



Commission on Independent Schools

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

2001 Edition

Introduction

The Standards for Accreditation of the Commission on Independent Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges are criteria by which the educational community assures the high quality of each member school.

The Mission Statement of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges states that, “Schools and colleges which demonstrate that they meet those Standards are accredited and thus become members of the Association.”

A school may be considered for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. only after it has been in operation for a sufficient period of time to establish its ability to carry out its mission and program, and to provide the necessary personnel and material support. Evidence of this stability may be produced by having successfully passed through affiliation with the Association in the category of Candidate for Accreditation.

In the accreditation process, the following Standards for Accreditation are applicable. To understand them thoroughly, they must be considered within the context of the *Manual for School Evaluation* published by the Commission on Independent Schools. During the accreditation process, the Visiting Committee will take and record a specific vote on each of the Standards. The votes will be submitted to the Commission on Independent Schools as part of the Visiting Committee Report.

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

www.neasc.org

email: cis@neasc.org

I. PROCEDURAL

The self-study document should demonstrate how the school fulfills its mission and meets the Standards for Accreditation. The self-study should be clearly written and the process should be as inclusive as possible with all members of the professional staff serving on one or more subcommittees. It is essential that procedures for follow-up be put in place at the time of the self-study.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <small>yes</small> | <input type="checkbox"/> <small>no</small> | 1. The school has completed a thorough self-study in accordance with the procedures outlined in the <i>Manual for School Evaluation</i> . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Administration, professional staff and those with governance responsibilities are familiar with the self-study and its findings. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. The school has in place a procedure for follow-up on plans and strategies found in its own self-study and on recommendations in the visiting committee report. |

II. MISSION

This section of the Self-study Report provides the basis, the very foundation of the evaluation process and of the report itself. It describes the past, gives context to the present, and provides direction for the future of the school. It is critical that the material provided here is clear and understood by all constituencies of the institution.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. The mission of the school is stated clearly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. The mission statement is reviewed regularly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. The mission is used as a guide for the school in planning and decision-making. |

III. STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The admissions process should assure that the school enrolls sufficient numbers of students to support the program and that those students who enroll are suitable to and may benefit from the school. It is expected that the program of the school fits the needs and abilities of the students. An accredited school must assure that parents are appropriately engaged with their children's education.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. The school has clearly stated procedures for admission of students which are developmentally appropriate at different levels. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. The school seeks to enroll only students who are likely to benefit from the program offered at the school. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. The school, in its public relations materials, presents an accurate description of its organization, staff, program, and facilities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. The school maintains complete and accurate records for both current and former students. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Records are protected against loss by fire or theft and are available only to authorized persons. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. The school has effective means of communication with parents. |

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <small>yes</small> | <input type="checkbox"/> <small>no</small> | 13. Student progress is reported regularly to parents in a clear and comprehensive manner. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Appropriate channels are available for parents to reflect their concerns and interests to school personnel. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. The school strives to be a positive member of the community in which it exists, is sensitive to the interests of its neighbors, and takes appropriate advantage of the character of its setting. |

IV. PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Accreditation ensures that a school is concerned about the quality of teaching and that there is a sufficient number of highly qualified and dedicated faculty appropriate to carry out the mission of the school, the faculty are treated with respect, and the school actively promotes their professional growth.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. The school has a procedure for recruiting professional staff who are the best available for the tasks to be performed and for the mission of the school; and also has a procedure for screening and interviewing candidates and providing them with necessary background information about the school. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. Members of the professional staff possess either a bachelor's degree or give satisfactory evidence of its equivalent in training or experience in the areas to which they are assigned. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. The teaching faculty and administrative staff are sufficient in number to carry out the program of the school and to provide for the needs of the students. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 19. Attention is paid to the equity of faculty and staff assignments and compensation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 20. The school demonstrates a commitment to staff development by providing opportunity for and expecting participation in professional growth and development. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21. The school carries out a system for supervision and evaluation of professional staff performance that protects the individual's rights as well as the interests of the school. The process includes written feedback and is understood by members of the staff. |

V. PROGRAM

Accreditation ensures that the school's program is appropriate to support its mission and is consistent with the needs of the students. The school expects effective learning and monitors learning outcomes. Adequate resources support the school's program.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 22. The educational program stems from the school's beliefs about teaching and learning which are regularly discussed and which are consistent with the mission of the school. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 23. The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that further the cognitive, social-emotional and physical development of students. |

- | <u> </u> | <u> </u> | |
|---------------|---------------|---|
| yes | no | |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 24. The school recognizes developmental levels of children and takes them into consideration in planning programs and teaching methodologies. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 25. The school recognizes and takes into consideration gender, diversity, and multicultural issues in planning programs and teaching methodologies. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 26. The planned curriculum demonstrates continuity from year to year. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 27. Attention is paid to transitions between grade levels and/or divisions of the school so as to facilitate passage of students from one level/division to another. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 28. Time is made available on a regular basis for teachers to plan together and to discuss students. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 29. There are instructional materials and equipment in sufficient quality, quantity, and variety to give effective support to the aims and methods of the program. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 30. Instructional facilities (including space and furnishings) are adequate for the instructional program and are age appropriate. Adequate play/recreation space is available. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 31. The schedule is planned by day and year to provide for the total program. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 32. There is a procedure in place to assess and report on how individual students are meeting the goals of the program with regard to both behavior and academic growth. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 33. There is a process in place to identify students who might benefit from a modification of program or for whom the school is inappropriate. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 34. Resources are available (in-school or through outside consultants) to faculty to assist in identifying and meeting the needs of students. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 35. Counseling, advising, and guidance procedures and personnel meet the needs of the students. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 36. College or school placement counseling, as applicable, meets the needs of the students. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 37. The school structures ways to work with parents/guardians proactively. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 38. Extracurricular/co-curricular programs, if available, are well organized, supplied, and staffed. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 39. The school has a plan for library and related technological resources which is integrated with the curriculum and which provides students with age appropriate experiences in research and reading. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 40. The school has a written plan which articulates a vision of technology that is appropriate to its total curriculum. |

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <small>yes</small> | <input type="checkbox"/> <small>no</small> | 41. There are procedures in place to assure that teachers have a leading role in planning the use of technology in their individual classrooms. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 42. The school has in place an acceptable use policy of which students and families are informed and the school provides information to students and families on the appropriate use of technology, both in the classroom and at home. |

VI. GOVERNANCE

The health of the school depends upon having a responsible and effective system of governance that assures that the school remains true to its mission and that it has the necessary resources to support its operations.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 43. The Governance of the school is clearly defined, understood by all constituents, and provides for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuity of mission • stability in transitions of leadership • comprehensive long-range planning, including financial planning • assurance of financial resources • institutional advancement • evaluation of and support of the professional growth of the head of school • establishing school policies • self evaluation of individuals and groups with governance responsibilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 44. The school considers gender, diversity and multicultural issues in policy making with regard to hiring, program planning and other issues. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 45. Provision is made for participation of all constituencies in the policy making process, as appropriate. |

VII. ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY

The role of the administration is to provide leadership and to maintain a structure to facilitate the effective functioning of the school, including the participation of faculty in decision-making.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 46. The administration is effective in carrying out the program of the school and the policies established by the governing body or school board. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 47. Administrative personnel and support staff are qualified by education, training or experience to serve in the areas to which they are assigned. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 48. There is a program for evaluation of administrative personnel and support staff performance that is carried out and understood by all concerned. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 49. The administration leads efforts to review and evaluate the educational program. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 50. The school involves faculty in decision making about the program of the school. |

VIII. INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

This section establishes standards for administrative support services and facilities. Each must function effectively and support the mission of the school.

- | <u> </u> | <u> </u> | |
|---------------|---------------|---|
| yes | no | |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 51. The school has appropriate procedures for auditing the accounts of the school. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 52. The school has adequate financial resources for the needs of the school. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 53. The school has appropriate procedures for the budget-making process. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 54. The school has appropriate procedures for accounting for the various funds of the school. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 55. The school has adequate provision for insurance coverage. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 56. Information regarding the financial responsibilities of the parent/guardian or student to the institution is clearly stated in writing and is made available prior to enrollment. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 57. If tuition assistance is offered, there are clearly stated policies and procedures for application which are consistent with the mission of the school. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 58. There is a tuition insurance plan or a procedure for determining equitable adjustments in tuition and other financial obligations existing between the parent/guardian and the institution. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 59. The school has a clear picture of its long and short-term development needs and organization and staffing to meet those needs. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 60. The school has a comprehensive written plan governing the use of information technology. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 61. The physical facilities are adequate for the program of the school and are appropriately maintained. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 62. The school is a safe and healthy place for students. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 63. The school has a comprehensive written crisis response plan. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 64. The physical facilities and staffing for health care are adequate to meet the needs of the student body, whether residential or day. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 65. The school provides appropriately for the prevention and care of athletic injuries. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 66. Facilities and staff for food services are adequate and the quality of the food meets reasonable nutritional and aesthetic requirements. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 67. The school maintains complete and accurate records for staff and faculty members that are available only to authorized persons. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 68. Personnel records are protected against loss by fire or theft. |

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---|
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 69. Support staff are qualified to undertake their assigned duties. |
| yes | no | |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 70. The school has documentation to attest to its compliance with all federal, state, and local legal and regulatory requirements with regard to discrimination in hiring, employment, and admissions practices, and health and safety regulations or requirements. |

IX. CULTURE AND CLIMATE OF THE SCHOOL

This section of the self-study is intended to assist the school in integrating all prior sections. This should be a unifying activity and bring the self assessment of the school to a conclusion centered around its goals, philosophy, and aspirations. It is important that the entire school community — students, faculty, administrators, trustees, and parents — should all understand and respect the school's culture or identity.

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--|
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 71. The school's climate and culture support an effective educational program consistent with its stated mission. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 72. There is mutual respect among faculty and students, adherence to rules and procedures, and concern for property within the school community. |

X. SUPPLEMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Schools with elementary grades that include programs for children younger than kindergarten are to complete this section.

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--|
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 73. The school communicates and collaborates with parents of children in its Early Childhood Program in a manner which addresses the needs of this constituency. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 74. Staff who work directly with children in the Early Childhood Program are trained in the field of Early Childhood education/child development. Their numbers are sufficient in relation to numbers and ages of children in each Early Childhood grouping to perform tasks effectively and safely. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 75. The school has curricular and extra-curricular programs in place which specifically and effectively address intellectual and developmental needs of children in the Early Childhood Program and are consistent with the school's stated mission. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 76. Facilities provided for the Early Childhood Program, including instructional, activity and play spaces, and supporting resources such as lavatories and dining areas, are adequate in construction, space provided per child, and maintenance to meet the needs of the children in this program. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 77. Materials, routines, and procedures are so organized as to protect the health and safety of young children enrolled in the Early Childhood Program. |

XI. SUPPLEMENT FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Schools with residential students are to complete this section.

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----|---|
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 78. | Residential staff are qualified to meet the needs of students under their supervision. |
| <small>yes</small> | <small>no</small> | | |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 79. | There is an intentional residential curriculum. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 80. | The residential program is integrated into the total life of the school. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 81. | Evening, weekend and vacation activities are appropriate. |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | 82. | The school provides for the needs of international students and students receiving financial aid. |