



NEASC Commission on Independent Schools

Chair Checklist for Required Self-Study Materials

Foundation Standards

1. Enrolled Students Align Appropriately with the Mission

- Current Marketing/Enrollment Plan
- Current printed admissions materials and/or link to online site
- Student/parent contract(s)
- Statement of Financial Aid policies and procedures
- Non-discrimination Policy (may be included in other materials)
- Parent and Student Handbooks

2. The Governing Body/Board Assures the School Remains Sustainable and True to its Mission

- Current Governing Body/Board roster indicating length of service
- Current By-Laws
- Minutes of two recent meetings
- Governing Body/Board Self-Evaluation Instrument
- Head Evaluation Process/Instrument
- Corporate Status as a tax-exempt institution, if applicable
- Conflict of Interest Policy for Board members

3. The School's Resources Sufficiently Support Present and Prospective Operation

(These financial documents are confidential and, as such, should only be viewed by the Chair of the visit and the NEASC office.)

Please provide ONE of the following at the time of the Foundation Visit:

- Opinion Audit
- Reviewed Financial Statements with Management Letter
- If a Catholic School, a Diocesan Report on School Finances

In addition, please provide the following financial documents:

- Annual Budget for most recently completed year (prior to Foundation Visit)
- Written Financial Plan including Three to Five-Year Projection
- Report summarizing annual giving/voluntary support for most recently completed year
- Insurance Safety Audit/Risk Management Report
- Insurance policies/plans
- Salary table for full-time faculty listing only the low, median and high salary
- List of Benefits

4. The School Assures that the Adult Community is Qualified and Organized to Implement the Mission

- Current employee roster, including roles and responsibilities, length of service and professional qualifications
- Organizational chart(s) and/or protocols setting out lines of communication and areas of responsibility
- Examples of each type of faculty/staff/administrative contract
- For the Chair of the Visiting Team and NEASC Staff only: Confidential Salary Documentation
- Faculty Handbook(s)
- Faculty Code of Conduct or similar document (if separate from E above)
- List of materials consistently maintained in personnel files

5. A Proactive Culture of Health and Safety Permeates the School

- Current Crisis Management Plan/Protocols including up-to-date communications and contact information.
- Compliance Documentation including:
 - Current fire inspections for each facility
 - Food Service certification (i.e. cleanliness, safe-handling, health inspection)
 - Medical facility inspection as required (state and local requirements vary)
 - As required by state or locale, any additional necessary testing (i.e. water at tap, radon, asbestos, carbon monoxide)
 - Schedule of fire drills and lockdown/campus emergency and safety activity – both completed for the most recent year and planned for the current one

- Documentation around individual activities where specialized health and safety considerations are necessary (i.e. waterfront and pool areas, sports practices and games, field trips and off-campus trips, international travel and immunizations)
- Policy on acquisition of current student health records
- Statement from the Head of School that the school's Emergency Plan is complete and has been submitted to the appropriate local officials
- State compliance documentation for programs serving students under the age of three (if applicable)

Note: To determine compliance with local, state and federal health and safety requirements, schools must consult legal counsel. NEASC Accreditation does NOT provide indemnification nor explicit or implied approval for any school activity, program or facility. The Visiting Committee or NEASC Staff Visit and Report are peer reviews only and not legal documentation. NEASC written or verbal communication never substitutes for or replaces local, state or federal legal requirements.

6. Proprietary Schools Ensure Effective Leadership, Clear Organizational Structure, and the Necessary Resources to Successfully Execute the Mission of the School for the Foreseeable Future. *(This Standard applies to for-profit schools only. Not-for-profit schools need not respond.)*

(These financial documents are confidential and, as such, should be sent separately to the Chair of the visit and to the NEASC office prior to the Foundation Visit.)

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

1. Reasonable assurance that the school has the assets available to sustain operation of the school for the foreseeable future (which include a current asset-to-liability ratio).
2. Assurances that the school has the systems in place to manage its finances appropriately.

This could include:

- Tax Returns for the organization, or its parent company or owner, for the most recent fiscal year
- Internal Trial Balance for most recently closed fiscal year

An annual audit (see below) is the best way to secure information in both areas.

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

Accreditation through the Commission on Independent Schools is granted expressly to a particular institution with clearly defined and identified ownership and/or control. A change in ownership or control automatically results in a self-executing, immediate discontinuance of accreditation unless the new owner or controlling authority provides adequate written assurance and evidence that the standards of the Commission will be maintained. Such assurances will be validated by a Focused Review Committee appointed by the Commission to visit the institution at a time designated by the Commission.

Program Standards

7. Commitment to Mission and Core Beliefs Informs Decisions, Guides Initiatives and Aligns with the Students' Needs and Aspirations

- Current Mission Statement
- Other guiding documents if applicable:
 - Statement of Core Values/Beliefs/Philosophy
 - Statement of Vision
 - Value Proposition

8. Commitment to Inspiration and Support Characterizes the Approach to Each Student

- School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey (if appropriate and/or completed)
- Documentation describing specific services, programs or activities such as:
 - Learning Support services
 - Language Support services
 - Counseling and guidance support services
 - Testing and placement – courses, programs, college application
 - Other programs specific to the school

9. Commitment to Excellence Distinguishes the Program

- Current written curriculum/curriculum guide
- List/examples of assessment tools/methods demonstrating student progress
- Documentation detailing any specific provisions for international students

10. Commitment to Continuous Professional Development Permeates the Adult Culture

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

11. Commitment to Engaging with the Greater Community Enhances Student Experience

- Examples of communication with alums and parents

12. Commitment to Meeting the Needs of Each Student Drives the Residential Program

- Residential Student Handbook (if separate from Student Handbook)
- Faculty or staff materials specific to the Residential Program
- Copy of weekend activities calendar

13. Commitment to the Health and Well-Being of Each Student Guides the School's Homestay Program

- Agency contract
- International Student Handbook

Strategic Planning Standard

14. Commitment to Long-Term Viability and Innovation Guides Planning

- Current Strategic Plan