts, primarily due to the building of second/vacation homes, have increased.

In addition to Bristol High School with a population of 988, Littleneck Middle School includes 740 students, and three elementary schools, one located in each of the three communities, house 559, 341, and 287 students for a total of 2,915 in the Barnacle Bay School District. Eighteen students, 2 percent, attend non-public schools.

The Bristol School District is ranked in the lower 30 percent of school districts in the state in terms of per pupil expenditures and expended \$8,443 per pupil compared to a state average expenditure of \$9,022 per pupil in 2010-2011 and \$8,678 compared to a state average expenditure of \$9,216 per pupil in 2010-2011. In FY 2011 state, federal, and other resources accounted for 62 percent of all funds received in the district, leaving 38 percent of funding to be obtained through local resources. Forty-seven percent of local property taxes are allocated to the public schools. Twelve students paid nonresident tuition fees of \$7,500 each to attend Bristol High School in both 2010 and 2011.

Bristol High School includes students in grade 9 -12 with the total enrollment of 988 students divided between 490 males and 498 females. The school population has remained stable over the past ten years. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition has remained constant with .43 percent (4) African-American students, .17 percent (2) Asian students, and 1.2 percent (10) Hispanic students during the 2011-2012 school year. The average dropout rate for the past two years has been 2.15 percent, the average daily student attendance 96.7 percent and the average attendance rate among teachers is 96.2 percent.

There are 62 teachers at Bristol High School, creating a ratio of 16:1. Individual teachers carry an average load of 80 students with an average class size of 19. In those classes required for graduation, the average class size is 22 students. Students attend school for 180 days and for a minimum of 975 hours.

All freshmen are placed in non-leveled teams concentrating on four core academic areas of English, mathematics, social studies, and science. Students in grades ten to twelve may select from three levels of college preparatory, honors, or Advanced Placement (where offered). Sixty-seven percent of students are enrolled in honors classes, 20 percent in college preparatory courses, and 12 percent in Advanced Placement courses. Approximately 7 percent of students receive special education services. All students are required to take four years of English, social studies, mathematics, and science, two years of health and physical education, one fine/performing art course, with the remainder of students' programs filled from a variety of elective courses, including three world languages. Bristol High School offers a variety of co-curricular activities for its students in which over 93 percent of students every year participates in at least one co-curricular activity.

In the class of 2012, 67 percent of graduates attended four-year colleges, with 13 percent enrolling in two-year colleges, 4.3 percent enrolling in business and technical schools, 11 percent entering the workforce, and 4.4 percent entering the military. Graduates take advantage of the considerable educational opportunities available as they choose from such colleges and universities as Rockport College, Coastal College, Mystic River University, and Seacoast School of Design. Opportunities for adult continuing education are available at Bristol Adult Learning Center, Bristol Community College, and Salty Creek Regional Technical School.

Bristol High School has established partnerships with local businesses, including an annual career day program in which every tenth-grade student spends a day at a local business in a job shadowing experience; numerous food drives and fundraising events for local charities; blood drives and walks for hunger; performances by music groups at hospitals and for the elderly. Juniors and seniors experience extended work experience through courses offered where students serve as interns at local businesses.

Bristol High School has also established effective partnerships with three of the local institutions of higher education. Juniors and seniors may enroll in one college course for credit each year at no cost to the student. Through grant monies the high school's guidance counselors and admissions office staff at Coastal College are working collaboratively to increase the number of students applying to colleges and universities. Over the past few years a significant number of intern teachers from Mystic River University have been working at the high school.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments through the superintendent's and principal's awards, given annually to students in each grade level; the Tri-Community Exchange Club which recognizes most improved students on a monthly basis; a First Honors Dinner, sponsored by parent-teacher association (PTA) to recognize those students who have attained first honors for the four terms during the previous year. In addition, local newspapers sponsor academic and athletic achievement awards and speech contests in addition to many locally sponsored scholarships. Each spring the school honors students from all spectra in awards assemblies recognizing individual student achievement in academics, music, drama, athletics, and community service.

## Resources for School Growth Plans

### References for School Growth Plan

Connecticut State Department of Education. CALI-School Improvement Planning. Retrieved from <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=322300>

Hanover Research/ District Administration Practice. Best Practices for School Improvement Planning, October 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.hanoverresearch.com/media/Best-Practices-for-School-Improvement-Planning.pdf>

Maine Department of Education. Getting to Proficiency: Helping Maine Graduate Every Student Prepared. Retrieved from <http://www.maine.gov/doe/proficiency/index.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Planning for Success in Massachusetts. (October 2015). Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on International Education. ACE. Retrieved from <https://cie.neasc.org/accreditation-standards-indicators>

New Hampshire Department of Education. New Hampshire's Story of Transformation. Retrieved from <http://www.education.nh.gov/transformation.htm> Pipkin, Cameron. (September 2015). Retrieved from <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2015-09-09-how-to-craft-an-effective-school-improvement-plan>

Rhode Island Department of Education. School Transformation. Retrieved from <http://www.ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/Accountability/SchoolTransformation.aspx> Thomas/Leaders Building Leaders. (September 19, 2016). Retrieved from <http://leaders-building-leaders.com/2016/09/19/establishing-school-improvement-plan/>

State of Vermont Agency of Education. Continuous Improvement Framework. November 2016. Retrieved from <http://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-education-quality-continuous-improvement-framework.pdf>

### Sample School Improvement/Growth Plans and Templates

Connecticut Department of Education. Retrieved from [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/word\\_docs/cali/annotated\\_sample\\_sip\\_2008-2009.doc](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/word_docs/cali/annotated_sample_sip_2008-2009.doc)

State of Vermont Agency of Education. Retrieved from <http://education.vermont.gov/documents/continuous-improvement-plan-template>

## News Release

### Seeking Community Participation During Accreditation

#### COMMUNITY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN ACCREDITATION OF SCHOOL

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The principal \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ School invites parents of students and other interested community residents to assist in a Self-Reflection which is currently being conducted by the school's professional staff.

The Self-Reflection is a significant component in the Accreditation process of the Commission on Public Schools for the Accreditation of \_\_\_\_\_ School by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal) noted that all aspects of the school will be assessed during the Self-Reflection. Volunteers are needed to serve on the Self-Reflection committee, which will assess the school's alignment to the Standards for Accreditation.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges is a voluntary membership organization of more than 2,000 public schools, colleges and universities, independent schools, and vocational/technical and career institutions. Approximately 725 public schools throughout New England are currently accredited through the Association's Commission on Public Schools. The Commission works with individual schools to improve the quality of their programs at all levels through a process of Self-Reflection, peer review, and ongoing monitoring.

Anyone interested in volunteering time or in learning more about the Self-Reflection should contact \_\_\_\_\_, who is coordinating the Accreditation process at the school. He/she may be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ during school hours.



*For more information contact:*

**Person** \_\_\_\_\_  
**School** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Email** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## News Release

### Staff Visit from the Commission on Public Schools

#### \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL TO SEEK NEASC ACCREDITATION

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\_\_\_\_\_ (School) \_\_\_\_\_'s faculty members met on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ to listen to strategies on preparing for the school's Self-Reflection offered by a staff member from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (title) \_\_\_\_\_, for the Association's Commission on Public Schools, provided the faculty with an overall picture of the Commission's Accreditation procedures and Standards for Accreditation during the hour-long session.

\_\_\_\_\_ noted that the New England Association is a voluntary accrediting agency of more than 2,000 public and independent schools, colleges and universities, and vocational, technical, and career institutions. Of these, approximately 725 schools are accredited through the Association's Commission on Public Schools. The Commission works with individual schools to improve the quality of education through a continuous process of evaluation and Accreditation.

Principal/Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_ said, "To become a member of NEASC, a school must align with the Standards for Accreditation. The purpose of the Self-Reflection is to provide an opportunity for our professional staff to review all our educational programs, processes, systems, and practices to determine the degree to which our school aligns with those rigorous Standards. The Standards were established to ensure that the necessary components for effective education exist within the school. \_\_\_\_\_ also noted that, "While Accreditation by the Association does not imply perfection, it does ensure that the school has the resources, leadership, and organization necessary to support the ongoing improvement required of all schools."

One of the major requirements for NEASC membership is that the entire school be assessed following the extensive Self-Reflection by the professional staff. This assessment is conducted by visiting teams of professional educators, sent by the Commission, who review all materials prepared by the faculty in the Self-Reflection, visit classes, and talk with students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members during their four-day visit to the school. \_\_\_\_\_ School has been scheduled for visits at the conclusion of the Self-Reflection and again on \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, founded in 1885, is the oldest accrediting agency in the country and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the sole agency to award Accreditation to PreK-12 schools, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in New England.



*For more information contact:*

**Person** \_\_\_\_\_  
**School** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone**  
**Date**

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## News Release

# The Collaborative Conference Conducted by the Commission on Public Schools

### **COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

\_\_\_\_ (Number) \_\_\_\_\_ educators will conduct an on-site Collaborative Conference visit with \_\_\_\_\_ School on \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_. Principal/Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_ announced today. The Collaborative Conference visit will be conducted under the direction of the Commission on Public Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The Collaborative Conference visiting team will be chaired by \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (title), \_\_\_\_\_ (institution). Dr. /Mr. /Mrs. /Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ has had extensive experience in the Association's Accreditation process.

Principal/Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_ said, "The purpose of this Collaborative Conference is to review and determine from an outside professional viewpoint the extent to which the school is aligned to the Standards for Accreditation and identify priority areas for growth and improvement. As part of the Conference, the team will meet with school constituents, review the school's Self-Reflection, visit a number of classes, and examine examples of student work submitted by the school. During the comprehensive Self-Reflection, the faculty attempted to identify the school's strengths and determined those areas in which changes would be beneficial."

The chair of the Collaborative Conference visiting team, \_\_\_\_\_, said, "Our purpose in visiting \_\_\_\_\_ School is to assist the faculty in its pursuit of quality education for its students." Principal/Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_ pointed out, "The members of the team are contributing their services to the school. This spirit of professional collaboration is one of the noted features of the New England Association. The goal of an Accreditation visit is to stimulate a continuing drive for improvement in the school." The members of the team are teachers and administrators from a variety of schools in the \_\_\_\_\_ (state) \_\_\_\_\_ area.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges is a voluntary membership organization of more than 2,000 public schools, colleges and universities, independent schools, and vocational, technical, and career institutions. Of these, over 725 schools have been accredited through the Association's Commission on Public Schools. The Commission works with individual public schools to improve the quality of education through a continuous process of Accreditation and ongoing monitoring.



*For more information contact:*

**Person** \_\_\_\_\_  
**School** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## News Release

# The Accreditation Visit Conducted by the Commission on Public Schools

### DECENNIAL ACCREDITATION VISIT TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\_\_\_\_\_(Number)\_\_\_\_ educators will conduct an on-site Initial or Decennial Accreditation visit of \_\_\_\_\_ School on \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_. Principal/Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_ announced today. The Accreditation visit will be conducted under the direction of the Commission on Public Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The visiting team will be chaired by \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_(Title), \_\_\_\_\_(Institution)\_\_\_\_. Dr. /Mr. /Mrs. /Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ has had extensive experience in the Association's Accreditation process.

Principal/Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_ said, "The purpose of this Accreditation visit is to review and determine from an outside professional viewpoint the extent to which the school is aligned with the Standards for Accreditation. As part of the assessment, the visiting team will meet with all school constituents, review the school's Self-Reflection, visit a number of classes, and examine examples of student work submitted by the school. During the comprehensive Self-Reflection, the faculty attempted to identify the school's strengths and determined those areas in which changes would be beneficial."

The chair of the visiting team, \_\_\_\_\_, said, "Our purpose in visiting \_\_\_\_\_ School is to assist the faculty in its pursuit of quality education for its students." Principal/Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_ pointed out, "The members of the visiting team are contributing their services to the school. This spirit of professional collaboration is one of the noted features of the New England Association. The goal of an Accreditation visit is to stimulate a continuing drive for improvement in the school." The members of the visiting team are teachers and administrators from a variety of schools in the \_\_\_\_\_(state)\_\_\_\_\_ area.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges is a voluntary membership organization of more than 2,000 public schools, colleges and universities, independent schools, and vocational, technical, and career institutions. Of these, over 725 schools have been accredited through the Association's Commission on Public Schools. The Commission works with individual public schools to improve the quality of education through a continuous process of Accreditation and evaluation.



*For more information contact:*

**Person** \_\_\_\_\_  
**School** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

News Release  
The Accreditation Decision

**COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS MAKES ACCREDITATION DECISION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Officials of \_\_\_\_\_ School were notified today that the Commission on Public Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges has voted to continue/grant \_\_\_\_\_ school's Initial or Continued Accreditation in the Association. The Commission's decision was based upon review of a Decennial Accreditation report prepared by a visiting team in \_\_\_\_\_ (month).

\_\_\_\_\_, principal of \_\_\_\_\_ School, stated: "We feel that the Commission's decision confirms the results of the extensive Self-Reflection, which our faculty and administrators conducted. We are convinced that the findings of our Self-Reflection, coupled with recommendations of the Commission on Public Schools' visiting team, will assist us in developing priorities for further improvements in the school.

"The Commission on Public Schools requires that accredited schools submit progress reports following the Decennial Accreditation visit to indicate the changes we've made to improve our school. In anticipation of these progress reports, the professional staff and administrators will immediately begin a follow-up program to review the findings of the visiting team report to establish the order in which recommendations will be carried out."

The New England Association of School and Colleges is a voluntary membership organization of more than 2,000 public and independent schools, colleges and universities, and vocational, technical, and career institutions. Of these, approximately 725 schools have been accredited through the Association's Commission on Public Schools. The Association works with individual schools to improve the quality of education through a continuous process of evaluation and Accreditation.



*For more information contact:*

**Person** \_\_\_\_\_  
**School** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Substantive Change Policy

## New England Association of Schools & Colleges

### Commission on Public Schools

#### SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has a *negative impact* on the school's ability to align with any of the Standards for Accreditation. The report of a substantive change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact on the school's ability to align with the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding
- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- grade level responsibilities of the principal
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services
- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees
- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency.

## Glossary

### **Accreditation Coordinators**

Working with the principal, the Accreditation Coordinators are responsible for leading the Accreditation process with the support of the steering committee. Ideally, the Accreditation Coordinators guide the process from the Self-Reflection through the Decennial Accreditation visit.

### **Collaborative Conference Report**

The Collaborative Conference report will summarize the school's alignment to each of the Standards for Accreditation, provide commendations and recommendations, and ensure that the identified goals for growth reflect the priority areas that have the greatest impact on student learning and that there are not obvious omissions or other needed improvement areas.

### **Collaborative Conference Visit**

The purpose of the Collaborative Conference visit is to gather information about the current conditions of the school; to collaboratively review and refine the school's Self-Reflection findings and the identified priority areas for growth and improvement; and to support the school in the development of its goals for growth.

### **Decennial Accreditation Report**

The Decennial Accreditation report will summarize the school's alignment to each of the Principles in the Standards for Accreditation and implementation of the School Growth Plan. The report will provide the school with commendations and recommendations to guide the revision of the School Growth Plan and help the school further align to the Standards for Accreditation over the next 3-6 years.

### **Decennial Accreditation Visit**

The Decennial Accreditation visit is an opportunity for the visiting team to assess the school's progress on the implementation of the School Growth Plan and their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation. The purpose of the Decennial Accreditation visit is to assess how the implementation of the School Growth Plan is proceeding and to be present for and observe firsthand the day-to-day workings of the school.

### **Descriptor**

The Descriptors of the Principles are guidance for schools to identify the common elements of successful implementation of each Principle in the Standards for Accreditation. The descriptors are neither exhaustive nor required. The Descriptors provide a template for aligning to the Principles. Schools may choose to use different, equally valid, paths to aligning with the Principles.

### **Disposition**

Dispositions are the patterns of behavior and thinking necessary for success in and out of school. Dispositions include persistence, flexibility, empathy, courage, and accuracy, for example.

### **Foundational Elements**

The Foundational Elements are the most basic conditions necessary for alignment to the Standards for Accreditation. Each Foundational Element is drawn from one of the Principles in the Standards. These elements must be in place for a school to meet the needs of students. If any Foundational Element is not fully implemented, the school must include it as a "priority area for growth" in the School Growth Plan

## **Growth Plan**

The School Growth Plan is the outline of a vision for continuous improvement and growth with specific, measurable goals and action plans targeting priority areas identified by the school through the Self-Reflection and Collaborative Conference.

## **Learning Organization**

A learning organization consistently facilitates and prioritizes the learning of its members and is continuously evolving. Schools whose cultures, structures and processes facilitate ongoing student, adult and organizational learning are working towards becoming learning organizations.

## **Principle**

The Principles in the Standards for Accreditation express the essential values, concepts, practices, and structures used to guide evaluation of the quality of school programs, services, and commitments.

## **Priority Area for Growth**

The Priority Areas for Growth are the areas within the NEASC Standards that the school needs to strengthen or better align to improve learning, achievement, and well-being for students. The Priority Areas for Growth should reflect school and district priorities that the school is working on and wants to focus attention on further.

## **Self-Reflection Committee**

The Self-Reflection committee is charged with completing the Self-Reflection report to determine the school's level of alignment with each of the Principles in the Standards for Accreditation, the school's capacity for growth, and identify priority areas for growth. The committee follows a process of evidence gathering, discussion, decision-making, and writing. The Self-Reflection committee is expected to engage the entire school community in the process including all educators, students, families, and other stakeholder groups.

## **Self-Reflection Report**

The School Self-Reflection report is written by the Self-Reflection committee and includes five parts: Look Back, Current Conditions, Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization, Goals and Vision for the Future, and Priority Areas for NEASC School Growth Plan. The School Self-Reflection report is the basis for the Collaborative Conference visit.

## **Steering Committee**

The steering committee is charged with providing leadership for the Accreditation process. The steering committee must include the school principal, or designated school administrator, and a minimum of two educators from the professional staff who serve as Accreditation Coordinators. Additional members may be included to provide sufficient capacity for the committee to lead all aspects of the Accreditation process.

## **Summary Report**

The Summary Report will be completed by the school prior to the Decennial Accreditation visit and includes four parts: Look Back, Progress on the School Growth Plan, Looking Ahead, Capacity for Continuous Growth and Change as an Organization.

## **Transferable Skills**

Transferable skills are the essential skills students need to be able to confront new challenges both in and outside of school. Transferable skills include creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, for example.

## **Vision of the Graduate**

The vision of the graduate includes the transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success.