

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
Commission on Independent Schools — <http://cis.neasc.org>
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Founded in 1885

Policy and Procedure for a Report for Merged Schools*

*A school will submit a Report for Merged Schools
when two or more schools merge.

Amending Accreditation Based on a Report for Merged Schools

Introduction

A school already accredited by NEASC may find itself substantially changed from the time of their most recent accreditation review. For example, it may add grades or a residential program to its existing structure or merge with another school.

The following protocol must be followed when a member school applies for a revision in its accreditation status to cover a wide range of changes without necessarily going through a comprehensive self-study and full visiting committee process.

Principles and Policies

1. NEASC recognizes the dynamic nature of its member schools and the fact that school communities go through major, sometimes rapid, changes.
2. NEASC will preserve the flexible, supportive nature of its accreditation process so as to ensure that schools have the opportunity to obtain accredited status for a newly merged school without unnecessary work or expense.
3. NEASC will also preserve the integrity and status of its accreditation process. The merged school will therefore require reporting and evaluation using the two sets of “benchmarks” which apply to all NEASC accreditation processes, namely:
 - The school’s own mission
 - The NEASC Standards for Accreditation
4. Upon notification of two or more schools merging, the schools’ accreditation will automatically be extended to include the newly formed school.
5. NEASC requires the school to file a Report for Merged Schools by the requested deadline, typically at the completion of one full year of the merger. This report may be followed by a Focused Visit from the Commission.
6. Subsequent procedures will be established by the Commission upon review of the Report for Merged Schools and any related Focused Visit Report.

7. If the effect of the merged school is such that the general nature of the entire school is likely to be radically changed, NEASC reserves the right to require the whole school to submit itself to a complete evaluation. This would only be required in very special cases and after in-depth discussions between the school and NEASC.

NOTE: The Commission may at its discretion expedite the schedule described above and may take steps at any time to assure a school's compliance with the Standards.

Practical Steps

The practical steps involved in extending accreditation to a newly merged school are as follows:

1. The school(s) will notify the NEASC office of the change.
2. NEASC will supply the school(s) with a Report for Merged Schools form as applicable. The report must be submitted by the requested deadline, typically at the completion of one full year of the merger.
3. Following receipt of the report, a one-day Focused Visit from the NEASC staff may be scheduled. The visitor or visitors will submit a brief report to the Commission which will determine if the initial extension of the school's accreditation is to be confirmed or revised.
4. The Commission will consider the Report for Merged Schools submitted by the school and the report of any related Focused Visit. There are two possible outcomes which are:
 - a. Accreditation is confirmed for the recently merged school.
 - b. Accreditation is confirmed with a Special Progress Report due to address specific issues.
5. Once final approval is made by the Commission, a timetable will be established to incorporate the next evaluation visit and/or Interim Evaluation Reports required.

Preparing the Report for Merged Schools

The Head of School is responsible for submitting the completed Report for Merged Schools to the Commission. The work involved in completing the report and submitting the additional documents required will in some ways be a “mini Self-Study” based on the NEASC Standards for Accreditation, which is a valuable exercise in itself. However, it is anticipated that the process will not be too time-consuming, especially as the majority of the required documents will be copies of items already in use within the school.

While the Head of School has the overall responsibility for the submission of the report, it is envisioned that other appropriate members of the school community will actively collaborate in the process. The members of the merged school’s administration and faculty most directly involved in supervising the proposed merger will certainly be expected to take part in the completion of the report.

The report will consist of the following:

1. Completing the Report for Merged Schools as applicable, and providing the requested documents or supporting materials.
2. Completing a rating of each of the Standards using the Compliance with the Standards for Accreditation Related to a Merged School form. Suggested indicators do not need to be utilized as in an initial or decennial accreditation process, unless a school finds this process useful.