



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Commission on Public Schools (CPS)

2020 Standards for Accreditation

For public elementary, middle, and high schools seeking Accreditation in 2020 and beyond

Introduction

The **New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Public Schools (CPS)** requires member schools to demonstrate alignment with the Standards for Accreditation. The revised 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 LEARNING CULTURE	Learning Culture promotes shared values and responsibility for achieving the school's vision.
Standard 2 STUDENT LEARNING	Student Learning practices maximize the impact of learning for each student.
Standard 3 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES	Professional Practices ensure that practices and structures are in place to support and improve student learning.
Standard 4 LEARNING SUPPORT	Learning Support ensures that the school has appropriate systems to support student learning and well-being.
Standard 5 LEARNING RESOURCES	Learning Resources ensure that the school has the resources necessary to meet the learning needs of all students.

Principles of Effective Practice

Each Standard includes Principles of Effective Practice, which define the expectations for that Standard. Schools will be asked to reflect on and report their progress in aligning with the Principles for each Standard.

Descriptors of Effective Practice

Descriptors of Effective Practice 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.

Foundational Elements

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.

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

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Standard 1: Learning Culture

The school provides a safe learning culture that ensures equity and fosters shared values among learners, educators, families, and members of the school community. These shared values drive student learning as well as policy, practice, and decision-making while promoting a spirit of collaboration, shared ownership, pride, leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement. The school community sets high standards for student learning, fosters a growth mindset, and facilitates continuous school improvement to realize the school’s core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

PRINCIPLES of Effective Practice	DESCRIPTORS of Effective Practice
<p>1.1 The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought.</p>	<p>The school community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment for learners and adults • demonstrates a culture of learning focused on the strengths of both students and adults • creates policies and protocols to define and support respectful treatment of all members of the school community • ensures all learners are known and valued and have equitable access to a full range of school programs and services • identifies learning gaps and social disparities and develops programs and initiatives to address them • ensures individuality among all community members is a positive opportunity for extended learning and growth • actively emphasizes and strengthens understanding of, and commitment to, equity and diversity • supports a diversity of opinion and personal experience.
<p>FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 1.1a The school community provides a safe environment.</p>	<p>The school community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliberately builds and maintains a physically safe environment for learners and adults • maintains policies and processes to ensure the safety of learners and adults.

<p>1.2</p> <p>The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.</p>	<p>The school community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research and best practices to identify, commit to, and regularly review and revise its core values and beliefs about learning • develops a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success • ensures the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are known and understood by all members of the school community • ensures the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are actively reflected in the school culture and drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom • ensures the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate promote a commitment to continuous improvement and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.
<p>FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 1.2a</p> <p>The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.</p>	<p>The school community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
<p>1.3</p> <p>The school community takes collective responsibility for the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.</p>	<p>The school community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintains and supports high expectations for all students • is focused on providing a balance of academic, social, and civic opportunities to meet the needs of diverse learners • helps students develop the skills necessary to achieve a positive school/life balance • has a plan and services in place to identify and support

	<p>the social and emotional needs of students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures that each student is known by an adult mentor in the school, or through some other formal process, to assist him or her in achieving the school’s vision of the graduate • has a broad commitment to all areas of learning • acknowledges the importance of and assists in building each student’s readiness to learn • demonstrates the value it has for all learners through its instruction and assessment practices • ensures that classroom educators and support staff share responsibility for struggling learners.
<p>1.4 The school community's professional culture demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.</p>	<p>The school community’s professional culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embodies a spirit of continuous improvement • promotes the use of innovative methods to achieve common goals • demonstrates a commitment to research-based instruction and reflective practice • promotes ongoing and authentic formal and informal collaboration • commits to a sense of ownership and responsibility for achieving the school’s core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate • demonstrates a growth mindset • creates the conditions and trust necessary for the full and active participation of all educators • supports educators in maintaining expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices • values educators as collaborative problem solvers, curriculum creators, and co-learners • emphasizes the use of evidence-based research, reflective practice, data, and feedback to improve learners’ educational experiences • uses ongoing and relevant assessment data, including

	<p>feedback from the school community, to improve school programs and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a formal process for evaluating programs and services.
<p>1.5 The school's culture promotes intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth.</p>	<p>The school culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is dynamic and vibrant with a shared sense of agency and responsibility • ensures learners and educators understand that learning from mistakes is an important part of intellectual and personal growth • promotes norms and protocols that support respectful discourse, including diverse perspectives, experimentation, innovation, and a disposition to listen well and learn from others • emphasizes the importance of persistence and opportunities for revision of student work.
<p>1.6 The school has an inclusive definition of leadership and provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning.</p>	<p>The school community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures the principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that sets high standards for student achievement and fosters a growth mindset • ensures school leaders facilitate school improvement efforts to realize the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate • involves educators, students, and families in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership • encourages educators to exercise initiative, innovation, and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning • ensures the school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive • ensures the principal is given appropriate decision-making authority to lead the school.

1.7

The school culture fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility.

The school culture:

- encourages social awareness, upstanding behavior, and fair and respectful treatment of all
- relies on the democratic values of agency, civil dialogue, adjusting thinking in the face of new information, equality, and a commitment to the common good to inform the curriculum, characterize classroom behavior, and guide school governance
- encourages learning experiences that connect to or make an impact on the community beyond the school campus.

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Standard 2: Student Learning

The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary to prepare learners for their future. Students are assured consistent learning outcomes through a defined curricular experience and have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a variety of creative ways. Students actively participate in authentic learning experiences while practicing the skills and habits of mind to regularly reflect upon, and take ownership of, their learning.

PRINCIPLES of Effective Practice	DESCRIPTORS of the Effective Practice
<p>2.1</p> <p>The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success and provides feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress in achieving this vision.</p>	<p>The vision of the graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes transferable skills defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which target high levels of achievement • includes knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success • is embedded into curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. <p>The school has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a formal process to assess and communicate individual learner progress toward achieving the school's vision of the graduate • an annual report on whole-school progress toward learner achievement of the vision of the graduate.
<p>2.2</p> <p>There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate.</p>	<p>The written curriculum includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills • instructional strategies • assessment practices • discipline-specific, higher order thinking and transferable skills • dispositions, such as independence, flexible thinking,

	<p>and persistence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge • the school’s vision of the graduate.
<p>FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 2.2a</p> <p>There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments.</p>	<p>The written curriculum includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills • instructional strategies • assessment practices.
<p>2.3</p> <p>Curriculum ensures that learners demonstrate a depth of understanding over a breadth of knowledge.</p>	<p>Learners engage in a curriculum that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes connections to prior knowledge across disciplines • places an emphasis on learner application of knowledge and skills • emphasizes deep understanding through interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning, and authentic learning experiences • includes discipline-specific, higher order thinking and transferable skills and dispositions • embeds skills and competencies necessary to attain the school’s vision of the graduate.
<p>2.4</p> <p>Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.</p>	<p>Instructional practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategically differentiating, individualizing, and/or personalizing based on student learning needs • using formative assessment to adjust instruction • purposefully organizing group learning • providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom • organizational, grouping, and tiered intervention strategies that meet the needs of each learner within

	<p>the regular classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structure and support to provide all learners with access to rigorous learning opportunities.
<p>2.5 Students are active learners who have opportunities to lead their own learning.</p>	<p>Active learning strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning that is personalized, relevant, and authentic • opportunities for students to determine learning outcomes • project-based learning • learning that fosters student agency by providing opportunities to set goals and reflect upon the results to guide their own learning process • application of knowledge and skills to authentic tasks • student discourse and reflection on learning • student choice, pursuit of personal interests, and opportunities for creative expression • opportunities to learn in and out of school.
<p>2.6 Learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.</p>	<p>Inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills require learners to engage in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • questioning, analysis, and understanding impacts • activities that prioritize deep understanding, analysis, synthesis, creativity, making connections, and understanding relationships • critical and creative thinking skills • dispositions, such as independence, flexible thinking, and persistence • deliberately designed learning and assessment experiences that are cognitively challenging and require learners to develop and exercise a full-range of thinking skills and learning dispositions.

<p>2.7</p> <p>Learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum.</p>	<p>Effective assessment practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment of, for, and as student learning • a wide range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, to inform and differentiate instruction • common assessments that serve to ensure consistent and equitable learning opportunities across grades or courses • specific and measurable criteria for success provided to learners prior to assessments • communication of the school’s vision of the graduate and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study • regular and consistent checks for understanding in ways that engage every learner’s thinking about the concept, skill, or information being learned • presentation of learning to authentic audiences, including students, families, community members, and professionals.
<p>2.8</p> <p>Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.</p>	<p>Learners are provided with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple and varied opportunities over time to demonstrate their learning • consistent, systematic, specific, and timely corrective feedback • opportunities and time necessary to revise and improve their work • teacher feedback as well as peer feedback and self-reflection to guide next steps in learning • separate grading/reporting and feedback for work habits and academic skills.

2.9

Learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning.

Learners use technology in informed, effective, and ethical ways to:

- communicate clearly and creatively
- access, support, document, and supplement their learning
- construct knowledge, create, and problem-solve
- broaden their perspectives locally and globally
- personalize the pace of learning
- share work with an audience beyond the school community
- collaborate digitally to support learning
- engage in learning beyond the constraints of the school building and school day.

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Standard 3: Professional Practices

The school maintains and implements a school improvement/growth plan, organizational practices, and productive community relationships to meet and support student learning needs. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional development to improve their practice and examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, programs, and services.

PRINCIPLES of Effective Practice	DESCRIPTORS of Effective Practice
<p>3.1 The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.</p>	<p>The school develops and regularly updates a school improvement/growth plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotes a strategic mindset that incorporates backward design • includes specific and measurable goals with expected learning impacts • is informed by the perspectives of the school community and current research • is aligned with district priorities • is aligned to the Standards for Accreditation • informs decision-making in the school • reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate • includes the evaluation of initiatives with opportunities for reflection and input from the various stakeholders.
<p>FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 3.1a The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.</p>	<p>The school has a plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes school-specific goals • informs decision-making in the school.
<p>3.2 Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration,</p>	<p>Educators, individually and collaboratively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuously examine their practice to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs about

<p>and professional development to improve student learning and well-being.</p>	<p>learning, and vision of the graduate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● engage in authentic professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning ● engage in formal collaboration ● engage in formal and informal professional development ● use resources outside of the school, including educational research, to maintain currency with best practices ● engage in peer observation ● engage in supervision and evaluation using effective and timely feedback to improve practices that result in increased student learning ● apply the skills and knowledge gained through professional learning to their practice.
<p>3.3 Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.</p>	<p>Educators, individually and collaboratively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● examine a range of evidence including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● student work ● common course and common grade-level assessments ● data from a variety of formative and summative assessments ● achievement data, disaggregated by subgroups ● individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school’s vision of the graduate ● data from sending schools ● post-secondary data ● feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other educators, supervisors, families, and the school community. ● use the examination of evidence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices ● analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in

	<p>student achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve programs and services, such as health, counseling, library/information, and student support services • ensure that grading and assessment practices are aligned with the school’s beliefs about learning.
<p>3.4 Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum.</p>	<p>The school uses structures and processes to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective curricular coordination within and among each academic area, department, and program in the school • vertical articulation within the school and with sending schools in the district • clear alignment between the written, taught, and learned curriculum.
<p>3.5 School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.</p>	<p>Organizational practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to challenging academic experiences for all learners • courses throughout the curriculum that are populated with learners reflecting the diversity of the student body • learning environments and practices that are inclusive • opportunities for students to learn with and from students who are different from them, such as heterogeneously grouped courses.
<p>3.6 Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.</p>	<p>Educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable and promote relationships with the community, businesses, and higher education institutions that support authentic student learning experiences • engage students, faculty, and families in the school improvement process • engage students and families as partners in each learner’s education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.

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Standard 4: Learning Support

The school has timely, directed, and coordinated interventions for all students. The school provides targeted supports to meet each student’s individual needs, including counseling services, health services, library/information services, and other appropriate support services to assist each student in meeting the school’s vision of the graduate.

PRINCIPLES Effective Practice	DESCRIPTORS of Effective Practice
<p>4.1 All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success.</p>	<p>The school provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a range of timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student’s success and well-being • a formal, defined process to identify and refer students who need additional assistance • information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
<p>FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 4.1a The school has intervention strategies designed to support students.</p>	<p>The school provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a range of intervention strategies for students • a process to identify and refer students who need additional assistance.
<p>4.2 All students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.</p>	<p>School counseling services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff to deliver effective services to students • include the implementation of a written, developmental program • ensure regular meetings with students to provide personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling • include individual and group meetings with all students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include delivery of collaborative outreach and referrals to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers.
<p>4.3 All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.</p>	<p>School health services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff to deliver appropriate health services to students • include preventative health services and direct intervention services • ensure the use of an appropriate referral process • are informed by ongoing student health assessments.
<p>4.4 All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.</p>	<p>Library/information services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff • ensure personnel and staff are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum and instructional practices • include a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum • are available for students and staff before, during, and after school • are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning • include a physical setting that encourages collaboration among students, opportunities for inquiry, and authentic learning.

4.5

Identified English Language Learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Support services for identified students:

- have adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff to meet students' needs
- ensure collaboration among all educators, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve success in meeting each student's goals
- include appropriate and challenging educational experiences
- ensure inclusive learning opportunities and instruction.

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Standard 5: Learning Resources

The school has adequate and appropriate time, funding, and facilities to support the realization of its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. The school and school community provide time, funding, and facilities for student learning and support; teacher collaboration and professional growth; and full implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs in the school. The school has appropriate plans, protocols, and infrastructure in place to ensure consistent delivery of its curriculum, programs, and services.

PRINCIPLES of Effective Practice	DESCRIPTORS of Effective Practice
<p>5.1 The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.</p>	<p>The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure a safe, secure, and healthy environment that supports the diversity of the student body • are adequately sized for the school community • have appropriate spaces to support student learning and the curriculum • are clean and well maintained • have appropriate mechanical systems • meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
<p>FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 5.1a The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.</p>	<p>The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure a safe, secure, and healthy environment • are clean and well maintained • meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

<p>5.2</p> <p>The school/district provides time and financial resources to enable researched-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services.</p>	<p>The school/district provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time during the school day organized to support research-based instruction, professional collaboration among educators, learning needs of all students, and student programs and services • sufficient time and resources for professional development, evaluation and revision of the curriculum, and improvement of instruction using assessment results and current research.
<p>5.3</p> <p>The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable funding to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.</p>	<p>The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a wide range of school programs and services • sufficient professional and support staff to ensure appropriate class sizes and teacher load • sufficient equipment and technology • resources to support library services and information technology • a full range of technology support • sufficient instructional materials and supplies • proper maintenance and replacement of furniture, technology, and equipment.
<p>5.4</p> <p>The school/district has short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of its building and facilities.</p>	<p>The school/district develops and maintains plans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and facilities • schedule regular maintenance and repair of the building and facilities • ensure safe, secure, and adequate building and facilities/campus • address enrollment changes and staffing needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide sufficient technology • implement capital improvements.
<p>5.5 The school has infrastructure and protocols in place to ensure effective responses in crisis situations.</p>	<p>The school maintains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protocols to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors in the event of an emergency • written documentation that describes responses for various situations • a positive working relationship and emergency protocols between the school and emergency services personnel • a school crisis team that meets regularly to review and revise protocols.