



Self-Reflection Guide

for public schools and districts, centers, and programs

Table of Contents

Introduction and Note about Resources	3
The Self-Reflection Process	3
Steering Committee	3
Self-Reflection Writers	3
Standards for Accreditation	4
Data and Information Collection	4
Self-Reflection Report Sections	6
The School and Community Summary	6
Core Values, Beliefs about Learning, Vision of a Learner Section	6
Part 1 – A Look Back	6
Part 2 – Current Conditions	7
Part 3 – Priority Area Goals for the School/District Growth/Improvement Plan	10
Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Reports	11
Final Submission by the school or district	11
Ensuring Community Representation through the Self-Reflection Process	11
Appendix A: Guidance for CTE Program/Cluster Report Reflections	13
CTE Specific Questions to Consider	13
Strengths	16
Areas for Growth	17
Priority Areas for Growth	17
Appendix B: Foundational Elements – Questions to Consider	18
Appendix C: Principles of Effective Practice – Questions to Consider	22
STANDARD 1 - Learning Culture	22
STANDARD 2 - Student Learning	26
STANDARD 3 - Professional Practices	30
STANDARD 4 - Learning Support	33
STANDARD 5 - Learning Resources	36

Introduction and Note about Resources

This document intends to provide a school and/or district with detailed information about conducting and completing the Self-Reflection Process. Throughout the following pages, there are references to materials both in the Appendices, and on the NEASC website under *School Resources*. Included on the [Public School Accreditation Guides and Templates](#) page:

- Opinion Survey Administration Guidelines
- Drafting Guides for all portions of the Self-Reflection and CTE Program Review
- Rubrics for assessing Principles and Foundational Elements
- Sample Self-Reflection Reports
- Templates for Final Self-Reflection Report and Final CTE Program Reports

All the documents referenced in this guide that are linked to the [Public School Accreditation Guides and Templates](#) page of the website are indicated in ***Bold Italic***.

The Self-Reflection Process

The school and/or district undertakes the Self-Reflection process to determine its alignment with the Standards. It should be viewed as research and reflection to help sharpen vision and actions for continuous improvement. The Self-Reflection should include information from faculty members, administrators, students, families, and other stakeholders. The Self-Reflection phase and related data collection will inform the School/District Growth/Improvement Plan. Overall, the minimum time required to complete the Self-Reflection is approximately three to six months for a school and six to twelve months for a district.

Steering Committee

The steering committee guides and oversees the entire Self-Reflection process, provides support, handles logistics, and ensures all parts of the Self-Reflection Report are completed and entered into the Self-Reflection Report Template. Usually, the steering committee writes the School and Community Summary, Part 1: A Look Back, and Part 3: Priority Areas for Growth. For a complete description of the Steering Committee's tasks, please see the ***Accreditation Handbook***.

Self-Reflection Writers

The school or district develops one or more groups of writers who review and organize evidence in order to write the Standard narratives, including the Foundational Elements. The writers are

responsible for completing Part 2 Current Conditions of the Self-Reflection Report, which comprises the five Standard narratives. For schools and districts with CTE programs, additional writers will be included. For a complete description of this role, see the **Accreditation Handbook**.

Standards for Accreditation

The steering committee and Self-Reflection writers should review and understand the language in the current **NEASC Standards for Accreditation**. The five Standards are Learning Culture, Student Learning, Professional Practices, Learning Support, and Learning Resources.

Each Standard includes Principles of Effective Practice, which define expectations. Schools and districts reflect upon and report progress in aligning with the Principles for each Standard.

The *Descriptors of Effective Practice* are examples of what each Principle looks like in practice. Descriptors serve as guidance or benchmarks to help schools and districts align with each Principle over time.

At a minimum, Accredited schools and districts must align with each of the Foundational Elements, which represent essential building blocks for each Standard. Schools and districts not meeting the Descriptors of Effective Practice for the Foundational Elements are expected to prioritize actions to ensure alignment.

Data and Information Collection

A. NEASC Opinion Surveys

Before beginning the Self-Reflection, the steering committee will collect information from students, families, and the members of the professional staff using the NEASC opinion surveys. The surveys provide perspectives to help assess the school or district's alignment with the Standards for Accreditation. The surveys will be provided for each participating school. School principals will receive an email with the survey links and directions in late August or early September. See the **Opinion Survey Administration Guidelines**.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Surveys can be used with students in grades 5-12. The steering committee can consider gathering information from students in grades K-4 through focus groups and asking survey questions in simpler language that younger students will understand.

B. Evidence Collection

The steering committee and Self-Reflection writers will collect additional evidence to determine

alignment with the Standards and provide documentation for the Self-Reflection Report. Place emphasis on gathering existing evidence, not creating evidence for the Self-Reflection.

Be sure to collect evidence, input, and feedback for the Self-Reflection from a wide range of stakeholders, including the school or district faculty and staff, students, families, and community members. For example, the professional staff can participate in a brainstorming activity for each Standard using NEASC-provided data collection spreadsheets. Some evidence in your narrative may be anecdotal and not formally documented.

As you plan approaches to collecting information, consider the ideas and suggestions in the section on *Ensuring Community Representation through the Self-Reflection Process* (below). Additionally, see the appendices for questions, and evidence, to consider in preparing narratives for the Foundational Elements, Principles of Effective Practice, and CTE Programs.

Evidence can take many forms and can be found before and during the writing process. Evidence could include student achievement data, student work, curriculum documents, classroom observations, minutes and notes from professional collaboration, external survey data, and other input from stakeholder groups. Evidence could also be from faculty discussions; external survey data; student work samples for Principles 2.4-2.9; student achievement data; school or district documents; curriculum documents; minutes and notes from professional collaboration; meetings with students, families, and other stakeholders; observations of teaching practice; and photographic, audio, and video artifacts. See Appendices B and C for examples of evidence to consider for each Principle.

As evidence is collected, it can be saved as informational notes and/or hyperlinks in the **Evidence Collection Spreadsheets**, or another system developed by the Steering Committee. The Self-Reflection writers may change, evolve, alter, or refine conclusions as they continue to review evidence. Additionally, they may select hyperlinks that are particularly illustrative to include within the pertinent Self-Reflection Report narratives.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

A district-wide brainstorming activity, using the NEASC-provided data collection spreadsheets, gives writers evidence from every school in one place rather than requiring separate collection at each building. For a district, the steering committee can use the NEASC Evidence Collection spreadsheets to gather school-specific and district-wide information from all staff. The steering committee might choose to add a column identifying the particular school to which that information relates. For example, the spreadsheets can be located in a shared folder that all district faculty can access and to which information can be added. Each school leader can then set aside time for faculty to enter the information.

Self-Reflection Report Sections

There are Drafting Guides for all sections of the Self-Reflection Report in the School Resources section of the website. The guides include prompts and structural options.

The School and Community Summary

The steering committee writes the School and Community Summary. It is a 750–1500-word narrative that provides general information about the school or district (see **Sample Self-Reflections**). The steering committee needs to share the draft and final School and Community Summary with all members of the professional staff to afford them the opportunity to review it and provide input, even though no vote for approval is required.

The **School and Community Summary Drafting Guide** includes a list of possible information for schools to amass and share. This list covers geographic, demographic, and historical information related to:

- The community
- The district and school(s)
- Students and staff
- Funding and resources
- Student outcomes
- Educational Opportunities, Partnerships, and Recognition
- CTE and other Specialized Programs

Core Values, Beliefs about Learning, Vision of a Learner Section

Enter the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner into the **Core Values Drafting Guide** by typing in or copy-pasting the text versions of these guiding documents from Word documents, Google Docs, or PDFs. If also including the stakeholder-friendly graphic is desired, the image(s) may be hyperlinked, but not in lieu of the text versions.

Part 1 – A Look Back

Briefly review recent milestones, improvements, and existing priorities for the school or district. The **Part 1 Drafting Guide** invites schools to consider the following questions in their response:

- What goals has the school and/or district prioritized over the past 3–5 years?
- From a whole-school or whole-district perspective, what are the faculty and the school or district most proud of? What are they most concerned about?

Additionally, if the school or district was previously accredited:

- What has changed or improved related to the Standards for Accreditation since the last Decennial Accreditation Visit?
- What was recommended by the previous visiting team that is still a priority?

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

A district may include one or more previously accredited schools. Consider changes and improvements since the last Decennial Accreditation Visit at each accredited school in the district, not just one building. If a school in the district has not yet undergone a Decennial Accreditation Visit (a candidate school), the previous-visiting-team question does not apply to that school.

Part 2 – Current Conditions

A. Unpack the Standards, Foundational Elements, and Principles

Ensure all writers clearly understand the meaning of the Foundational Elements, Principles, and Descriptors.

Discuss the Principles of Effective Practice in each Standard, reviewing the Descriptors that serve as guidance for each Principle. Begin thinking about how well the school or district aligns with each Principle. The Descriptors are meant to be aspirational, so your school or district may not align with every Descriptor at the time of your Self-Reflection.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For a district, begin thinking about how well the district aligns with each Principle by looking at the progress of each of its schools together, not any single school in isolation. The Descriptors are aspirational, so it is expected that not every school in the district will align with every Descriptor at the time of the Self-Reflection.

B. Analyze the Evidence and Determine Ratings

Writers will engage in a thorough discussion about what the evidence indicates about the school or district's alignment with the Foundational Elements and the Principles of Effective Practice.

Foundational Elements

Based on the *Foundational Elements - Questions to consider* (in both Appendix B and the **Foundational Elements Drafting Guides** in School Resources for each Foundational Element), and the evidence compiled, the writers will determine whether the school or district meets each Foundational Element. Use the **Foundational Elements Rubric** to assess if the school or district "Meets" or "Does Not Meet" each Foundational Element:

Foundational Elements Rubric

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.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

To meet a Foundational Element district-wide, all schools in the district must have that element in place.

Principles of Effective Practice

Based on the *Principles of Effective Practice - Questions to consider* (Appendix C) and the evidence compiled, the writers will determine at what level the school or district aligns with each Principle of Effective Practice. Use the **Principles of Effective Practice Rubric** to assess the school and/or district's level:

Principles of Effective Practice Rubric

Not yet evident	Elements of the Principle are not yet evident in the school.
Initiating	The ideas and concepts of the principle are being considered by the school community but not yet in action.
Developing	Some elements of the principle are in place, and the school has developed plans and timelines for full implementation.
Implementing	All elements of the principle are firmly in place in the school. Organizations or systems have been formed to support and sustain these practices.
Transforming	The principle is driving innovative and transformative practices to achieve the school's vision of a learner.

C. Write Foundational Element and Standard Narratives

Use the Drafting Guides to write the Foundational Element and the five Standard narratives. Housed in a shared drive, they provide the opportunity to co-create, draft, save, and update as information is finalized. See the **Sample Self-Reflections** to better understand how these narratives might be constructed.

The **Narrative Drafting Guides** include the language of the Standard and each Element or Principle of Effective Practice. They also provide a structure to organize information within the narrative. The narrative paragraph(s) should provide details, evidence, and examples to support and explain your conclusions. The length of each narrative will vary based on the school or district's circumstances.

If you are assessing any of the Foundational Elements as “Does Not Meet”, indicate which criteria still need additional work to ensure alignment, and explain what the school or district needs to do to meet those criteria.

Once the draft narratives are approved by the professional staff, they can be copied and pasted into the Self-Reflection Report Template.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Writers can split the writing across a district-wide team in several ways (for example, by Standard, by school, or by Foundational Element). The steering committee should determine the method that will work best for the district.

For a district narrative, it is not necessary to write about each school individually, although it will be important to collect information, evidence, and insights from each school. For the narrative, you might focus on commonalities across schools. If something is specific to one school, it can be noted to add depth to the narrative. You might also choose to include a brief section for each school following a district-focused introduction.

D. Identify Strengths and Areas for Growth in Each Standard

After completing the narrative for a given Standard, determine overall strengths and areas for growth. Strengths are areas in which the school or district is well aligned with the principles, and areas for growth indicate where the school or district needs work to align with a principle.

- Use the Principles and Descriptors to guide the writing of strengths and areas of growth.
- Ensure each strength and area for growth is grounded in the narrative. For example, an area for growth may be a principle or descriptor that the school or district has not yet aligned with but would like to in the future. Additionally, a school or district might describe a specific initiative, program, or structure the school would like to implement.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For a district, a strength or area for growth can focus on a specific school as warranted, for example, a school that is leading the district in a certain area or one that needs support in aligning with the practices of other schools in the district.

E. Faculty Review and Approval

As each Standard area is completed, the entire faculty must review and vote to approve it. A 2/3 majority vote by the faculty is required to approve the report; however, a 4/5 (80 percent) majority vote is preferred.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For a district, "the entire faculty" means the faculty across all schools in the district. The district should keep its own records of the vote; the results do not need to be reported in the Self-Reflection.

Part 3 – Priority Area Goals for the School/District Growth/Improvement Plan

Writing Priority Area Goals

To identify Priority Areas for Growth, the Steering Committee should closely examine the strengths and areas for growth for each Standard area, noting themes. Taking district and current school or district priorities into consideration, the school leader, along with the rest of the steering committee, should identify three to five Priority Areas on which to focus its growth and improvement efforts on student learning.

Please remember that if the school or district does not meet one or more Foundational Elements, they must be included as Priority Areas.

Write a goal statement for each Priority Area using the **Priority Area Drafting Guide** with a measurable outcome using the language from the Foundational Element or Principle. Connect the Priority Area to the Foundational Element(s) or Principle(s) by number in parentheses after the goal statement. If the School or District already uses a SMART Goal or other specific format for planning, Priority Areas may be written in that same format. Simply be sure to include the Foundational Element and/or Principle(s) in parentheses alongside the priority/goal.

Writing the School or District Response to Priority Area

Think about your school or district as a learning organization. A learning organization is committed to constant growth, consistently facilitates the learning of its members, and continuously evolves. Schools and districts whose cultures, structures, and processes facilitate ongoing learning for students, adults, and the community are learning organizations.

The **Priority Area Drafting Guide** includes questions to consider as you write your response to each identified priority. The questions encourage reflection on the desired outcomes and possible implementation steps as well as the school or district's level of conceptual understanding, commitment, competency, and capacity to address the priority.

See the **Sample Self-Reflection Reports** to help guide your Priority Area writing.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Reports

Schools, districts, and centers with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs will include CTE faculty members in the Self-Reflection Report writing process. CTE programs are sequences of courses, typically spanning years, that provide pathways to industry certifications or licensure. These courses have written curricula providing theoretical coursework and applied learning experiences. CTE programs are supported by Perkins Grant funding and recognized by the state education agency or department as career and technical education programs of study.

Using the **CTE Program Report Drafting Guide**, CTE faculty members will gather evidence, write narratives, and reach conclusions. The objective is for CTE faculty members to reflect deeply on their programs and practices, identify the specific strategies and practices used to achieve positive student outcomes, and identify areas for improvement. The CTE Program Self-Reflection Report will be submitted in conjunction with the School or District Self-Reflection Report. Common areas for improvement across programs may be identified as Priority Areas for Growth.

Final Submission by the school or district

When all parts of the Self-Reflection Report are completed and copied and pasted into the NEASC Self-Reflection Report Template, the school leader conducts a final review using the **Self-Reflection Report Checklist** and submits the report by emailing their NEASC Liaison.

Ensuring Community Representation through the Self-Reflection Process

The Commission has developed the following recommendations and tools for ensuring community representation in the Self-Reflection process. Many examples of specific language in the Standards support your efforts to build an equitable and inclusive school or district. In addition, there are

ways to assess progress on any Principle in the Standards for Accreditation by using the following lenses: **Access, Decision-making, Disaggregated Data, and Focus Groups.**

The following table offers a range of questions and considerations within each of these lenses:

Community Representation Lenses

Access	How does the school or district ensure access for English learners and students and families who have a home language other than English? How does the school or district ensure access for people with disabilities? How does the school or district ensure access for historically marginalized communities? How does the school or district ensure the full participation of low-income students and families? Consider access to information, opportunities, and decision-making. How does the school or district honor the experiences and identities of historically marginalized students and families in the school or district community? How does the school or district honor the experiences and cultures of communities not represented in the school or district community? Consider curriculum and instruction, school or district culture and events, and communication strategies.
Decision-making	How much does the school or district reach out to and include students, families, and community members from historically marginalized communities in decision-making? What processes are used to ensure the accessibility of participation in decision-making, and that these voices are heard, elevated, and honored?
Disaggregated Data	The NEASC survey includes demographic questions for students and parents that can be used to disaggregate responses. Schools and districts receive both an aggregate report and raw data. Consider which subgroups might have experiences in school or district that would be masked in the aggregate data, and which would provide meaningful insights. School- or district-generated data can also be disaggregated to look for patterns.
Focus Groups	When designing focus groups, use affinity groupings that represent historically underrepresented populations. For example, organize focus groups by grade level, and then by students of color, LGBTQ+ students, etc. The same can be done for parents. Ensure that staff in a wide range of roles are included in providing feedback. Also, consider forming a stakeholder advisory panel for the process to ensure representation.

Appendix A: Guidance for CTE Program/Cluster Report Reflections

CTE Specific Questions to Consider

Standard 2 – Student Learning

Principle of Effective Practice 2.2 (Curriculum)

There are written curriculum documents for all courses that include a scope and sequence or curriculum map with units of study that contain expected course outcomes for each student, guiding and essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, formative assessments, assessments aligned with expected course outcomes, instructional strategies, and connections to the school's vision of a learner.

- To what extent do the written curriculum documents for all courses in each program or cluster include:
 - a scope and sequence or curriculum map for each course in the school that includes units of study with guiding and essential questions, concepts, content, skills, and assessments aligned with expected course outcomes
 - competency-based elements for all career and technical education programs with pathways leading to licensure, certification, and post-secondary education
 - instructional strategies, materials, and resources
 - formative and interim assessments
 - opportunities for all students to see themselves represented within the curriculum
 - connections to the school's vision of a learner
 - a published curriculum revision cycle
- To what extent is the instructional program designed to prepare students to meet required licenses, certifications, and post-secondary education, if applicable to this trade.

Evidence to consider

- curriculum documents
- list of licenses and certifications aligned with the curriculum

Principle 2.4 (Instruction)

Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.

- In what ways are teachers strategically differentiating, individualizing, or personalizing instructional practices based on student learning needs?
- How is instruction informed by best practices of cultural competency and responsiveness?
- How is formative assessment used to adjust instruction in all classrooms?
- What structures and supports are available to provide all learners with access to rigorous learning opportunities?
- What opportunities do teachers have to collaborate with others regarding instructional practices designed to meet the needs of all students?
- To what extent are curricula from the academic departments integrated into your CTE program, department, or cluster? Provide examples of co-teaching between academics and your program, department, or cluster.

Evidence to consider

- lesson and unit instructional plans
- examples of how data from assessments is used to adjust instruction

Principles 2.7 (Assessment) and 2.8 (Feedback)

Learners experience a wide range of assessment practices to support and improve learning.

Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.

- Describe the range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, and how the results are used to inform and differentiate instruction. What type of safety instruction and safety testing is offered in the program?
- How does the school use common assessments to ensure consistent and equitable learning opportunities across grades or courses?
- Do educators provide specific and measurable criteria for success to learners prior to assessments?
- How do educators regularly and consistently check for understanding in ways that engage every learner's thinking?
- What opportunities do learners have to present their learning to authentic audiences, including students, families, community members, and professionals?

- What kinds of feedback do teachers provide to ensure students can revise and improve their work? Is it specific and timely?

Evidence to consider

- assessment documents

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 a learner. 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 to ensure consistent delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.

Program/Cluster Basics

- What is the physical layout of the space?
- Where is it located? How many rooms are there?
- Where is the equipment located?
- Identify any safety or health issues.
- Is there proper signage?
- Is there a clear evacuation route?
- Are there lockers? Are there bathrooms?
- Describe the overall appearance to visitors.

Adequacy of Program/Cluster Resources

- What is the student-teacher ratio?
- Are the equipment and technology consistent with current practice? If not, what is missing?
- Is all the equipment working properly?
- What is the copyright date of textbooks?
- What online resources are used?
- Explain the process of developing the department's annual budget.

Evidence to consider

- department budgets from the last three to five years, showing allotments and expenditures

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

- What is the program's record for student placement in work-based experiences, such as internships, employment shadowing, or cooperative education?
- Does the program have school-industry partnerships?
- Does it have articulation agreements with higher education for dual enrollment?

Evidence to consider

- numbers of students in work-based learning over the last three to five years
- list of articulation agreements with higher education institutions
- list of school-industry partnerships

Production Work

- Does the program complete production work for the school, center, or community?
- Does it complete any work outside of the school or center?
- To what extent is production work aligned with the curriculum?
- Over the past few years, what kind of work has been undertaken?
- How much production revenue does the program generate annually?

Evidence to consider

- list of production jobs completed in the last three to five years
- photographs of production jobs

Strengths

Examples of strengths:

- The \$250,000 grant, written by the plumbing department, enabling the school to purchase new equipment and expand training opportunities for students
- The strong support from the community for the automotive program, supported by the donation of four vehicles, which allows students greater access to training vehicles
- The warm, inviting atmosphere in the biotechnology classes, making all students feel

included as valued members of the school community and resulting in a 95 percent decline in behavioral incidents over the past three years

Areas for Growth

Areas of growth can be needed resources or aspects of the program that the school wants to improve.

Examples of areas of growth:

- Create a plan to address the lack of adequate storage for lumber to eliminate a potential safety issue
- Seek additional resources to update technology in the theory room to provide students with a stronger curriculum

Priority Areas for Growth

Priority Areas related to the school's CTE program can be included in the school's growth and improvement plan. Priority Areas are big-picture goals, connected to the Standards, Principles, or Foundational Elements, that include multiple steps for completion. Explain why the goal is important and how it will transform the educational experience for students.

Examples of CTE-focused Priority Area goals:

- The school will expand the membership of the Trade Advisory Committee to include more members from business and industry, to ensure that the program is getting advice from a wider range of prospective employers (3.6).
- The school will pursue articulation agreements with additional institutions of higher education to expand opportunities for students to receive college credit (3.6).
- The school will complete written curriculum documents for a specific program and ensure alignment with the school's vision of a learner (2.2, 2.2a).

Appendix B: Foundational Elements – Questions to Consider

For each Foundational Element within the Standards for Accreditation, use the questions and evidence below while writing the Self-Reflection Report narrative. They help the school or district determine whether it “Meets” or “Does Not Meet” each Foundational Element.

USING THIS APPENDIX FOR A DISTRICT

Read “school” as “school or district” throughout. To meet a Foundational Element district-wide, all schools in the district must have that element in place, so gather evidence from every school before drawing a district-wide conclusion.

STANDARD 1 – Learning Culture

Foundational Element 1.1a

The school community provides a socially and emotionally safe environment for students and adults.

Questions to Consider

- How does the school or district build and sustain a socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment for students and adults?
- What policies and protocols define respectful treatment of all community members and reflect the experiences of historically marginalized communities?

Evidence to Consider

- Survey data
- Student/family handbook
- Anti-discrimination and other policies supporting safety and respectful treatment, including for historically marginalized communities
- Comparative annual data on disciplinary incidents and actions
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Foundational Element 1.2a

The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success.

Questions to Consider

- Does the school or district have a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner?
- Does the vision include the transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions students need for future success?

Evidence to Consider

- The school or district's vision of a learner, core values, and beliefs about learning
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

STANDARD 2 - Student Learning

Foundational Element 2.2a

There are written curriculum documents for all courses that include a scope and sequence or curriculum map with units of study that contain expected course outcomes for each student, guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, and assessments aligned with expected course outcomes.

Questions to Consider

- Do written curriculum documents exist for all courses in all departments, including a scope and sequence or curriculum map with units of study, essential questions, concepts, content, skills, and outcomes for each student?
- Are assessments aligned to expected course outcomes?
- For CTE programs, are competency-based elements in place with pathways to licensure, certification, or postsecondary education?

Evidence to Consider

- Written curriculum documents for all courses, departments, and programs
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

STANDARD 3 - Professional Practices

Foundational Element 3.1a

The school has a current school growth/improvement plan.

Questions to Consider

- Does the school or district have a growth/improvement plan with specific goals?
- Does the plan inform decision-making based on stated priorities?

Evidence to Consider

- Current growth/improvement plan
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Foundational Element 3.6a

All career and technical education programs have a program advisory committee and implement a systematic program review process.

Questions to Consider

- Does each CTE program have an effective advisory committee?
- Does the school or district conduct regular program reviews?

Evidence to Consider

- Advisory committee agendas, notes, and reports; past and upcoming program reviews
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

STANDARD 4 - Learning Support

Foundational Element 4.1a

The school has intervention strategies designed to support learners.

Questions to Consider

- Is there a process to identify and refer students needing additional assistance? Briefly describe it.
- What range of intervention strategies is available to students?

Evidence to Consider

- Identification/referral process; range of interventions; student/family handbook; related publications
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

STANDARD 5 - Learning Resources

Foundational Element 5.1a

The school site and plant support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.

Questions to Consider

- Do school buildings and facilities ensure a safe, secure, healthy, clean, and well-maintained environment that meets applicable federal and state laws and local fire, health, and safety codes?

Evidence to Consider

- Maintenance/cleaning schedules; compliance documentation
- Impact of facilities on teaching, learning, and services
- Capital, short-, and long-term upgrade/repair plans
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Foundational Element 5.5a

The school provides a physically safe environment for students and adults.

Questions to Consider

- What infrastructure supports a physically safe environment for students and adults?
- What policies, processes, and protocols address safety for students and adults?

Evidence to Consider

- Safety/crisis plans
- Safety or crisis committee that meets regularly
- Entrance/exit safety procedures
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Appendix C: Principles of Effective Practice – Questions to Consider

For each Principle of Effective Practice within the Standards for Accreditation, use the questions and evidence below while writing the Self-Reflection Report narrative. They help the school or district determine its level of alignment with each Principle, based on the phases of implementation defined in the Principle Rubric:

Not Yet Evident ► Initiating ► Developing ► Implementing ► Transforming

USING THIS APPENDIX FOR A DISTRICT

Read “school” as “school or district” throughout. For a district, consider alignment by looking at the progress of all schools together rather than any single school in isolation, and note where practice varies meaningfully by building.

STANDARD 1 – Learning Culture

Principle 1.1

The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that demonstrates a commitment to all students feeling that they belong and are valued and accepted.

Questions to Consider

- How does the school or district build and sustain a socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe, strengths-based culture for students and adults?
- What policies and protocols define respectful treatment of all community members, including historically marginalized communities?
- What systems identify and address learning gaps and social disparities?
- How does the school or district define and strengthen equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, including diversity of opinion and experience?

Evidence to Consider

- Student/family handbook; anti-discrimination policies
- Comparative annual disciplinary data
- Committees or programs that support a safe, respectful culture

- Professional development on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 1.2

The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner drive student learning, professional practices, learning supports, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.

Questions to Consider

- How were the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner developed through a collaborative, research-informed process?
- Does the vision include the transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions needed for future success?
- How are these documents known, understood, and reflected in classrooms and in school or district culture?
- How do they inform equity commitments, decision-making, and practice?

Evidence to Consider

- Vision, core values, and beliefs documents; research consulted
- Meeting notes on development and board/faculty approval
- Examples of the vision embedded in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and improvement planning
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 1.3

The school community takes collective responsibility for the well-being of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.

Questions to Consider

- How does the school or district connect students to adults and peers to support social, emotional, and physical well-being?
- How is a balance of academic, social, and civic opportunity provided for diverse learners?
- What formal process (such as an adult mentor) ensures every student is known?
- How do all staff share responsibility for every student, especially those from historically marginalized communities or who are struggling?

Evidence to Consider

- Details of the mentoring or formal student-connection process
- Examples of high-expectation and well-being messaging to students
- Descriptions of social-emotional support programs or interventions
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 1.4

The professional staff commits to continuous improvement through research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.

Questions to Consider

- How do educators demonstrate a growth mindset and a commitment to research-based, reflective practice?
- What structures support authentic formal and informal collaboration?
- How does the culture build educators' cultural competency and content-specific expertise?
- How is data and feedback used to improve learners' educational experiences?

Evidence to Consider

- Agendas/minutes from PD, PLC, and data-team meetings
- Current research read or implemented by faculty
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 1.5

The school's culture promotes intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth for educators and learners.

Questions to Consider

- How does the culture build a shared sense of agency and responsibility among educators and learners?
- How are mistakes framed as part of intellectual and personal growth?
- What norms and protocols support respectful discourse, experimentation, and diverse perspectives?

- How is persistence and revision of student work emphasized?

Evidence to Consider

- Examples of a dynamic, agency-driven school culture
- Revision, retake, or reassessment policies
- Meeting norms or protocols
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 1.6

The school has an inclusive leadership model reflecting the school community.

Questions to Consider

- How does the principal provide instructional leadership that sets high expectations and fosters a growth mindset?
- How are educators, students, families, and community members - especially from historically marginalized communities - involved in decision-making?
- What student leadership opportunities exist?
- Are school board, superintendent, and principal roles collaborative and constructive, with appropriate decision-making authority for the principal?

Evidence to Consider

- Evidence of high expectations and growth mindset (publications, forums, announcements)
- Stakeholder participation in councils, student government, or leadership groups
- Board, superintendent, principal, or school goals/vision statements
- Growth/improvement plan
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 1.7

The school culture fosters civic and community engagement.

Questions to Consider

- How are civic and community engagement defined, and do they honor the experiences of historically marginalized communities?

- How does the culture build social awareness of local, national, and global perspectives?
- How do learning experiences connect to or make an impact on the wider community?

Evidence to Consider

- Student handbook or publications on expectations for civic behavior
- Anti-discrimination or anti-bullying policies
- Courses, clubs, or activities involving civic or community engagement
- Examples of community service or internships
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

STANDARD 2 - Student Learning

Principle 2.1

The school's vision of a learner is defined by measurable criteria and learners receive feedback on their progress toward proficiency.

Questions to Consider

- Does the vision define specific, measurable proficiency criteria for each aspect?
- How is individual and school-wide progress toward the vision measured and communicated?
- How is the vision embedded in curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
- What opportunities do students have to practice and receive feedback on their progress?

Evidence to Consider

- Vision-of-a-learner document with measurable success criteria
- Progress reports to students/families and to the community
- Examples of the vision embedded in curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 2.2

There are written curriculum documents for all courses that include a scope and sequence or curriculum map with units of study that contain expected course outcomes for each student, guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, formative assessments, assessments

aligned with expected course outcomes, instructional strategies, and connections to the school's vision of a learner.

Questions to Consider

- Do written curriculum documents for all courses and grade levels include a scope and sequence, formative and outcome-aligned assessments, instructional strategies and materials, opportunities for students to see themselves represented, and connections to the vision of a learner?
- For CTE programs, are competency-based elements in place with pathways to licensure, certification, or postsecondary education?
- Is there a published curriculum revision cycle?

Evidence to Consider

- Written curriculum documents for all courses, departments, and grade levels
- Guides or plans for curriculum creation and revision
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 2.3

The written curriculum documents emphasize deep understanding, through aspects such as interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning, and authentic learning experiences.

Questions to Consider

- How does the curriculum connect prior knowledge across disciplines and emphasize application of knowledge and skills?
- How are discipline-specific higher-order thinking and transferable skills integrated?
- How is the curriculum articulated vertically and horizontally to ensure depth of understanding?

Evidence to Consider

- Written curriculum documents
- Meeting notes on vertical/horizontal articulation
- Interdisciplinary, project-based, or performance-based work
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 2.4

Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.

Questions to Consider

- How is instruction differentiated, individualized, or personalized, and informed by cultural competency and responsiveness?
- How is formative assessment used to adjust instruction across classrooms?
- What tiered-intervention, grouping, and collaboration structures support all learners' access to rigorous instruction?

Evidence to Consider

- Examples of data-informed instructional adjustment
- School-wide tiered intervention systems (e.g., MTSS)
- Lesson plans showing differentiation and purposeful grouping
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 2.5

Students are active learners who have opportunities to lead their own learning.

Questions to Consider

- How does curriculum build student agency through relevant, self-initiated learning experiences?
- What opportunities exist for goal setting, reflection, choice, and creative expression?
- How is student discourse incorporated into classroom learning?

Evidence to Consider

- Student work demonstrating project-based or authentic learning
- Reflection protocols; student-led conference artifacts
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 2.6

Learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.

Questions to Consider

- How are learning and assessment experiences designed to be cognitively challenging?
- What learning activities across grade levels and departments prioritize analysis, synthesis, and investigation?
- How do learners develop flexible, critical, and creative thinking skills?

Evidence to Consider

- Assessments measuring vision-aligned skills and dispositions
- Cognitively challenging lessons and assignments
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 2.7

Learners experience a wide range of assessment practices to support and improve learning.

Questions to Consider

- Is assessment of, for, and as learning used school-wide, including common assessments for consistency and equity?
- Are specific, measurable success criteria shared with learners before assessments?
- How do educators regularly check for understanding, and what opportunities exist to present learning to authentic audiences?

Evidence to Consider

- Range of formative and summative assessments
- Shared success criteria provided before assessments
- Examples of assessment results changing instruction or curriculum
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 2.8

Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.

Questions to Consider

- How do learners get varied, ongoing opportunities to demonstrate their learning?

- How is timely, specific corrective feedback (teacher and peer) provided and used to revise work?
- Is there a distinct grading/feedback approach for work habits versus academic skills?

Evidence to Consider

- Retake or reassessment policies
- Examples of feedback provided and used for revision
- Grading policies and student grade reports
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 2.9

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

Questions to Consider

- How do learners use technology effectively and ethically to communicate, personalize their learning, and access support?
- How do learners collaborate digitally and share work beyond the school community?
- How is technology used to extend learning beyond the school day?

Evidence to Consider

- Acceptable use policy
- Examples of technology-supported communication, personalization, and information-literacy integration
- Digital classroom sites; online or credit-recovery courses
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

STANDARD 3 - Professional Practices

Principle 3.1

The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school growth/improvement plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner.

Questions to Consider

- How does the plan reflect the vision, core values, and beliefs about learning, with measurable goals and success criteria?
- How is the plan informed by stakeholder input, current research, district priorities, and the Standards?
- How does the plan inform decision-making and get reviewed and revised over time?

Evidence to Consider

- Current growth/improvement plan; district strategic plan
- Meeting notes on plan goals and outcomes
- Data collected after plan implementation
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 3.2

Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development.

Questions to Consider

- How do educators engage in professional discourse for reflection and analysis of teaching and learning?
- What formal and informal PD, peer observation, and supervision/evaluation practices exist?
- How do educators maintain currency in content-area and instructional practice?

Evidence to Consider

- Collaboration, PD, and peer-observation schedules and agendas
- Supervision and evaluation practices
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 3.3

Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.

Questions to Consider

- How do educators examine student work, assessment data (including disaggregated by subgroup), sending-school or postsecondary data, and stakeholder feedback?
- How is this evidence used to improve curriculum, instruction, and programs/services, and to address inequities in achievement?

Evidence to Consider

- Data-analysis protocols; student well-being monitoring systems
- Data-team meeting agendas/minutes
- Examples of equity-focused analysis and program/service improvements
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 3.4

Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum.

Questions to Consider

- Is there a formal, ongoing curriculum review and revision cycle for all courses and departments?
- What structures ensure vertical articulation and alignment among the written, taught, and learned curriculum?
- How does the curriculum review process address bias and promote representation and inclusivity?

Evidence to Consider

- Meeting notes on curriculum articulation and coordination
- Curriculum maps or scope-and-sequence documents
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 3.5

School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.

Questions to Consider

- How are organizational practices, data, and stakeholder input used to ensure access to challenging academic experiences for all learners?

- How does the school or district ensure equitable, diverse enrollment across courses and programs, including CTE?
- What admission or enrollment policies support equitable access?

Evidence to Consider

- Program of studies; course selection and approval process
- Descriptions of heterogeneously grouped courses
- Enrollment and co-curricular participation data by subgroup
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 3.6

Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.

Questions to Consider

- How do partnerships with community, business, and higher-education organizations support authentic student learning and work-based experiences?
- How are students and families - especially less-connected families and those from historically marginalized communities - engaged as partners?

Evidence to Consider

- Partnership documentation and student outcomes
- Family communication and outreach records
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

STANDARD 4 - Learning Support

Principle 4.1

All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success.

Questions to Consider

- What timely, coordinated intervention strategies exist for all students, including identified and at-risk students?

- How are interventions monitored, and what are next steps for students who succeed or continue to struggle?
- How do families, especially those most in need, learn about available support services?

Evidence to Consider

- List of support services and how families learn about them
- Referral and intervention process documentation
- Progress-monitoring data
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 4.2

All students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Questions to Consider

- Are counseling services adequately staffed with certified/licensed personnel delivering a written developmental guidance program?
- How do counselors meet regularly with students and collaborate with outside mental-health and social-service agencies?
- How are services informed by cultural competency, and how is feedback used to improve them?

Evidence to Consider

- Personnel list and role descriptions
- Guidance-program curriculum or topics
- Community agency partnerships
- Feedback or survey data
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 4.3

All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Questions to Consider

- Are health services adequately staffed, informed by ongoing student health assessments, and responsive to referrals in a timely manner?
- How are services informed by cultural competency, and how is feedback used to improve them?

Evidence to Consider

- Personnel list and role descriptions
- Referral process; health-assessment data
- Feedback or survey data
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 4.4

All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Questions to Consider

- Are library/information services adequately staffed and actively integrated into curriculum and instruction?
- Does the facility offer current technology, a curriculum-aligned and diverse collection, and a collaborative learning space, accessible before, during, and after school?
- How is feedback used to improve services?

Evidence to Consider

- Personnel list, role descriptions, and operating hours
- Collection and technology inventory
- Examples of integration with curriculum and instruction
- Feedback or survey data
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 4.5

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.

Questions to Consider

- Are services adequately staffed with certified/licensed personnel who collaborate across roles to meet student goals?
- Do services provide challenging, inclusive learning experiences informed by cultural competency?

Evidence to Consider

- Personnel roles and responsibilities
- Examples of cross-role collaboration
- Descriptions of specialized programs or services
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

STANDARD 5 - Learning Resources

Principle 5.1

The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.

Questions to Consider

- Are buildings and facilities safe, adequately sized, well-maintained, and equipped with appropriate learning spaces and mechanical systems?
- Do they meet applicable federal/state laws and local fire, health, and safety codes?
- If applicable, do residential programs support independent-living skills in a safe, appropriate environment?

Evidence to Consider

- Maintenance personnel and schedules
- Compliance documentation
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 5.2

The community and the district's governing body provide time to enable research-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services.

Questions to Consider

- How is time structured to support research-based instruction, professional collaboration, and program/service development?
- How is time allocated for professional development, curriculum evaluation/revision, and instructional improvement using data and research?

Evidence to Consider

- School schedule and calendar
- PD schedule and funding
- PLC or common-planning-time descriptions
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 5.3

The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable financial resources to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities and employ a review process of its financial practices.

Questions to Consider

- Is funding adequate and dependable for staffing, class sizes, professional development, library services, materials/technology, and co-curricular programs?
- How are equipment and technology maintained and replaced?
- How does the school or district ensure financial audits and adherence to accepted financial policies?

Evidence to Consider

- Program of studies; co-curricular offerings
- Staffing counts and course/case loads
- Budget and multi-year funding data
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 5.4

The community and district's governing body has short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of the school building, facilities, and technology.

Questions to Consider

- How are building maintenance and repairs scheduled and carried out?
- Are there plans addressing enrollment changes, staffing needs, technology, and capital improvements?

Evidence to Consider

- Maintenance/repair and capital-improvement plans
- District technology plan
- Enrollment projections
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment

Principle 5.5

The school has infrastructure and protocols in place to provide a physically safe environment for students and adults.

Questions to Consider

- What infrastructure, policies, and protocols support physical safety for students and adults?
- What is the working relationship with local emergency services?
- Is there a regularly meeting crisis team, and are safety data sheets and safety testing current?

Evidence to Consider

- Crisis response plans
- Agreements with local emergency services
- Crisis team agendas/minutes
- Other evidence that demonstrates alignment