



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

# Chairs Checklist: Self-Study Required Materials

for independent school visits in the US

## Foundation Standards

### 1. Enrolled students align appropriately with the mission.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Current marketing and enrollment management plans
- Link to an online admissions application
- Parent tuition agreement
- Statement of financial aid policies and procedures
- Non-discrimination policy (may be included in other materials)  
*NEASC requires all students to be treated fairly and equitably.  
The missions of independent schools may be gender specific.*
- Parent and student handbooks with date of most recent revision

### 2. The governing body/board assures the school remains sustainable and true to its mission.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Current governing body/board roster indicating length of service
- Current bylaws
- Minutes of two recent meetings
- Governing body/board self-evaluation instrument
- Head of school evaluation process/instrument
- Corporate status as a tax-exempt institution, if applicable
- Conflict of interest policy with an annual member disclosure statement

### 3. The school's resources sufficiently support present and prospective operation.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Opinion audit\*
- Annual budget for most recently completed year (prior to Foundation Visit)
- Written financial plan including three- to five-year projection
- Report summarizing annual giving/voluntary support for the most recently completed year
- Evidence of sufficient liability insurance for the school and its extended programs (for example, summer camps, international travel, etc.). The declaration pages from policies

are sufficient.

- List of employee benefits

\* By exception, reviewed financial statements with a management letter may be submitted by schools in place of an opinion audit with the written approval of a NEASC director. Catholic elementary schools may submit a Diocesan Review of School Finances form with required signatures in place of an opinion audit.

**Important:** All financial documents provided for review will remain confidential. A few months prior to the Foundation Visit, the head of school will receive instructions from NEASC for uploading the school's financial documents to a secure document sharing platform. Access to the documents will be given to the school's Foundation Visiting Team.

#### 4. The school employs an appropriate adult community to implement the mission optimally.

##### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- Current employee roster, including roles and responsibilities, length of service, and professional qualifications
- Organizational chart(s) and/or protocols setting out lines of communication and areas of responsibility
- Examples of each type of faculty/staff/administrative contract
- Faculty handbook(s)
- Faculty code of conduct or similar document (if separate from faculty handbooks)
- The list of materials that the school consistently maintains in its personnel files. The following are recommended (do not include medical records or I-9 Forms):
  - Employment agreement or contract
  - Position description with role and responsibilities, unless included in an employment agreement
  - Signed receipt of employee policy handbook
  - Summary of most recent or current criminal background check
  - Signed performance evaluations

- f. Resume with references and/or letters of recommendation
- g. Copy of teaching or administrative credentials (if required)
- h. Official copies of all transcripts
- i. IRS W-4 Form
- j. List of emergency contacts and next of kin

## 5. A proactive culture of health and safety permeates the school.

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- Current crisis management plan/protocols, including up-to-date communications and contact information.
- Compliance Documentation, including:
  - current fire inspections for each facility
  - food service certification (i.e., cleanliness, safe handling, health inspection)
  - medical facility inspection as required (state and local requirements vary)
  - as required by state or locale, any additional necessary testing (i.e., water at the tap, radon, asbestos, carbon monoxide)
  - schedule of fire drills and lockdown/campus emergency and safety activity — both completed for the most recent year and planned for the current one
  - documentation around individual activities where specialized health and safety considerations are necessary (i.e., waterfront and pool areas, sports practices and games, field trips and off-campus trips, international travel, and immunizations)
  - policy on the acquisition of current student health records
  - statement from the head of school that the school's emergency plan is complete and has been submitted to the appropriate local officials

**Note:** NEASC accredits schools for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to Post-Graduate. It does not accredit, certify, nor approve programs for children from birth to three years old.

**Important:** To determine compliance with local, state, and federal health and safety requirements, schools must consult legal counsel. NEASC Accreditation does not

provide indemnification nor explicit or implied approval for any school activity, program, or facility. The Visiting Team and NEASC Staff Visit and Report are only peer reviews, not legal documentation. NEASC written or verbal communication never substitutes for or replaces local, state, or federal legal requirements. Check requirements in the school's state.

## 6. Proprietary schools ensure effective leadership, clear organizational structure, and the necessary resources to successfully execute the mission of the school for the foreseeable future.

*This Standard applies to for-profit schools only. Not-for-profit schools need not respond.*

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

The school should have an outside third party (auditor) write a letter speaking specifically to the following two aspects of the school:

1. Reasonable assurance that the school has the assets available to sustain operation of the school for the foreseeable future (which includes a current asset-to-liability ratio).
2. Assurances that the school has the systems in place to manage its finances appropriately. This could include:
  - tax returns for the organization, or its parent company or owner, for the most recent fiscal year
  - internal trial balance for most recently closed fiscal year

An annual audit is the best way to secure information in both areas.

- Should this involve a parent corporation, this corporation can give the school a copy of its annual audited statement for the corporation, and then separate financial documents (budget, P&L, etc.) for the school itself. Occasionally, schools are audited independent of the parent corporation.
- Should the parent corporation refuse to submit an audit, it must provide a letter from its auditor assuring that the school appropriately addresses the concerns noted above about the school.

**Note:** Accreditation through the NEASC Commission on Independent Schools is granted expressly to a particular institution with clearly defined and identified ownership and/or control. A change in ownership or control automatically results in a

self-executing, immediate discontinuance of accreditation unless the new owner or controlling authority provides adequate written assurance and evidence that the standards of the Commission will be maintained. Such assurances will be validated by a Focused Review Committee appointed by the Commission to visit the institution at a time designated by the Committee.

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## Program Standards and Indicators

### 7. Commitment to the mission informs decisions, guides initiatives, and aligns with the students' needs and aspirations.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Current mission statement
- Other guiding documents, if applicable
  - Statement of core values/beliefs/educational philosophy
  - Statement of vision
  - Value proposition
  - Vision/Profile of the Graduate
  - Statement of a school's beliefs and commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, or equivalent

### 8. Commitment to inspiration and support characterizes the approach to each student.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Documents describing specific support services and programs such as:
  - English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
  - counseling
  - advisory program
  - college guidance
- Policies addressing the needs of neurodiverse students and those with disabilities, student support plans, and IEPs
- Any additional documents describing the school's strategies and supports for students with needs, such as:
  - Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework
  - Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) plan
  - Culturally and linguistically responsive practices

### 9. Commitment to excellence distinguishes the program.

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- Current written curriculum/curriculum guide
- List/examples of assessment tools/methods demonstrating longitudinal student progress
- Documentation detailing any specific provisions for international students
- List/examples of supporting resources essential to the delivery of curriculum

## **10. Commitment to continuous professional learning and development permeates the adult culture.**

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- List of completed professional development opportunities provided to faculty and staff for the past three years
- List of current faculty, administration, and staff who have participated in NEASC Visiting Teams in the past five years
- Evaluation/assessment documents/protocols for faculty, administration, and staff

## **11. Commitment to engaging with the greater community enhances the student experience.**

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- Examples of communication with alums and parents

## **12. Commitment to meeting the needs of each student drives the residential program.**

*Schools with five or more students boarding on campus together or separately must complete Standard 12. Schools with fewer than five students boarding on campus should complete a narrative on how the school provides for the social, emotional, and physical well-being of its boarding students.*

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- Residential student handbook (if separate from student handbook)
- Faculty or staff materials specific to the residential life program
- Residential life curriculum and pertinent policies

- Copy of weekend activities calendar
- Faculty housing policies

### 13. Commitment to the health and well-being of each student guides the school's homestay program

*Schools with five or more students in homestays with unrelated families must complete Standard 13. Schools with fewer than five students in homestays should complete a narrative on how and how often the school monitors its homestay students' social, emotional, and physical well-being.*

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Agency contract
- International student handbook

## Strategic Planning Standard

### 14. Commitment to long-term viability and innovation guides planning.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Draft of strategic plan and/or other strategic planning documents

**Important:** A final draft of the school's strategic plan, including how the school will address any incomplete major recommendations and Standard-specific recommendations from the Commission Notification Letter, is due at the time of the Two-Year Progress Report.