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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

NEASC Commission on Public Schools

Collaborative Conference Guide for Teams

**for Members of Collaborative Conference Teams
visiting public elementary, middle, and high schools**

Spring 2024

A Vision for Learning

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Overview of the Collaborative Conference Visit

Purpose of the Collaborative Conference Visit

The purpose of the Collaborative Conference Visit is to gather information about the current conditions of the school, to collaboratively review and refine the school's Self-Reflection findings and the identified Priority Areas for Growth and improvement, and to support the school in developing its goals for growth. The Collaborative Conference visiting team will also verify the school's alignment with the Foundational Elements. The school will be scheduled for a Collaborative Conference Visit in the spring or fall two years prior to its Decennial Accreditation visit date. Schools can choose from a window of available time and give input into when their conference is scheduled. The Collaborative Conference visiting team will work with the school to ensure that the identified Priority Areas for Growth reflect goals that have the greatest impact on student learning and that there are no obvious omissions or other needed improvement areas.

Collaborative Conference Visiting Team Composition

The Collaborative Conference Visit will take two days. The team will have 5 to 8 visitors, depending on the school size and the number of career and technical education (CTE) programs, if any. The team will include a chair and assistant chair and three to six other educators representing the Commission on Public Schools (CPS). Visiting teams will have five core team members and up to three additional team members if the school has CTE programs.

Collaborative Conference Visit Outline

The first day of the Collaborative Conference Visit will include a school tour, classroom visits, and meetings with representative groups of various stakeholders including the principal, superintendent, teachers, students, other personnel as requested, and the Self-Reflection committee. The second day will include additional meetings, if necessary, and time for the team to complete its draft report. The second day will also include a debrief with school leaders to review the visiting team's findings. The school will pay all costs for the Collaborative Conference Visit, including team meals, hotel rooms, and travel expenses. Whenever possible, visiting teams will comprise members who live within an hour's drive from the school so that they can commute to the school the morning of the visit. On occasion, visiting teams may have some members who live more than an hour's drive from the school and may need to arrive the evening before the visit.

Before the Collaborative Conference Visit

Understand the 2023 Standards for Accreditation

In preparation for the visit, review the 2023 Standards, including the Foundational Elements and the Principles of Effective Practice. The Standards are a framework for understanding the complex work underway at all schools. They provide a common language for the visiting team members and the school to have collaborative discussions during the visit. The language in the Standards should be used extensively by the visiting team in writing its report.

Review Preliminary Information

The school will enter its Self-Reflection in the Vision for Learning Accreditation Portal (https://www.accportal.org/cpsvision). Team members will receive a username and password for the Accreditation Portal to view the school's Self-Reflection Report. In addition, the chair will create a Google folder that will be shared with the team. This Google folder will contain the visit schedule, team handbook, writing guides for each portion of the report, sample reports, and other information valuable to the team. The chair will assign team members Standards to review. Team members should develop questions for the school pertaining to their assigned Standard(s) from reading the Self-Reflection Report and reviewing this guide. In advance of the visit, team members will read over the Self-Reflection Report with a special focus on the school's Priority Areas, strengths and areas for growth, and any evidence uploaded to the Vision for Learning Accreditation Portal or hyperlinked. Among that evidence is the NEASC survey for students, parents, and members of the professional staff, which the school will have conducted before beginning its Self-Reflection.

Understand the Core Values, Beliefs about Learning, and Vision of the Graduate

The school's guiding statements should include a combination of its current core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. Visiting team members determine the extent to which the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are reflected in the culture of the school and the extent to which they drive important decisions about policies, procedures, and resource allocations. Look for evidence that the school has articulated its vision of the graduate, is reflective about its common beliefs, and regularly makes decisions that promote the achievement of the vision of the graduate for all students.

The core values and beliefs about learning include:

- the core values held by stakeholders of the school

- the beliefs about learning that stakeholders agree upon, which should be used to guide the curriculum, instructional, and assessment programs and practices

The vision of the graduate is a critical document because it includes and defines:

Transferable Skills – The essential skills students need to confront new challenges in and outside of school. Examples include creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.

Knowledge – The topics, information, and facts that are essential for students to be able to recall or access.

Understandings – The ability to marshal skills and facts wisely and appropriately through effective application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Knowledge and understandings are most commonly found in a school's curriculum.

Dispositions – The patterns of behavior and thinking necessary for success in and out of school. Examples include persistence, flexibility, empathy, courage, and accuracy.

Review the School's Self-Reflection

In year one of the Accreditation cycle, the school reflected on its alignment with the 2023 Standards. The Self-Reflection phase and related data collection inform the school's ratings related to the Foundational Elements, Principles of Effective Practice, and their identified Priority Areas for Growth. The Self-Reflection process is viewed as a research and reflection step to examine the current conditions at the school and help the school sharpen its vision for the future by creating action steps for continuous improvement. The school formed a committee to complete the Self-Reflection process and write the Self-Reflection Report.

Components of the school's Self-Reflection

School and Community Summary

The School and Community Summary provides information about demographics to provide the visiting team with some background information and context.

Part 1 – Look Back

This is a brief look back at recent milestones, improvements, and existing priorities for the school.

Part 2 – Current Conditions

This is an assessment and review of the school's current alignment with each Foundational Element and Principle of Effective Practice in the Standards.

- The school must eventually meet the Foundational Elements within the Standards. The school uses the Foundational Elements Rubric to determine if the school "Meets" or "Does Not Meet" each Foundational Element. If the school does not meet a Foundational Element, that Element will automatically become a Priority Area for Growth.

- The school determines the phase in their alignment with each Principle using the Principle of Effective Practice Rubric and the descriptions for each phase of implementation: Not Yet Evident, Initiating, Developing, Implementing, or Transforming.

- The school writes a narrative in the Vision for Learning Accreditation Portal explaining its rating for each Foundational Element (Meets or Does Not Meet) based on the rubric. Narratives for the Foundational Elements can be brief because additional information for each Element will also be included in the narratives for the corresponding Principle of Effective Practice. Narratives and evidence for the Foundational Elements can be used again with corresponding Principles.

- The school writes a narrative in the Vision for Learning Accreditation Portal explaining its

rating for each Principle within the Standards based on the rubric. After the narratives are completed for each Principle within a Standard, the school determines overall strengths and areas for growth for that Standard.

Part 3 – Priority areas for school growth/improvement plan

The school will identify Priority Areas for Growth based on the results of the Self-Reflection process. The Visiting Team will collaborate with the school during the visit to ensure the Priority Areas are aligned with Principles of Effective Practice within the Standards and that pursuing these goals will lead to transformative growth for the school. The School Growth/Improvement Plan will be finalized after the Collaborative Conference Report is received by the school. The Collaborative Conference visiting team will verify the validity of the Priority Areas and identify any obvious omissions based on data collected during the visits.

Part 4 – CTE Program Reports (where applicable)

For schools with career and technical education (CTE) programs, CTE faculty members will gather evidence for each program, and then examine the evidence, draw conclusions, and write program reports for each program. The objective is for CTE faculty members to use this process to reflect deeply on their programs and practices, identify the specific strategies and practices they use to achieve positive student outcomes, and identify areas for improvement. The CTE program reports will be submitted according to the school/center-determined workflow. Areas for improvement common across programs should be identified as Priority Areas for Growth. The program reports should be uploaded to the Vision for Learning Accreditation Portal for review by the visiting team.

The Collaborative Conference Visit Schedule

Day 1		
7:30 a.m.	Team arrival at the school	All
7:45 – 8:15 a.m.	Tour of the building and grounds	All
8:20 – 9:00 a.m.	Review report with Self-Reflection committee	All
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Observe classes	All
10:30 – 11:25 a.m.	Meeting with central office administrators/Meeting with support staff Meeting with CTE program personnel (if applicable)	Divide Team
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Lunch	All
12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Meeting with parents/Meeting with students	Divide Team
12:50 to 1:50	Meeting with a representative group of teachers Meeting with CTE program personnel (if applicable)	Divide Team
1:55 – 2:40 p.m.	Meeting with department heads or other school leaders	All
2:45 – 3:30 p.m.	Meeting with building administrators	All
3:45 p.m.	Depart school and check-in to the hotel	All
5:00 p.m.	Team debrief meeting in hotel workroom	All
6:00 p.m.	Dinner	All
7:00 p.m.	Evening meeting and writing time in hotel workroom	All
9:00 p.m.	Adjourn	All
Day 2		
6:30 a.m.	Breakfast at hotel and check-out of hotel	All
7:30 a.m.	Arrival at school	All
7:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Work on the draft Collaborative Conference Report in the team room and other meetings if requested by the chair. It is important for the team to collaborate on the Foundational Element ratings and the finalization of the Priority Areas of Growth.	All
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	All
12:30 p.m.	Preparation for debrief meeting with the principal	All
1:00 p.m.	Debrief with the principal	All
1:45 p.m.	Depart	All

- The chair will develop the Collaborative Conference Visit schedule, adjusted based on the school's bell schedule, in consultation with the principal or Accreditation Coordinators.

- All meetings should be 45-60 minutes, depending on the school bell schedule.

- Visiting team members may be asked to attend different meetings during the same block of time at the chair's discretion, who will divide the team based on their writing assignments to ensure they will gather appropriate information for their section of the report.

- If the team is split between two concurrent meetings, the chair typically attends one meeting, and the assistant chair attends the other.

- CTE meetings with the director and program personnel will be scheduled as needed.

Facility Tour

The tour, conducted by students, should enable team members to see parts of the school that students believe are important in their daily lives. As you tour the physical plant, be attentive to instructional areas, including the library/media center, school counseling area, computer and science labs, performance areas for the arts program, the cafeteria, and the gymnasium. Look for evidence to determine the extent to which the physical plant meets the learning needs of students and provides appropriate areas for their involvement in school activities. It is equally important to gain a sense of the students' beliefs about the condition of the facility and any specific strengths or areas of need. This is also an opportunity to talk to students about the culture and climate of the building. If the facility has notable needs, the chair will request an additional, more structured tour for one of the visiting team members, which would be led by a staff member with expertise in the physical plant, its infrastructure, and the full extent of its needs.

Visiting Classrooms

The purpose of classroom visits is to learn more about the teaching and learning across the school. You can see what happens during the school day, what types of learning activities students are involved in, how they relate to their teachers and the school, and how teachers teach and assess learning. Observing learning is critical to your understanding of how the school functions. See Appendix A for the "Look-fors" in Classrooms and Student Work page and the Evidence Gathering Worksheet.

Meetings with Committees and Groups

Team members will participate in various meetings, assigned by the chair, which will give background information needed to prepare reports. The overall purpose in meeting with various groups is to formulate working conclusions regarding the school's alignment with the Standards. Be sure to collect detailed information and validate and clarify all evidence. Please ask and select questions that will help resolve issues or confirm initial conclusions from the Self-Reflection Report or the prepared questions in Appendix D. There will not be sufficient time to ask all the questions provided, so prioritize questions carefully.

Conducting a meeting

Set the stage, begin on time even if everyone is not present, keep track of the time, and use the following steps:

- Call the group to order and **state the purpose of the meeting**. Short introductions are appropriate, e.g., just name and role in the school for each person.

- Begin the discussion with a general question that anyone can answer. Be sure to let as many people respond as possible before changing to a new subject or question. Be sensitive to the dynamics of the group.

- Be confident and relaxed. There is no need to be apologetic about your questions. When appropriate, clarify and summarize what has been said.

- Don't pose as an expert.

- Ask for the information that you need in a straightforward manner. Move on to another topic if there is little or no interest by the group in the issue at hand.

- Near the end of the meeting, ask if anyone has something else to say and be sure to invite further discussions with individuals at a later time.

- Thank them and dismiss the group on time.

Remember that the purpose of the meeting is to gather and clarify information. Do not share any judgments, conclusions, or information about team members' schools with those at the meeting. Afterward, corroborate impressions with others on the visiting team.

Writing the Collaborative Conference Report

After gathering evidence from various sources and clarifying any questions that arise, you will write a report expressing your conclusions about the school's alignment with each of the Standards.

Part 1: Introduction

The chair will complete this section in the Vision for Learning Accreditation Portal by copy-pasting the information into the portal and making changes specific to the visit.

Part 2: Foundational Element Review

Evaluate each of the Foundational Elements.

☐ Write a paragraph about the Foundational Element using some of the information you gathered for the corresponding Principle of Effective Practice. For instance, when writing the paragraph for Foundational Element 1.1a, it will be informed by your findings for your Principle 1.1 narrative.

☐ In the first sentence use the Foundational Element and adjust it with a qualifier/judgment as needed, e.g., "provides" or "has yet to provide."

☐ Next, use the first Descriptor and add a qualifier/judgment if necessary. Provide a few sentences about how the school aligns with the criterion with specific examples. Repeat for all criteria (listed as Descriptors).

☐ Rate the school's alignment with each Foundational Element by checking the appropriate radio button in the Vision for Learning Accreditation Portal.

☐ The team's rating of the Foundational Element may be different from the school's rating.

☐ *Please do not copy directly from the Self-Reflection Report*; paraphrasing short phrases is fine.

Part 3: Standards Narratives

Identify areas of alignment for the Principles in each Standard by writing full-sentence bullet points providing examples using information from meetings, observations during the visit, NEASC survey results, and the Self-Reflection Report. You should use the language of the Descriptors in your sentences. Try to include 2-3 specific examples for each Descriptor addressed. In Standard 2, incorporate classroom observation examples from the team's Evidence Gathering Google Sheet as evidence in your bullet points. Numerous strengths are fine.

> Please do not copy directly from the Self-Reflection Report; paraphrasing short phrases is fine. Repeat the process for each Principle.

Bullets identifying areas of alignment should include:
- Who/What
- Language from the Descriptor
- Judgment (How they are doing it)
- Examples to support the judgment

EXAMPLE:

The school...
[who]
pervasively...
[judgement/how they are doing it]
maintains a socially and emotionally safe environment for students...
[language from the descriptor]
through efforts such as adopting the recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating (RULER) approach in Advisory, a flex-time block, and numerous activity offerings based on student interest.
[examples to support the judgement]

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES:

The students and families express a strong sense of social-emotional safety, with faculty members taking a comprehensive approach to helping students with social-emotional needs as much as possible.

The school engages in ongoing reviews and revisions of its learning expectations, involving various stakeholders, including faculty members, parents, students, and community members.

The high level of relational trust among faculty members and between teachers and administrators fosters collaboration and the sharing of innovative practices, which creates conditions for the full and active participation of educators, including sharing best practices whenever possible.

Faculty members are dedicated to teaching students that mistakes and persistence are natural parts of the learning process and encourage them to try new things.

The principal, superintendent, and school committee are collaborative, reflective, and constructive, which reinforces a collaborative leadership approach.

Identify future areas of growth for each Standard
by writing full-sentence bullet points providing examples using information from meetings, observations during the visit, NEASC survey results, and the Self-Reflection Report. Use an action verb to start each Future Area of Growth. A Future Area of Growth, for example, would be connected to a Descriptor in which the school may need more alignment. Please limit the Future Areas of Growth to five per Standard and use the language of the Descriptor as much as possible, along with examples.

Bullets identifying Future Areas of Growth should include:

- Action verb

- Suggested growth using language from the Principle or Descriptor

EXAMPLE:

> *Identify and implement...*
> [action verbs]
> *teaching strategies across classrooms that encourage students to feel intellectually safe in the building.*
> [suggested growth, language from descriptor]

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES:

> *Explore and expand ways to include and ensure belonging for historically marginalized groups.*

> *Ensure the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are actively reflected in the school culture, guide policies, procedures, and resource allocations, and include the school's commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.*

> *Develop and implement more opportunities for student involvement in decision-making processes and expand their role in shaping school programs and policies, including career and technical student organizations.*

Cite three or more sources of evidence used to formulate the areas in which the school aligns with the Principles and the Future Areas of Growth by checking the appropriate radio button in the Vision for Learning Accreditation Portal.

Part 4: CTE Program Feedback (if applicable)

CTE Specific Program Feedback:

- For each CTE program, use the writing template and respond to the selected Principles from the Standards. For the Principles listed, please provide areas in which the program demonstrates strong alignment and areas in which the program can grow in alignment with this principle in a bulleted list.

- Each bulleted area in which the program demonstrates strong alignment, as well as each area in which the program can grow, should align with a Principle or Descriptor of Effective Practice. Also, include some overall Commendations and Recommendations for the CTE program.

CTE Overall Program Feedback:

- Provide some overall impressions of the CTE programs in the school. Please write a narrative paragraph describing the programs overall and then areas of strength and areas of growth for the CTE programs.

Part 5: Collaborative Conference Team Feedback

Evaluate each of the Priority Areas and consider additional Priority Areas if necessary.
This should be done collaboratively as a team.

Analyze the school's stated Priority Areas considering the following questions:

☐ Are there any Foundational Elements that the school is not meeting? If so, are they reflected in the Priority Areas?

☐ Does the team feel that these are the appropriate Priority Areas for the school? If yes, what evidence did the team use to make this judgment?

☐ Are the Priority Areas broad enough to include multiple action steps with multiple stakeholders over the next two years?

☐ Are these Priority Areas related to school and district priorities that the school is working on and where it needs to focus attention?

☐ Are there one or two Priority Areas focused on the CTE center, if applicable?

Consider whether additional Priority Areas are necessary.

☐ Based on the information gathered by the team, are there any obvious omissions that the school made when selecting its Priority Areas? If so, what additional Priority Areas should be considered?

Determine suggested next steps for each of the Priority Areas.

☐ Consider what steps the school could take to successfully achieve the goal they have set for themselves.

☐ Combine these with the next steps the school has identified in its Self-Reflection Report or shared during meetings.

☐ Do not be overly prescriptive but provide thoughts for the school to consider when planning its future work related to these Priority Areas.

Write the response for each of the Priority Areas and any Additional Priority.
This should be done collaboratively as a team.

For each of the school's stated Priority Areas:

1. Use the following heading: "The Collaborative Conference visiting team concurs (or does not concur) with the Priority Area identified by the school," or "The Collaborative Conference visiting team recommends a modification to the Priority Area identified by the school."

2. Write a goal statement for that Priority Area in the language of the relevant Foundational Element, Principle, or Descriptor from the Standards and cite the relevant Foundational Elements or Principle in parentheses after the statement. This goal statement will be used by the school in its School Growth/Improvement Plan.

3. Use the following heading: "School Response."

    a. Copy-paste that which the school wrote in the Self-Reflection Report.

4. Use the following heading: "Visiting Team Response"

a. Describe the team's perspective and include any specific areas for attention by the school.

b. Add **Action Steps** to help the school with its planning. These steps should be written in the same format as recommendations with an action verb to start the sentence. *Action steps are optional*.

EXAMPLE:

The Collaborative Conference visiting team concurs with the Priority Area identified by the school.

Priority Area #1 Goal Statement: The school will develop a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understanding, and dispositions necessary for future success and provides feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress in achieving this vision (1.2, 2.1).

School Response: Create a vision of the graduate for our school.

Visiting Team Response: The school does not yet have a vision of the graduate with transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions. Administrators and teachers have expressed a desire to develop this document through an inclusive process. However, it is still to be decided whether the document will be district-wide or only at the high school. Because the curriculum is coordinated across grades 5-12, a unified vision of the graduate would be beneficial because it could be embedded into curriculum documents in a consistent manner.

Action Steps: (optional)

- Develop a team of stakeholders district-wide to examine current research and learn more about the importance of a vision of the graduate.

- Gather input from stakeholders regarding the skills and attributes with which they want learners to graduate.

- Examine the school's current core values, beliefs, and other guiding documents.

- Think about what types of assessments are in place in the school that could be aligned with the vision of the graduate.

For an additional Priority Area:

1. Use the following heading: "The Collaborative Conference visiting team has identified an additional Priority Area."

2. Write a Priority Area goal statement in the language of the relevant Foundational Element, Principle, or Descriptor from the Standards and cite the relevant Foundational Element and/or Principles in parentheses after the statement. This goal statement will be used by the school in the School Growth/Improvement Plan.

3. Use the following heading: "Visiting Team Response"

a. Describe the team's perspective and include any specific areas for attention by the school.

Write Commendations

Determine commendations that are based on the strengths in each Standard, listing them in the order of the Standards. These are areas where the school aligns with the Foundational Elements and Principles. Always begin a commendation with phrase that references what is being commended.

- Begin the commendation with a noun.
  - You are commending the practice or thing, not the people at the school.
  - Every commendation should be easily connected back to a narrative written by the visiting team in the Collaborative Conference Report.
- As an example, this commendation is related to the allocation of professional time:
  - **Incorrect** - Leadership's time allotted throughout the academic year for continued professional learning and further equity work.
  - **Correct** - The allocation of time throughout the academic year for continued professional learning and further equity work by the school's leaders

Note any Special Considerations

At the end of the report, there is a Special Considerations section that is to be used if there are any specific concerns that do not fall into a Priority Area. This would be for health and safety concerns, personnel shortages, or any area to which the visiting team wants to bring attention because it is a serious concern. This section is not required and should only be used after speaking with the school's NEASC professional staff liaison and discussing the concern that the team believes needs to be addressed.

Appendix A
Look-fors in Classrooms and Student Work

LEARNING

- skills and competencies necessary to attain the school's vision of the graduate
- knowledge, understandings, transferable skills, and dispositions necessary for future success
- dispositions, such as independence, flexible thinking, and persistence
- disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge deep understanding
- higher order thinking inquiry
- application of knowledge and skills to authentic tasks collaboration
- questioning, analysis, and understanding impacts
- analysis, synthesis, creativity, making connections, and understanding relationships
- critical and creative thinking
- using technology in informed, effective, and ethical ways
- communicate clearly and creatively construct knowledge
- the ability to: create, problem-solve, share work with an audience

TEACHING

- interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning, and authentic learning experiences
- strategic differentiating and individualizing purposefully organized group learning connections to prior knowledge across disciplines additional support and alternative strategies
- organizational, grouping, and tiered intervention strategies
- learning that is personalized, relevant, and authentic
- opportunities for students to determine learning outcomes, set goals, and reflect on the results
- student discourse and reflection on learning
- student choice, pursuit of personal interests, and opportunities for creative expression
- opportunities to learn in and out of school experiences that are cognitively challenging
- a wide range of assessment strategies, including formative, summative assessments, and common assessments
- specific and measurable criteria for success provided to learners prior to assessments
- regular and consistent checks for understanding presentation of learning to authentic audiences
- multiple and varied opportunities over time to demonstrate learning
- consistent, systematic, specific, and timely corrective feedback
- opportunities to revise and improve work
- teacher feedback as well as peer feedback and self- reflection
- separate grading/reporting and feedback for work habits and academic skills
- technology to:
  - access, support, document, and supplement learning
  - broaden perspectives locally and globally
  - personalize the pace of learning
  - share work with an audience beyond the school community
  - collaborate digitally to support learning
  - engage in learning beyond the constraints of the school building and school day

Evidence Gathering Worksheet

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

For classroom observations:

Room: _____   Teacher: _____

Course: _____

In the conclusion section describe the Principle or Descriptors observed.

Literal Notes	Conclusions

Appendix B

Continuum of Terms for Writing Conclusions

From the Rubric	Quantitative	Qualitative
TRANSFORMING	**ALWAYS**	by design – not by design
driving innovation	all	individually – collaboratively
organizations or systems support and sustain	across the school	deliberately – haphazardly
firmly in place	pervasively often	formally – informally
implementing	the vast majority most	implicitly – explicitly
living	extensively consistently	purposefully – lacking connection
plans and timelines in place	frequently sometimes	systematically – by happenstance
working on	in some areas	consistently – inconsistently
developing	occasionally limited	commonly – seldom
initiating	infrequently rarely	targeted – scattered
not yet in action	**NEVER**	regularly – sporadically
being considered by the school community		
thinking about		
NOT YET EVIDENT		

Appendix C

Foundational Elements Writing Guide

In your narrative, state whether the school meets the element or not then include answers to each of the questions.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT

1.1a The school community provides a socially and emotionally safe environment for students and adults.

Questions

How does the school community build and maintain a socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment for students and adults?

How does the school community create policies and protocols that define and support the respectful treatment of all members of the school community?

How does the school community consider the experience of historically marginalized communities?

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT

1.2a The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

Questions

How did the school community use a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research to develop its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate?

How did the school community create a vision of a graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success?

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT

2.2a There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments.

Questions

Is there a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices?

If applicable, is there a written curriculum that includes competency-based elements for all career and technical education programs with pathways leading to licensure, certification, and post-secondary education?

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT
3.1a The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.

Questions

Does the school have a school improvement/growth plan that includes school-specific goals?

Does the school improvement/growth plan inform decision-making in the school?

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT
3.6a All career and technical education programs have a program advisory committee and implement a systematic program review process.

Questions

Does the school have effective career and technical education program advisories?

Does the school complete regular program reviews?

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT
4.1a The school has intervention strategies designed to support students.

Questions

Does the school have a process to identify and refer students who need additional assistance?

Does the school have a range of intervention strategies for students?

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT
5.1a The school site and plant support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.

Questions

Do the community and district provide school buildings and facilities that:
- support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services?
- are clean and well-maintained?
- meet all applicable federal and state laws and comply with local fire, health, and safety regulations?

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT
5.5a The school provides a physically safe environment for students and adults.

Questions

Does the school maintain infrastructure designed to support a physically safe environment for students and adults?

Does the school maintain policies, processes, and protocols regarding safety for students and adults

Appendix D

Meeting Questions

MEETING WITH STEERING COMMITTEE, SELF-REFLECTION COMMITTEE, AND/OR STANDARDS CHAIRS

Who was involved in the Self-Reflection, and how was it organized and created?

In what ways did the Self-Reflection Committee engage the faculty in the Self- Reflection phase through involvement in the collection of evidence, providing input and feedback, and through regular progress updates?

How did you arrive at the ratings on the Foundational Elements and the Principles?

How and to what extent was the consensus of the professional staff reached on each part of the report?

How did the school determine its Priority Areas for Growth?

FACILITY TOUR

How does the school ensure that all students and adults are physically safe?

How and to what degree do the school building and grounds support safety, security, learning, curricula, and co-curricular activities?

How can the school verify that the building is in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations?

Are all areas of the building clean and well maintained?

What written and understood protocols are in place to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors?

If you could do something to improve the school, what would you do?

MEETING WITH STUDENTS

What do you like best about your school? If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?

Do you feel safe at this school?

Are all kids accepted at this school?

Do you feel like you belong at this school?

How do you know that adults in the school care about you?

How do your teachers adjust their teaching to support your learning, and do they understand how you learn best?

What opportunities are there for you to present your learning to authentic, real-life audiences?

In what ways do teachers ask you to show what you know?

When trying to show your teacher that you have learned something, are you comfortable trying something out of the ordinary – "thinking outside of the box" – and maybe not succeeding the first time around?

Do teachers allow you to revise and improve your work?

How do you use technology?

If you could do something to improve the school, what would you do?

MEETING WITH PARENTS

What is the best part about this school? What are its needs or areas for growth?

Do you feel this school is a safe place for your son or daughter?

Does your son or daughter feel like they belong at this school?

Do you have a clear understanding of the school's core values, beliefs about learning,

and the skills expected of your child through graduation?

How is the responsibility of students' well-being shared in the school and community?

Do you think that the courses that your child is taking are helping to prepare her/him for living and working in the world that awaits beyond graduation?

Do you believe that the school has adequate technology, materials, books, and other resources for students?

How do teachers personalize learning for your son or daughter?

Do you know how your son or daughter is progressing at meeting the school's vision of the graduate?

How does the faculty and staff show an interest in the learning and well-being of students?

Can you give examples of opportunities that parents have to provide input to school officials?

In what ways are the student support services – guidance, library/media, health services, and services for identified students – most helpful?

If you could do something to improve the school, what would you do?

MEETING WITH FACULTY

How do the school and the full school community share responsibility to ensure the comprehensive well-being of all students?

How does the school support diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging for students and faculty?

To what degree does the professional staff exhibit a unified commitment to continuous improvement and best practices?

How do teachers participate in decision-making at the school?

How and to what degree does the written curriculum include higher order thinking, transferable skills, and dispositions, such as independence, flexible thinking, and persistence?

What opportunities are there for students to use multiple and varied approaches over time to demonstrate their learning and present their learning to authentic audiences?

How and to what degree do students use technology?

How do teachers examine evidence to improve student learning and well-being? (Including student work, common assessments, achievement data, post-secondary data, and feedback from students, parents, and the community.)

How does the school provide appropriate interventions and support for all students?

How and to what extent are the faculty and staff afforded formal time and appropriate funding for professional growth and school improvements?

If you could do something to improve the school, what would you do?

MEETING WITH GUIDANCE COUNSELORS/SUPPORT SERVICE PROVIDERS

How does the school provide appropriate interventions and support for all students?

How does the school ensure that support options are communicated to families, especially those in most need?

For guidance counselors, how often do you see each student during the school year to meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs?

What relationship does the school have and maintain with community and area mental health and social service providers?

How does the school deliver health services that include preventive, direct, and referred components, and ensure they are available for all students?

How and when do students and teachers use the library/media center, its resources, and programs?

To what extent is the library/media specialist involved in the development and

delivery of the school's curricula?

What role does the collaboration of the professional staff serve to ensure inclusive learning opportunities for identified English language learners?

MEETING WITH DEPARTMENT HEADS

How does the professional staff engage in continuous improvement through research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection?

How are department leaders and teachers engaged in the development of the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate?

To what degree is the professional staff committed to continuous improvement, best practices, and the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate?

What is the school's approach to leadership; to what degree is it inclusive; and does it ensure that leaders have the authority to improve student learning?

How does the evaluation, review, and revision of curriculum take place, and how does the school ensure alignment with the sending school(s)?

How does the professional staff foster improvements in instructional practices?

How do teachers ensure rigorous learning opportunities for all students through design of instructional practices?

What assessment strategies are employed by teachers throughout the school?

How and to what degree is technology made available to, and used by, teachers and students?

How and to what degree do teachers engage in professional discourse during department meetings and/or other formally scheduled meeting time, and how does this discourse inform professional development?

How is professional development determined?

How and to what extent are the faculty and staff provided formal time and appropriate funding for professional growth and school improvements?

How and to what degree does the facility support high quality programs and services, and are there areas of need within certain departments?

MEETING WITH ADMINISTRATORS

How are the core values, beliefs about learning, and the vision of the graduate used to make decisions about student performance, policies, and instruction?

What is the school's process to report on whole-school progress toward learner achievement of the vision of the graduate?

How do you promote a growth mindset among the faculty and students?

How does the school and the full school community share responsibility to ensure the comprehensive well-being of all students?

How do the school board, superintendent, and principal collaborate, and to what degree does the principal have appropriate decision-making authority?

How is the school improvement/growth plan developed and updated, and how is it informed by the Standards for Accreditation, school-specific goals, district priorities, and current research?

How and to what degree does the school's implementation of the supervision and evaluation plan result in timely and effective feedback to improve teaching practices?

How does the school ensure curricular alignment among its department and programs, with sending schools, and between the written, taught, and learned curriculum?

How does the school ensure that each student's learning needs are met and that each has equitable, inclusive, and heterogeneous academic experiences?

How and to what extent are the faculty and staff afforded formal time and appropriate funding for professional growth and school improvements?

What are the plans that are in place at the building and district levels to ensure that the building is well maintained, safe, and secure; that there are regular facility repairs; and that staffing reflects enrollment changes?

What written and understood protocols are in place to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors?

If you could do something to improve the school, what would you do?

MEETING WITH CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

What are some of the strengths of this school and what are its areas for growth and improvement?

Are you aware of the proposed Priority Areas for Growth and do you agree with them?

How do the school board, superintendent, and principal collaborate, and to what degree does the principal have appropriate decision-making authority?

How does the school identify, monitor, and respond to inequities in student achievement?

How does the school ensure curricular alignment among its department and programs, with sending schools, and between the written, taught, and learned curriculum?

How and to what extent are the faculty and staff afforded formal time and appropriate funding for professional growth and school improvements?

To what extent does the community provide consistently dependable funding to support safety, security, learning, curricula, and co-curricular activities?

What are the plans that are in place at the building and district levels to ensure that the building is well-maintained, safe, and secure; that there are regular facility repairs; and that staffing reflects enrollment changes?

If you could do something to improve the school, what would you do?

QUESTIONS FOR MEETING WITH CTE PROGRAM TEACHERS

How does the program demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging? (1.1)

How does the program ensure that all students and adults are emotionally and intellectually safe? (1.1a)

Is there a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in the program? How can teachers access the curriculum? How often is it revised? (2.2a)

What authentic and hands on learning experiences are available through the program? (2.3)

How and to what degree are all students consistently afforded opportunities to demonstrate progress toward mastery through formative and summative assessments? (2.7)

How and to what degree do students discuss and reflect on their learning as part of planned lesson activities? (2.7)

How and to what degree do students participate in authentic, project-based learning? (2.7)

How does the program ensure curricular alignment among its department and programs, with sending schools, and between the written, taught, and learned curriculum? (3.4)

How does the program ensure that each student's learning needs are met and that each has equitable, inclusive, and heterogeneous academic experiences? (3.5)

Does the program have an effective program advisory committee? How often does it meet? Who is involved? How does it impact the program's direction? (3.6a)

How does the program provide appropriate interventions and support for all students? (4.1)

How does the program ensure that support options are communicated to families, especially those in most need? (4.1)

How does the program's physical space support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services? (5.1a)

Does the program have adequate and dependable funding to implement the curriculum including co-curriculum programs and other learning opportunities? (5.3)

What safety measures are in place to ensure that the program's activities are physically safe for adults and students? (5.5a)

Appendix F

Foundational Elements Rubric

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

> **Meets**: All criteria of the Foundational Element are evident in the school.
>
> **Does not meet**: Some criteria of the Foundational Element are not yet evident in the school.

Standard and Foundational Element	Criteria necessary to meet the Foundational Element	Does the school meet the Foundational Element as based on the school's written narrative?
1.1a The school community provides a socially and emotionally safe environment for students and adults.	The school community: ▪ builds and maintains a socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment for students and adults ▪ creates policies and protocols that define and support respectful treatment of all members of the school community and consider the experiences of historically marginalized communities	☐ Meets ☐ Does not meet
1.2a The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success.	The school community: ▪ uses a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research to develop its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate ▪ creates a vision of a graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success	☐ Meets ☐ Does not meet

2.2a There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school.	The written curriculum includes: • units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices • competency-based elements for all career and technical education programs with pathways leading to licensure, certification, and post-secondary education	☐ Meets ☐ Does not meet
3.1a The school has a current school growth/ improvement plan.	The school has a plan that: • includes school-specific goals • informs decision-making in the school	☐ Meets ☐ Does not meet
3.6a All career and technical education programs have a program advisory committee and implement a systematic program review process.	The school: • has effective career and technical education program advisories • completes regular program reviews	☐ Meets ☐ Does not meet
4.1a The school has intervention strategies designed to support learners.	The school provides: • a process to identify and refer students who need additional assistance • a range of intervention strategies for students	☐ Meets ☐ Does not meet
5.1a The school site and plant support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.	The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that: • support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services • are clean and well-maintained • meet all applicable federal and state laws and comply with local fire, health, and safety regulations	☐ Meets ☐ Does not meet
5.5a The school provides a physically safe environment for students and adults.	The school maintains: • infrastructure designed to support a physically safe environment for students and adults • policies, processes, and protocols regarding safety for students and adults	☐ Meets ☐ Does not meet

Appendix G

Principles of Effective Practice Rubric

The continuum is used to determine the school's current phase of implementation, which best describes the school's alignment with each Principle in the Standard.

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

About us

NEASC Mission Statement

NEASC partners with schools to assess, support, and promote high quality education for all students through accreditation, professional assistance, and pursuit of best practices.

Commission on Public Schools Statement

The NEASC Commission on Public Schools, in partnership with its members, strives to ensure that all students experience an equitable, high-quality education necessary for their future success and well-being.

We will accomplish this mission through a cycle of continuous improvement and growth that includes:

- *quality, research based, Standards for Accreditation*
- *an inclusive, collaborative process of Accreditation*
- *an inquiry-based process of self-reflection*
- *valid and reliable feedback and assessment through peer review*
- *ongoing monitoring and professional support*

Resources

Accreditation resources are available on our website at www.neasc.org/public

Contact us

New England Association of Schools and Colleges
1115 Westford Street, Third Floor
Lowell, MA, 01851 USA

Phone 781-425-7700 | Toll free (US) 855-886-3272

Staff directory: www.neasc.org/staff-directory