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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Mission Statement

CIS engages member schools in a comprehensive peer review accreditation process that provides assurance of quality and serves as a catalyst for innovation, improvement and excellence.

We support the efforts of schools, with their diverse missions, to meet the current and emerging needs of their students and to achieve long-term institutional health.

As world leaders in accreditation with our partners at NEASC (founded in 1885), we promote an understanding of the changing educational landscape, and generate relevant discourse and action in the global educational community.

Core Principles

Our schools benefit from our continuous and systematic peer review accreditation process, one that integrates both internal voice and external perspective. We hold our schools responsible for improving and transforming themselves, through self-study and reflection. The ultimate objective is for our schools to design a sustainable future, which is consistent with their respective missions in serving their students, and responsive to a rapidly changing environment.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, November 2013
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policies and Procedures for the
Commission on Independent Schools

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. has as its stated purposes: "to advance the cause of education in the colleges and schools of New England and of other geographical areas designated from time to time by the Board of Trustees . . . ; to act as a regional accrediting organization dedicated to the establishment of cooperative relations among the colleges and schools of New England, and of other geographical areas designated from time to time by the Board of Trustees, to the development, maintenance, and improvement of sound educational standards, and to promote the interests common to both colleges and schools; . . ." (By-Laws of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., as amended April 26, 2013.)

The Commission on Independent Schools is one of the four constituent commissions functioning within the framework of the Association. The Commission is responsible for:

- Developing standards and procedures for evaluation of institutions for institutional accreditation or Candidate for Accreditation; and
- Reporting to the Board of Trustees actions taken regarding candidacy or accreditation status, adverse decisions, or reports received relative to the continued monitoring of member and affiliate institutions. (By-Laws, Article IV, Section 7)

Historical note: While the New England Association of Schools and Colleges was founded in 1885, and reference is made to a Standing Committee on Independent (Private) Secondary Schools within the Association as early as 1928, it was not until 1952 that the Association became an accrediting body, and 1966 when the first full-time Director of Evaluation was appointed for the Commission on Independent Schools.

The Commission on Independent Schools

The Commission on Independent Schools meets normally three times a year. The duties of the Commission are in Article IV, Section 7 of the By-Laws. Since the main work of the Association is evaluation and accreditation, the major items on any agenda are action on school reports of one sort or another. The Director of the Commission, in consultation with the Chair of the Commission, prepares the agenda.

At the present time there are twenty-five members of the Commission representing each of the six New England states and both elementary and secondary schools. Each member serves for a three-year term and may be reelected one time. Eligibility for nomination
and procedures for election are in the By-Laws, Article IV, Sections 2-5, and in the Policy and Procedure for Nomination of Commission Members.

The members of the Commission elect their own Chair in a manner prescribed in Article IV, Section 6 of the By-Laws.

**Commission Staff**

The Commission is served by a full-time Director, one Deputy Director, two Associate Directors, an Executive Assistant to the Director, two full-time administrative assistants, and two part-time administrative assistants. In addition, the Commission makes use of the Association Central Office staff and resources as needed. This includes access to accounting and legal services.

The Commission Director acts as an agent of the Commission on Independent Schools in carrying out the responsibilities of the Commission. The Commission staff responds to communications and inquiries regarding the evaluation process from member and affiliate institutions, from institutions seeking affiliation and/or membership, and from individuals or agencies seeking information about the Association and the evaluation process. The staff is also responsible for the maintenance of accurate records of meetings of the Commission on Independent Schools, up-to-date files on member and affiliate schools, processing reports, and in general overseeing the evaluation and accreditation process on behalf of the Commission on Independent Schools and the Association.

**Categories of Membership and Affiliation**

An institution may be a member of the Association and accredited thereby or affiliated as a Candidate for Accreditation. The Roster of the Association, published annually online, reflects a wide range of types and styles of schools. In terms of program, student body served, grades included, denominational affiliation, residential or otherwise, the universe is broad. The Commission will evaluate for accreditation by NEASC schools that include any combination of grades PK-12 (PG); e.g., PK-8; 7-12; 9-12, etc. The basic criterion defining a school is that programs are provided leading to a diploma or appropriate certificate of completion of the requirements of the program or programs. It is expected that the majority of students spend at least one year enrolled in such a program or a full semester in a semester-length program. The Commission does not accredit free-standing early childhood or day care programs.

**Candidate For Accreditation**

Institutions seeking affiliation in this category must file with the Commission office complete sets of information as requested on the appropriate forms. A prospective candidate must have been in operation for at least one year. A preliminary visit by a staff
member is scheduled and the school’s request for approval to apply for candidacy is presented at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting. A committee, ordinarily three people, is appointed by the staff on behalf of the Commission on Independent Schools and supplied with copies of the application as filed by the school. The committee conducts an on-site visit, ordinarily a day in duration, to verify the information in the application. Expenses of this committee are borne by the school being evaluated. This committee then prepares a written report for the Commission on Independent Schools and provides a recommendation to the Commission as to action on the application. The Commission makes the final decision on the action and reports affirmative decisions to the Board of Trustees. An evaluation fee equal to the annual fee for a member school is assessed based on the school’s total operating expenses.

Schools that have been accredited by other accrediting bodies recognized by the Commission may be granted candidacy status based on a staff visit, following the filing of the candidacy application. At the time of application from a school that is a member of a diocesan school system, the Commission requests a written statement from the diocesan superintendent of schools approving the school’s application for accreditation by NEASC or explaining why approval is not granted. The Commission will take the response of the diocese into account in its deliberations, but not be bound by it.

Institutions granted Candidate for Accreditation status file Annual Reports. A school may be affiliated as a Candidate for Accreditation for a maximum of five years, by which time it must have either applied for evaluation for institutional membership or be terminated as a Candidate for Accreditation. Extension of time may be granted by the Commission on Independent Schools, on an annual basis if, in its opinion, circumstances warrant such an extension.

The annual fee for an institution so affiliated is equal to the annual dues for a member school and is based on the school’s total operating expenses.

**Member School**

A school may be considered for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. only after it has been in operation for a sufficient period of time (a minimum of one year) to establish its ability to carry out its purposes and objectives and program, and provide the necessary personnel and material support. Evidence of this stability may be produced by having successfully passed through affiliation with the Association in the category of Candidate for Accreditation or by submission of such information as will, in the opinion of the Commission on Independent Schools, qualify it for consideration for membership and accreditation.

Institutions seeking accreditation must complete an institutional self-study leading to the preparation of a self-study report according to the *Manual for School Evaluation*. Copies of the manual and other related documents are available from the Commission.
Who Does What in the Accreditation Process?

Schools Seeking Candidacy for Accreditation

- School contacts Commission Office
- Commission staff sends:
  - Information about the Association
  - Standards for Accreditation
  - Manual for School Evaluation
  - The Self-Study Overview
  - Statement regarding Candidate for Accreditation Status
  - Policy and Procedure to Apply for Candidate for Accreditation
  - Application for Candidate for Accreditation
  - Dues and Fees Memo

- Commission staff meets, at no expense to the school, with school officials to discuss the evaluation process
- The request for approval to apply for candidacy is presented to the Commission at its next meeting
- School is notified by the Director that it may proceed with the application
- School prepares five sets of the Application for Candidate for Accreditation
- School sends two copies of the Application for Candidate for Accreditation to the Commission office
- School contacts the Commission office to set a date for the candidacy visit
- School sends single copies of the application to the members of the visiting committee at least one month before date of evaluation

Automatic Candidacy

Schools that are currently accredited by certain associations recognized by the Commission (CAIS, AISNE, ACSI, AWSNA, and several of the Catholic dioceses) may be granted automatic candidacy status. In these situations, a school will submit the Application for Candidate for Accreditation and host a staff visit. The staff member will write a brief report for the Commission, describing the school and making recommendations concerning particular areas of focus for the self-study.

Evaluation for Accreditation

- Commission office notifies an accredited member school 18-24 months in advance of the fact that the decennial evaluation for continued accreditation is due, and
  - Sends a copy of the Manual for School Evaluation and an order form
  - Sends workshop registration forms
- Offers to visit, at no expense to the school, and meet with school staff to discuss evaluation process
- School obtains evaluation materials from NEASC office
- School prepares Self-Study Report in accordance with instructions in Manual for School Evaluation
- School establishes dates for evaluation visit in consultation with the Commission staff
- Commission staff works with Head of School to name the visiting committee Chair. The school may reject up to three nominees suggested by staff.
- Commission staff appoint the visiting committee and notify school
- The Head of School establishes contact with the Chair of the visiting committee as soon as notified of the appointment to begin working out details of the evaluation visit
- School arranges for lodging for members of the visiting committee
- School completes the Self-Study Report in the portal at least four weeks prior to date of evaluation
- Following evaluation and receipt of the Visiting Committee Report, the school responds to the request from the Commission staff with written comments as to accuracy of the report, nature of the recommendations, and observations on the work of the visiting committee

If a school seeking initial accreditation does not meet one or more standards with a rating of SU1 or SU2, action on its application will be tabled until it documents how the standard is being met and hosts a staff visit.

If a school seeking continued accreditation does not meet one or more standards with a rating of SU1 or SU2, continuing accreditation is granted and the school has one year to submit a Special Progress Report demonstrating how the standard is met. A visit by a staff member will be scheduled following receipt of the report, and a written report of the visit will be presented to the Commission.

Each member institution must file Interim Evaluation Reports two years and five years following the evaluation in a form as prescribed by the Commission on Independent Schools. Special Progress Reports may be requested by the Commission at any time.

The Five-Year Interim Evaluation Report submitted by member institutions in the state of Vermont will satisfy that state’s reporting requirement, and copies of the correspondence to the school following review of the report by the Commission will be forwarded to the Vermont State Department of Education.

**The Visiting Committee**

Members of visiting committees to institutions undergoing evaluation for initial institutional or continued accreditation or candidate for accreditation are appointed by the
Commission staff. Persons are nominated to serve on visiting committees by Heads of member or affiliate schools or are chosen from other sources that may provide useful candidates to be of assistance in the evaluation process.

Rosters of these potential visiting committee members are kept in a database at the Association office. Their names, school positions, and experience on visiting committees are on record. These records are updated at least annually. General instructions to the visiting committee are contained in *The Handbook for Visiting Committee Members*. Detailed instructions for the Chair of the visiting committee are contained in *The Handbook for Visiting Committee Chairs*.

The visiting committee will conduct its evaluation in accordance with procedures outlined in *The Handbook for Visiting Committee Chairs* and *The Handbook for Visiting Committee Members*. A copy of the Visiting Committee Report prepared by the Chair on behalf of the visiting committee will be sent to the Commission Director within a month following the evaluation. The report will be accompanied by a letter from the Chair of the visiting committee including the recommendation to the Commission regarding membership and accreditation, the result of the specific votes by members of the committee on the Standards for Accreditation, and performance rating sheets for visiting committee members.

Visiting committee members will hand in expense vouchers to the Chair prior to the conclusion of the visit. The Chair will submit all vouchers, along with his/her expense voucher for expenses incurred in conducting the evaluation as well as the cost of preparing the Visiting Committee Report, to the school for payment at the conclusion of the visit.

The members of the visiting committee, once the report is completed and filed with the Director of the Commission, have completed their responsibilities to the Association and the school. Members of the committee will receive a copy of the notification letter to the school from the Commission.

**Commission Action**

Following is the Commission procedure for handling the reports on a school undergoing evaluation for initial institutional or continued membership and accreditation:

Each Commission member is sent:
- Agenda for meeting including specific committee assignments
- Supporting material for agenda including:
  - documentation or information regarding agenda items
  - visiting committee reports for all schools on the agenda for action regarding initial or continuing membership and accreditation or Candidate for Accreditation are posted on a secure page on the CIS website. Members login with a password provided by the Commission office.
An individual commission member assigned to a given school is sent the above material plus a copy of school's self-study report, school's reaction letter to the visiting committee report, and confidential material as described in the Manual. The individual commission member is expected to become an "expert" on that school, make a motion regarding a recommendation as to accreditation or affiliation, and lead discussion and respond to questions.

Following Commission meetings

In cases of schools applying for initial institutional membership and accreditation or Candidate for Accreditation:
- A letter from the Director of the Commission summarizing recommendations made by visiting committee and Commission, reviewing the recommendation to be made to the Board of Trustees, and outlining school's responsibilities to the Commission in the way of reports, etc., is sent to the head of school. This letter states that the action will be reported to the Association Board of Trustees. Copies of this letter are sent to the chair of the governing body, the diocesan superintendent, or joint accrediting association (where applicable), and the chair and members of the visiting committee.
- The President of the Association writes to the head of school regarding the action of the Association.

In cases of schools undergoing evaluation for continued accreditation:
- A letter summarizing key recommendations made by the visiting committee and Commission and outlining the school's responsibilities to the Commission in the way of reports, etc. is sent by the Director of the Commission to the head of the school. Copies of this letter are sent to the chair of the governing body, the diocesan superintendent, or joint accrediting association (where applicable), and the chair and members of the visiting committee.

Changes of Status

Mergers

In the event of a merger where one or more of the merged schools is accredited by the New England Association, the accreditation of the school will be continued with a substantive change report due upon completion of one full year of the new configuration. The ongoing status of the school will then be determined by the Commission in accordance with the Policy on Substantive Change.

Corporate or Other Substantive Change

Schools that undergo a corporate or other substantive change are required to notify the Commission on Independent Schools in writing of this change or changes and may be required to submit further documentation and/or be visited by representatives of the
Commission for the purpose of making a recommendation to the Commission regarding continued accreditation. Substantive changes are those that affect significantly the nature of the institution; e.g., its purposes and objectives, its educational programs, the allocation of its resources, and its financial base.

**Termination or Suspension of Operation**

It is the responsibility of school officials to notify the Association in the event of a termination or suspension of the operation of the school and to provide information as to where the permanent records of current and former students are to be located as well as the responsible person/agency to contact to obtain pertinent records.

**Evaluation Expenses**

Schools undergoing evaluation for initial accreditation, continued accreditation and Candidate for Accreditation are responsible for the following expenses related to the evaluation:

- Expenses of the visiting committee for travel, lodging, and meals related to the evaluation.

Special Visits: In the event of a special visit by a representative or representatives of the Commission to review an Interim Evaluation Report or Progress Report or any other matter relating to continuing accreditation or affiliation; i.e., a Focused Visit, the school is liable for expenses for the travel, lodging, and meals of the representative(s). Expenses of Commission staff are not charged to the school.

**State Departments of Education**

In Connecticut, as part of the approval process, the State Department of Education may appoint a member to the visiting committee. If the department or agency exercises that option, their designee will remain with the visiting committee during the entire visit, participate as the chairperson may direct in the preparation and review of the visiting committee report, and serve as a voting member of the committee. His or her expenses will be paid by the institution being evaluated on the same basis as the other members of the committee.

In the event of evaluation of special education programs where separate procedures are required for approval by state departments of education or agencies, the Director of the Commission will exercise his/her judgment as to whether it can be combined with the evaluation and accreditation on the basis shown above or will require a separate evaluation by that agency for their purposes.

A copy of the visiting committee report, votes on standards, and the letter of notification from the Commission will be sent to the responsible person in the state department of education in Connecticut and Vermont.
Reports

Annual Reports

Each year the Association requests each member and affiliate to file an Annual Report. This report is routine in nature and asks for basic information such as enrollment totals and tuition figures for day, boarding and international students, prior year’s operating income and operating expense figures, names and addresses of certain officials, and notification of any "substantive change." This report provides information for the school master file, information for calculating annual dues, and information that might suggest a change in the circumstances under which a school was accredited.

Interim Evaluation Reports

Each member institution is required to complete Interim Evaluation Reports to be filed two and five years following their most recent evaluation for institutional or continued accreditation. The Five-Year Interim Evaluation Report filed by Vermont schools will fulfill that state’s reporting requirements.

Progress Reports

Schools may be required, at the discretion of the Commission, to file Progress Reports responding to specific concerns expressed and identified by the Commission.

School File

Each school file includes routine correspondence since the most recent evaluation, copy of the most recent self-study (culled at the time of the Five-Year Interim Evaluation Report), the visiting committee report, and Two and Five-Year Interim Evaluation Reports where applicable. Also included are previous visiting committee reports and notification letters from the Director of the Commission and President of the Association where applicable. Files are culled following each periodic evaluation. Irrelevant correspondence is destroyed.

Ownership of Evaluation Materials

Prior to Association action on the application for institutional membership or Candidate for Accreditation and Commission action on schools seeking continued accreditation, the documents relating to the evaluation, reports prepared by the school for the visiting committee and for the Commission and the visiting committee reports are privileged documents, for use by the Commission/Association and school only.

Following action by the Association or the Commission, the documents are the property of the school and may be used by them as they see fit, except the Association reserves the right to take action against a school misusing or misrepresenting material in the reports.
Public Disclosure


Due Process

The Commission's procedures provide reasonable due process to schools undergoing the evaluation process.

Adverse Recommendations

In addition, the due process procedures in use by the Association are spelled out in a document entitled Policy and Procedure for the Appeal of Adverse Action Affecting Institutional Accreditation or Candidate for Accreditation Status.

Complaint Procedure

From time to time, the Commission on Independent Schools (NEASC) receives a complaint about a member or affiliate school. Usually these are concerned with allegations of unfair disciplinary procedures in regard to a student dismissed or suspended, or a dispute over the financial obligations. The Commission has adopted a Complaint Procedure which is included in this manual.
The Commission
Policy and Procedure for Nomination of Commission Members


On MOTION made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To adopt the nomination procedure as amended. The text of the policy as adopted follows:

"A letter is to be sent to the head of each member or affiliate school, diocesan school superintendent(s), state or regional association of independent schools, and other interested parties.

This letter will spell out some of the expectations of the Commission, solicit their suggestions, and ascertain their personal interest and availability.

1. In all letters there will be a statement of the fact that we are soliciting names for a member-at-large. (A sample letter will be prepared for review by the Commission.)

2. In states where CIS vacancies will exist, a special paragraph will be inserted in the letter requesting nominations to fill the vacancy in that state.

3. An Ad Hoc nominating committee appointed by the Chair of the Commission would meet prior to the fall meeting of the Commission, review the suggestions and any other names they might have to consider and prepare a slate of suggested candidates. These people would be approached to ascertain their interest and availability if nominated. The suggestions would be presented to the Commission at its fall meeting. The Nominating Committee will report at the meeting of institutional delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Association. A vote for nominees will follow."
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policy Statement on Conflict of Interest

In carrying out its accreditation responsibilities, the Commission on Independent Schools of
the New England Association of Schools and Colleges seeks to ensure that its decisions are
based solely on the application of professional judgment to the information resulting from its
processes. Therefore, it seeks to avoid both the reality and the appearance of conflict of
interest. For purposes of this policy statement, conflict of interest is defined as:

A circumstance in which an individual’s capacity to make an impartial or unbiased
accreditation decision may be affected because of a prior, current, or anticipated
institutional affiliation(s), other significant relationship(s), or association(s) with the
institution under review.

The following examples are meant to be illustrative:

**Affiliation:**

- employee, board member, appointee, consultant, or graduate

**Other Significant Relationships:**

- affiliation with another institution in the same educational system;
- having a close relative affiliated with the institution under review;
- sought or seeking a position at the institution under review;
- knowledge or personal interest concerning the institution under review
  which might prejudice decision making.

Members of the Commission on Independent Schools are committed to full disclosure and
restraint in any institutional consideration involving a conflict of interest. Members of the
Commission absent themselves from deliberations or votes on decisions regarding
institutions with which they are affiliated. They do not participate in discussions or vote on
decisions on institutions where it would reasonably appear that they have a conflict of
interest. Commission members who are uncertain regarding the possible appearance or
reality of conflict of interest shall seek the advice of the Director of the Commission. At the
request of the Chair, the Commission can determine the question by vote. In general,
however, if there is any doubt on the part of a Commission member, it should be resolved by
the member refraining from any discussion or action to the institution under review. All
school-related materials made available to Commission members; e.g., self-studies, visiting
committee reports, etc. must be turned in to the Commission staff at the conclusion of every
meeting. Visiting Committee Reports available to Commission members at a secure page of
the NEASC website are removed and passwords disabled immediately after each meeting.
Members are instructed to destroy all electronic notes and information regarding schools
reviewed at each meeting.

*Revised and Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, June 2010*
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policy and Procedure for Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions

Upon inquiry, the Commission on Independent Schools through its Director will release the following information about affiliated institutions:

Descriptive information as contained in the Commission database:
- Date of founding
- Contact information (address, phone, fax, email, website, etc.)
- Grade levels included
- Type of school, e.g., boarding or day, coeducational or single-sex, denominational, etc.
- Enrollment (as of the preceding October)
- Name of Chief Administrative Officer
- Name and address of the Chair of the Governing Body

Information concerning the school’s accreditation status:
- Current status – Member or Candidate (Probation is a public status, Warning is not)
- Dates of candidacy or initial membership and accreditation by NEASC; most recent full visit and confirmation of accreditation; next regularly scheduled report
- In the event of an adverse recommendation (probation, denial of membership, dropping from membership) where final action has been taken and no appeal is pending, the reasons for the adverse status and the effective date are released. For schools placed on Probation, the Commission’s plans to monitor the school are stated.

The self-study, Visiting Committee Report, and notification letters regarding Commission/Association action are the property of the school. Neither the Association nor the Commission releases copies of any material relating to an individual school’s evaluation without the express permission of the school.

However, the self-study is an exercise in analysis and planning that should be inclusive of professional staff and should engage others as the school deems appropriate. The self-study presupposes work done in advance that provides background information, including surveys of parents, students, and staff. The Visiting Committee Report and the letter from the Commission regarding its review respond to the self-study and add recommendations that are to be integrated with the conclusions of the self-study. The Commission encourages that, in the spirit of inquiry and institutional improvement, the school will provide access to these documents relating to the evaluation process to the professional staff and to other responsible parties in the school community, as appropriate.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, November 2008
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policy and Procedure for
Use of Visiting Committee Reports and Notification Letters

Following an evaluation for membership or accreditation, initial or continued, the school is provided the following documents in sequence:

1. The Visiting Committee Report to which the school is asked to respond as to its factual accuracy, the nature of the recommendations, and comments relative to the work of the visiting committee and the votes on Standards for Accreditation;

2. Following Commission action, a letter from the Director of the Commission, outlining the action taken, the continuing responsibilities of the school to the Association, and the recommendations to be dealt with in future reports; and,

3. A brief letter from the President of the Association noting the action taken regarding initial membership and accreditation. These last two letters may be expected some weeks following receipt of the Visiting Committee Report.

The Visiting Committee Report and notification letters regarding Commission/Association action are the property of the school. Either the report or the notification letter may be used in whole or part by the school for external purposes. However, if excerpts are to be released to the public, they must present a balanced view of recommendations as well as commendations.

Association policy as approved by the Board of Trustees, May 12, 1978, and as amended, December 10, 1981 states:

"If something is publicly released by an institution that misrepresents or distorts the Commission recommendation, the appropriate Director of the Commission should contact the chief administrative officer of the institution and request that corrective action be taken. If the misrepresentation or distortion is not promptly corrected, the Director of the Commission should so notify the Executive Director who is the chief executive officer of the Association and who speaks on behalf of the Association."

Neither the Association nor the Commission releases copies of any of the material relating to an individual school's evaluation without the express permission of the school. In certain cases, such as the institution seeking approval by the appropriate state department of education, or membership in or recognition by another agency, there will be sent, at the request of the Head of School, a copy of the Visiting Committee Report and the letter of notification regarding membership and accreditation from the Director of
the Commission. In the event of a request being made for a research study, the material may be made available for use at the Association office only with the specific approval of the Head of School.

Within the framework of the above policy, the Commission encourages, in the spirit of inquiry and institutional improvement, access to the documents relating to the evaluation process to interested parties in the school community.
Accreditation Status
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policy and Procedure for Standards for Accreditation

Accreditation has as its purpose quality assurance and school improvement. As a tool to assure quality, the Commission on Independent Schools maintains Standards for Accreditation against which a school is measured. These standards are reviewed and updated on a regular basis through a participatory process with accredited schools and adopted by the Commission.

The voluntary accreditation process provides the opportunity for a school, through its self-study, to demonstrate that it meets the accreditation standards of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and also demonstrate that it carries out its mission in an appropriate fashion.

The Commission on Independent Schools in its decisions regarding accreditation has the expectation that each accredited school will meet all Standards for Accreditation. If a school seeking continued accreditation does not meet all standards at the time of the accreditation visit, it is expected that all standards will be met within one year. If a school seeking initial accreditation does not meet all standards at the time of the evaluation visit, action by the Commission will be tabled and the school will be asked to report on the status of compliance with all standards within one year.

A school that has an “unmet” standard with a rating of SU1 or SU2 should notify the Commission office within one year when it believes it has taken necessary action to warrant a “met” rating. At that time:

1. A staff visit to the school will be made to assess whether the standard(s) is met with a SM1 or SM2. If the staff member finds that the school is clearly in compliance, the staff member will recommend to the Commission that the standard is met and propose any further recommendations related to the standard to which the school should be asked to respond and a date for the response. The Commission may accept the recommendation of the staff member or may direct a focused visit by a visiting team of two or three, possibly including a Commission member.

2. If the staff member finds that the school is still not in compliance, the school will be notified of the outstanding issues and asked to submit a further report when ready. The Commission will be informed. If the school disagrees with the finding of the staff member it may request that a visiting team of two or three conduct a focused visit to assess compliance with the standard(s).

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, November 2011
Policy and Procedure to Apply for Candidate for Accreditation

Under normal circumstances a school seeking affiliation with the Association would first go through the Candidate for Accreditation process. The category of Candidate for Accreditation is not to be confused with membership in and accreditation by the Association. It is a temporary status. An institution so recognized is entitled to make public this fact in its catalog and other publications. This candidacy is subject to annual review and may not be continued beyond five years.

The conditions for recognition as a Candidate for Accreditation are as follows:

1. For a school to be recognized as a Candidate for Accreditation, it must meet the following criteria:
   
a. It must be a nonpublic school that is separately incorporated under the relevant laws of the state in which it is located or a member of a school system.

b. At least one year of operation of the school program must have been completed.

c. The institution must be developing in accordance with the general Standards for Accreditation for independent schools in NEASC.

d. The school must provide academic programs leading to a diploma or appropriate certificate issued by the school being considered.

e. It is expected that the majority of students spend at least one year enrolled in such a program or for a full semester in a semester-length program.

f. In the case of a proprietary school, that the school has a governing body which meets the criteria set forth in the Commission Policy on Governing Bodies for Proprietary Schools.

2. Such an institution would be required to:
   
a. Host a preliminary visit by a staff member and receive approval by the Commission to proceed with the application.

b. Following that approval, submit an Application for Candidate for Accreditation. An evaluation fee equal to the annual fee for a member school with that enrollment is assessed following receipt of the application.
c. Host a one-day visit from representatives of the Commission to determine the readiness of the school to be accepted into Candidate status and to move toward full accreditation and membership in the Association. The Committee will prepare a written report to the Commission which will include a recommendation as to acceptance of the school into Candidate status.

d. Pay all costs of the visiting committee — travel, meals, and lodging.

e. Pay an annual fee set by the Board of Trustees of the Association while the institution remains in this category. *This fee is equal to the dues for a member school with that enrollment.*

3. The Commission on Independent Schools grants Candidate status to those institutions which appear to the Commission to merit it. When this status is conferred, the school may attend, without vote, the Annual Meeting and other meetings of the Association. The institution will submit annual reports to the Commission on Independent Schools and may be visited by representatives of the Commission. Failure to submit these reports as requested or inadequate progress in the development of the school toward meeting the *Standards for Accreditation* in the Association may be cause for dropping a school from this category of affiliation.

4. A school may remain affiliated with the Association as a Candidate for Accreditation for a maximum of five years, in the course of or at the end of which period an institution must apply for membership and undergo evaluation in accordance with established procedures.

5. The visiting committee must be able to assess the total program of the school. With a school that is adding grades, a visit may proceed, at the discretion of the Commission, if complete plans are in place.

*Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, June 2009*
Policy Regarding Financial Reporting Requirements

The Commission is sensitive to its responsibility to monitor the financial health of member schools, but also to limit the cost to schools of reporting requirements. With these dual objectives in mind, the Commission has established a reporting calendar that reduces the requirement for externally validated financial reports to five-year intervals, at the times of the decennial visit and the five year interim evaluation report. The Commission currently accepts:

1. A full-opinion audit
2. An independent auditor’s review with a management letter
3. A Diocesan Report on School Finances
4. A Report on School Finances from a Religious Order

For reports other than the decennial visit and the five-year interim evaluation report, the Commission accepts internally generated balance sheets, budgets, and operating statements.

*Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, 2002*
Policy and Procedure for Warning Status

The Commission's policy for placing a school on Warning Status is as follows:

When the Commission finds that an institution is in direct and immediate danger of losing its accreditation because of conditions that threaten its ability to comply with the requirements of affiliation and/or Standards for Accreditation and/or other policies, but when the Commission feels that it is not appropriate to use the Probation status, the Commission may place the school on Warning. (It is noted that Probation status is a matter of public record and must be made public by the school. Warning has no such requirement.)

The school that is placed on Warning will be required to file frequent reports and undergo, at a minimum, an annual visit from representatives of the Commission. If the institution does not show progress in correcting the conditions, the Commission will review its decision on Warning and will report to the Board of Trustees of the Association that the school has been placed on Probation, unless there are mitigating circumstances which would indicate a more appropriate course of action.
Policy and Procedure for Probation Status

Probation is a public status signifying that the Commission on Independent Schools has found that conditions exist at the school which, if left uncorrected, pose a direct and immediate threat to the school's ability to retain its accreditation.

A school holding probationary status is subject to close scrutiny by the Commission. The school is expected to take appropriate corrective action within a specified time period. Failure to resolve the cause for probation will lead to an action asking the school to show cause why its accreditation should not be removed.

Probation is a public status indicated in any Association publication or communication about the affected school. The Association will also provide in its relevant publications notice of the availability of a statement regarding the school's probationary status as well as a plan to monitor the school. This statement will be developed by the Commission, and the Commission reserves the right to make final determination as to its nature and content.

A school on Probation is obliged to disclose its status as well as the availability of additional information on its probationary status to prospective students, those currently enrolled, and the public in its catalog and recruitment materials. The following statement will be used:

(School Name) is accredited on Probation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, effective (date), because it has not fully met the accreditation standard(s) on __________. A statement providing further information about the probationary status will be made available upon request by:

Commission on Independent Schools
New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Revised and Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, 2009
Policies Regarding
Special Circumstances
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policy for Extending Accreditation Across Commissions

If an institution accredited by one NEASC commission develops a division or branch campus that falls within the authority of another NEASC commission, the latter commission may conduct a staff inquiry into the quality of the new entity and then may extend accreditation to it, subject to a full accreditation review at the commission’s discretion, but no later than that scheduled for the originating institution.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, November 2014

Examples:

A university accredited by CIHE establishes a lab school serving elementary and/or secondary students; after a staff visit to confirm the quality of the new entity, CIS (or CIE) may extend accreditation to the lab school, subject to a full accreditation review at the commission’s discretion, but no later than the review scheduled for the university.

An independent school accredited by CIS establishes a branch campus overseas; after a staff visit to confirm the quality of the new entity, CIE may extend accreditation to the branch campus, subject to a full accreditation review at the commission’s discretion, but no later than the review scheduled for the originating school. (In this case, CIE and CIS may choose to grant joint accreditation.)

Note: CIS currently has a policy to extend accreditation to cover substantive change (adding a division, merging with another institution, establishing a new campus, etc.) subject to a report with staff visit in one year.
Focused Visit Review

The Role of the Visiting Committee

The Commission on Independent Schools will, from time to time, request a small team of evaluators to visit a member school to obtain information or verify a report submitted by the institution. This focused visit is different from a regular comprehensive evaluation visit as follows:

- The visit is typically scheduled for one day
- The visiting committee is small in number
- The entire institution is not evaluated

Material to assist in preparation for a focused visit is in the form of a progress report submitted by the school, any communication between the Commission and the institution, and the charge to the visiting committee by the Commission.

One member of the visiting committee is identified as the Chair and that person is responsible for making necessary arrangements for the Committee and for all communications with the school to assure an efficient and meaningful visit. The Chair is expected to be in contact with the other members of the committee and with the chief administrative officer of the institution prior to the visit.

It is expected that team members will review all materials provided by NEASC prior to the on-site visit. Upon arrival at the school, the Chair will hold an organizational meeting and assign responsibilities to the members of the committee.

The Visit

Because the visit is very brief, it is important that a schedule be established with opportunities to meet with appropriate school personnel and review necessary written material. It is expected that the Committee will be prepared to write a report and make a formal recommendation to the Commission on Independent Schools at the conclusion of the visit.

Although it is not necessary to communicate all the findings of the committee to the chief administrative officer, it is certainly appropriate to schedule an exit interview with him or her prior to departing. Care should be taken that the content and tone of the exit interview are consistent with the written report.
The Focused Visit Report

Each Focused Visit Report should contain a narrative section describing the school and the issues that were identified as the focus for the work of the Committee. Strengths of the school and areas of concern should be mentioned, particularly as they relate to the charge by the Commission. Recommendations and suggestions may also be made which are intended to strengthen the school. It is certainly appropriate to relate any comments to the Standards for Accreditation. The report should conclude with a specific recommendation to the Commission.

The Chair of the visiting committee is responsible for the preparation of the report. The completed report and the recommendation of the committee should be submitted by the Chair within thirty days of the visit to the Director of the Commission on Independent Schools at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Any expense vouchers should be submitted to the school.

When the Focused Visit Report is submitted to the Director of the Commission, the committee's assignment is complete.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, December 1997
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policy for a Governing Body for a Proprietary School

It is the policy of the Commission on Independent Schools that each proprietary school granted accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. have a governing board.

Essential to the proper conduct and public trust of an accredited proprietary school is a governing body charged with these responsibilities:

- Collaborates in sustaining the mission of the school to assure a clear and commanding commitment to education;
- Assures continuity and provides evaluative feedback on leadership which may include appointment and evaluation of the Head of School;
- Collaborates with the owner of the school in assuring the school's fiscal health;
- Reviews the policies by which the school is conducted;
- Reviews, assesses, and constructively comments on the school's effectiveness in accomplishing its mission and goals.

The governing board shall have as at least a third of its members people who represent the public interest, that is, who have no contractual, employment or personal financial interest in the institution (other than an enrollment contract in the case of a current parent). Public representatives should be free from present or potential conflict of interest.

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.

_Revised and Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, February 2006_
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policy for International Campuses

The NEASC Commission on Independent Schools (CIS) accredits individual schools. That accreditation does not extend to additional campuses, branches, partnerships, or other related entities except with the explicit authorization of CIS and in accord with published Commission policies.

The Commission is aware that member schools are exploring opportunities to share their expertise and experience with new and existing schools abroad. Member schools have been generous in assisting in hiring and training faculty, in providing curriculum, and in participating on boards of trustees. The Commission applauds these initiatives; however, it wishes to make clear that in general the member school’s accreditation cannot be included in a package of services provided to another entity and that the member school is responsible for making sure that no such claim of accreditation is made or suggested. Further, on one specific matter, a member school may not award (or authorize the award of) its diploma to graduates of another entity.

There are two circumstances in which a member school may extend its accreditation to an international campus and may issue diplomas in its name:

1) The international school meets fully the provisions of the “Multi Campus School” policy, subject to confirmation by a site visit by CIS staff or a visiting team appointed by CIS.

2) The international campus has been approved for accreditation by the Commission on International Education (CIE) and thereby receives joint NEASC accreditation from CIS and CIE.

(Note on expedited initial approval: For expedited initial approval, the member school must demonstrate that the international school or program is an integral part of the member school; that there is a formal agreement with the international school or program, signed by both boards; and that the member school provides the required curriculum (fully aligned with that of the member school), participates in the recruitment, training, and evaluation of faculty, and oversees the general operation of the school or program to assure that it meets acceptable standards with regard to the student experience. In this circumstance, the international school or program may gain initial approval from CIE (and jointly from CIS) on the basis of a successful two to three day Eligibility Visit by CIE, with the understanding that the school or program must achieve full accreditation by CIE within two years.

The Commission holds schools accountable to its Standards for Accreditation and determines the terms of its award of the status of school accreditation; it does not otherwise restrict activities sponsored or conducted by the member school.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, February 2016

CIS Policies and Procedures – Page 27
Policy for Making Changes to Visiting Committee Reports

When CIS staff deems it necessary to make substantive editorial changes to a Visiting Committee Report to ensure clarity and appropriateness, the staff will make the change(s) and provide a memo listing those changes for the Commission. The memo will be included with the report when it is sent to the Reviewer. In addition, the memo will remain as part of the Visiting Committee Report record.

The staff will continue to make grammatical corrections to Visiting Committee Reports as necessary.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, June 2014
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.  
Commission on Independent Schools  

Policy for Multi-Campus Schools

The Commission is aware of plans to consolidate existing schools in various ways or to add campuses. Some plans call for combining two or more schools into a single school with more than one campus. Recently, schools have opened branch campuses abroad. The Commission recognizes that such arrangements may make sense for administrative, governance, and/or financial reasons. However, the Commission reserves the right to determine how it will view these new entities for purposes of accreditation.

The Commission has adopted the following policy:

Pending further review, the Commission will regard each campus location as a separate school for purposes of accreditation (reports, visits, dues, etc.) regardless of nomenclature suggesting one school on more than one campus.

A school may demonstrate that the multiple campuses are in fact one school by documenting in writing how each of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation is met by the multi-campus entity as though it were a single school. Upon receipt of the report, the Commission will review the information at its next scheduled meeting, make a determination, and notify the school in writing of its decision.

Unless and until a school demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Commission that a branch campus is part of the accredited school, as though the two campuses were a single school, the Commission will consider the branch campus as a separate school and does not authorize the awarding of transcripts or diplomas with the name of the accredited school to students at that branch campus. The award of such a transcript or diploma suggests the endorsement of the accrediting agency and is unacceptable.

Revised and Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, June 2014
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

Policy and Procedure for Postponing Visits to Merging or Consolidating Accredited Schools

(When the merge/consolidation moves the school beyond its scheduled decennial visit and the one year postponement allowed by the Commission)

The Commission is aware of plans to merge or consolidate existing schools in various ways. Some plans call for combining two or more schools into a single school or closing two or more schools and reopening them as a new school. The Commission recognizes that such arrangements may make sense for administrative, governance, and/or financial reasons. The Commission understands that some of these mergers may come at the same time as the normal accreditation decennial visit. Schools which find themselves in this situation may ask for an extraordinary extension; complete a report explaining the circumstances; and host a small focused visiting committee, composed of a staff member and a member of the Commission, to recommend a timetable for proceeding with the full accrediting process and any intermediate reports that might be required. The Commission reserves the right to determine the appropriate timetable and procedure for the accreditation process. The school’s accreditation will be continued until the time set by the Commission.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, November 2007
Policy on Postponing the Decennial Evaluation and Interim Reports

Member schools in CIS are engaged in a decennial cycle of accreditation activities. Schools have the choice of fall or spring for the visit. Schools may request in writing, a postponement of no more than one calendar year for the scheduled visit; such a postponement requires a vote of the Commission. Schools in the state of Vermont may postpone visits and reports only if the Commission receives state approval for the delay.

The Two and Five Year Interim Evaluation Reports are scheduled from the date of the Commission action. The Commission may, at the staff’s discretion, grant postponement in due dates for Two and Five Year Interim Reports. Such postponements will be granted if, in the judgment of the staff, a postponement is likely to result in a more positive experience/outcome for the school.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, November 2014
Policy Regarding Schools Affiliated with Other Governing or Accrediting Entities

Many member schools of the Commission on Independent Schools have responsibilities to other accrediting associations, diocesan central offices, and/or to government entities. NEASC seeks to communicate and, where possible, to cooperate with these groups in ways that will minimize the duplication of effort for schools. However, the Commission accredits schools as individual and independent institutions according to the policies of NEASC. Therefore:

1. The Commission will not enforce the requirements of other associations, offices, or entities as part of its accreditation process.

2. The Commission will not waive or modify its standards to correspond with the requirements of other associations, offices, or entities.

In certain circumstances, the Commission has agreed to cooperate with another accrediting association to conduct a joint visit to a school. The Commission has agreed to include representatives of the other association on the visiting committee and has allowed the school to add sections to its self-study at the request of the other association. All elements of the NEASC accreditation process are followed, however, and granting of NEASC accreditation is based solely on the NEASC components of the jointly-conducted evaluation.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, February 2005
Policy on Accreditation of Semester and One-Year Schools

The Commission on Independent Schools accredits schools that are an integral part of the kindergarten – grade twelve continuum. To achieve accreditation, limited-time schools must demonstrate that students do not step out of the continuum, but transfer in from and back to sending schools while receiving academic credit for their time away.

Applicants must meet all Standards for Accreditation and the following:

Approval to Apply for Candidacy
Semester or One-Year Schools seeking accreditation from NEASC must, prior to being approved to apply for candidacy, submit evidence that independent schools who are now members of NEASC routinely grant full credit to those students who attend the limited-time school so that those students do not lose time in the normal school progression.

Documentation of Program Continuity
Semester or One-Year Schools seeking accreditation from NEASC must provide along with their self-study documentation of the curriculum for the current and three prior years that demonstrates program continuity.

Semester or One-Year Schools seeking accreditation from NEASC must provide survey data from students and parents from the previous three years.

Semester or One-Year Schools seeking accreditation from NEASC must document sufficient continuity of staff to assure consistency of program.

Observation of Off-Campus and/or Out of New England Programs
Semester or One-Year Schools seeking accreditation from NEASC that conduct their programs in significant part away from a central New England campus must host separate visiting committees or representatives of a central visiting committee at all sites.

Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, June 2011
Policy for Substantive Change

A school that has undergone a substantive change to the nature of the students it admits or the students’ educational experience must provide the Commission with a Substantive Change Report after completing one year of the substantive change. Receipt of this report may be followed by a staff visit or, if determined by the Director of the Commission, with a focused visit and a written report presented to the Commission, which will determine if further action is warranted.

Examples of substantive changes include adopting a new mission, purpose, or admitting different students (e.g., changing from a traditional school to a therapeutic school), adding a division (e.g., early childhood for three and four-year-olds, elementary school, middle school, high school, post-graduate), adding a residential or homestay program, adding or removing enrollment of a sex (e.g., single-sex to coed), adding a new local campus that will serve current students, and changing ownership for a proprietary school. The merging of two or more schools is also a substantive change but is addressed under the Merged School Policy.

Revised and Approved by the Commission on Independent Schools, June 2022.
NEASC Policies
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC

Mission

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

Our Goals

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges aspires to provide a process for meaningful, ongoing whole school improvement and growth while honoring the unique culture and context of each institution we support.

In this spirit, NEASC:

- Encourages the pursuit of a unique mission in distinctive circumstances by each member.
- Advocates for thoughtful self-reflection guided by objective peer review.
- Promotes public recognition of the challenges that accredited institutions face both in common and in particular.
- Elucidates the value, philosophy, and practice of accreditation for our member schools, the public, legislative bodies, and governing boards.
- Assists member schools in navigating accreditation in a context often dictated by federal, state, or local mandates and by limited means.

Our Assurance

"Accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges" assures that our members:

- Strive to achieve rigorous and common standards in education
- Demonstrate substantive institutional commitment to continual improvement
- Commit to balancing the creative tensions that exist between local autonomy and public authority
- Nurture individual creative accomplishment

Accreditation is a catalyst for school improvement and growth.
The Association

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges is a voluntary membership organization. It is composed of three commissions serving public schools, independent schools and international schools in the US and worldwide. Each commission decides matters of accreditation in the context of standards derived and reviewed by its membership.

The accreditation work of the commissions is reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Along with the Board of Trustees, each of the three commissions is dedicated to the accomplishment of the mission, assurance, and goals of the Association.

The Association is a not-for-profit corporation that adheres to fundamental principles of fairness and non-discrimination.

Approved by the NEASC Board of Trustees on December 13, 2018.
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.

Bylaws of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Article I - Name and Offices

Section 1.1 Name. The name of the Corporation shall be the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. ("The Association.")

Section 1.2 Business Office. The principal office of the Association shall be located in the Town of Burlington, County of Middlesex, Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The address of the principal office may be changed from time to time by the Board of Trustees subject to M.G.L. c. 180, §5.

Section 1.3 Registered Office. The duly appointed registered agent of the Association shall be located within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The registered agent may be changed from time to time.

Section 1.4 Purpose. The Association is organized exclusively for educational purposes under M.G.L. Chapter 180 and section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Specifically, the purposes of the Association shall include: 1) advancing the cause of education for pre, elementary and high schools, colleges and programs in New England, in addition to other education institutions and programs in geographical areas designated from time to time by the Board of Trustees; 2) acting as a regional accrediting organization for the schools of New England, in addition to educational institutions in other geographical areas designated from time to time by the Board of Trustees; 3) developing cooperative relations, maintaining, and improving educational standards and promoting the interests common to schools, colleges, and programs; and 4) advancing the cause of education and the interests of entities and persons focused on assisting or promoting, directly or indirectly, the education and training of students, teachers, and educational administrators; and 5) receiving by gift, bequest, or otherwise monies and property to be devoted to the purposes of the Association and to accept and administer the same in the name of the Association in trust or otherwise.

Section 1.5 Prohibited Activities. The Association shall never be in any way, directly or indirectly, for the profit of its Members and no part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of any Member, Trustee, Officer, employee, or individual. No Trustee, Officer, employee, or representative of this Association shall take action or carry on any activity by or on behalf of the Association not permitted to be taken or carried on by an organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the “Code”) or any corresponding provision of any future federal tax code. The Association shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any
candidate for public office.

**Article II – Members**

**Section 2.1 Membership.** There shall be three classes of Members: accredited schools, programs and other legal entities approved by the Board.

**Section 2.2 Members.** Entities and programs eligible for membership in the Association shall be those entities and programs approved by the respective Commission or the Board as the case may be. The Board shall announce the names of newly approved Members at the next regular or special meeting of the Association. Delegates appointed by the chief administrative officer of each Member shall be eligible to vote at any meeting of the Association throughout the year subsequent to such appointment.

**Article III - Board of Trustees**

**Section 3.1 General Powers.** The Board has a fiduciary responsibility for the Association and the entire management and control of the property and affairs of the Association; all powers usually vested in a Board of a business corporation, and all powers possessed by the Association consistent with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and these By-Laws, including but not limited to:

- furthering the financial health of the Association, including monitoring and oversight of key financial indicators;
- participating in the raising and management of funds necessary to support programs;
- final responsibility and jurisdiction over the actions of any officer, committee, commission or employee of the Association;
- approving selection of an independent auditor to conduct an annual audit of the Association’s accounts;
- reviewing and accepting the annual audit;
- requiring periodic reports from and action on the recommendations of committees and Commissions;
- appoint a President, who shall be responsible for the operations of the Association and who shall be under the direction of, and responsible to, the Board;
- annually evaluating the President and taking any employment action necessary.

**Section 3.2 Specific Powers.**

**Section 3.2.1 Dues.** The Board shall have the power to establish, assess and collect the annual dues from Members. The Board may, on a case by case basis, waive or accept a reduced payment from a Member for good cause shown as determined in the sole discretion of the Board of Trustees.
Section 3.2.2 Committee appointments. The Board may establish, appoint, and terminate standing or special committees of the Association, such committees to be established to further and improve services rendered by the Association.

Section 3.2.3 Adverse Decisions regarding Membership. The Board shall formulate and keep up to date a written statement prescribing due process for an applicant seeking Membership or a Member that receives an adverse decision regarding its membership or continued membership. For purposes of this section, an adverse decision means denial of candidacy for accreditation, denial of membership, placement of the Member on warning, probation, termination of membership or denial or termination of accreditation.

Section 3.2.4 Money and Property Management. The Board is authorized to accept and receive in the name of the Association all monies and property given in trust or otherwise in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 180 of the General Laws of Massachusetts.

Section 3.2.5 Preserving the Association's Tax-Exempt Status. The Board of Trustees will ensure that the Corporation does not engage in any activity that will jeopardize the Corporation’s federal tax exemption. Specifically, the Corporation will not attempt to influence legislation except to the extent permitted by Section 501 or any succeeding or related section of the Internal Revenue Code or participate or intervene in any political campaign of any candidate for public office.

Section 3.3 Number and Qualifications of Trustees. The Board shall consist of the Officers, as set forth in Article IV, the Chair of each Commission or an alternate elected by the Commission, six members-at-large, as defined below, the immediate past chair and six representatives of the public interest of their respective New England states as specified below, except that the President of the Association shall serve ex-officio without vote and shall not be counted in determining a quorum.

Section 3.4 Members at Large. There shall be six members-at-large, with two coming from the constituency of each Commission. Members-at-Large of the Board shall be elected for three-year terms and may be elected to not more than two consecutive terms of three years, pursuant to the provisions of Sec. 5.1.1 and Section 7.2.

Section 3.5 Public Members. A person from each of the six New England states who has not been an active, full time educator for the previous year, and who is not currently employed full time with a Member shall be eligible for election to the Board as a representative of the public interest of his/her respective New England state. Each of six public representatives shall become a Trustee on election by the Board. Each person elected shall serve for three years as a voting member of the Board and may be elected to not more than two consecutive terms of three years. In the event that any person representing the public interest as aforesaid shall die, resign, or otherwise be removed from office, the resulting vacancy shall be filled by the Board of Trustees by another person from the same New England state to serve for the remainder of such term.
Section 3.6 **Meetings of the Board.** The Board may establish a regular schedule of meetings. No notice of these meetings need be given.

Section 3.6.1 **Membership Decisions.** The agenda of each meeting of the Board shall provide for the presentation of affirmative and adverse candidacy and accreditation recommendations and actions by the Commissions.

Section 3.6.2 **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Board may be held at any time or place and may be called by the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, the Chair-Elect, the President or any two members of the Board of Trustees.

Section 3.6.3 **Notice of Meetings.** Unless otherwise required by law or these By-laws, no notice need be given of the date, time, place, purpose or action(s) to be taken at any meeting of the Board.

Section 3.6.4 **Quorum.** At any meeting of the Board, the presence of a majority of the Board shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 3.6.5 **Manner of Acting.** The act of the majority of the Trustees present at a meeting at which a quorum is present when the vote is taken shall be the act of the Board unless the Act or these By-laws requires a greater percentage. Should a quorum not be present, a lesser number may adjourn the meeting to reconvene at another time.

Section 3.6.6 **Telephone Conference Meeting.** Trustees may participate in a regular or special meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all Trustees participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A Trustee participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

Section 3.6.7 **Unanimous Written Consent.** Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board at a meeting may be taken without a meeting if all of the Trustees sign a written consent describing the action taken, and the consents are filed with the records of the Association. Electronic signatures are acceptable. Action taken by unanimous written consent is effective when the last Trustee signs the consent, unless the consent specifies a different effective date. A signed consent has the effect of a meeting vote and may be described as such in any document.

Section 3.7 **Compensation.** Trustees shall not receive any salaries for their services as Trustees but may be reimbursed for direct out of pocket expenses approved by the President or by such other person designated by the President.
Section 3.8  **Resignation.** Any Trustee may resign his or her office at any time, such resignation to be made in writing and to take effect immediately without acceptance, upon a mailing postage prepaid, or hand delivered to the Association’s Secretary.

**Section 3.9  Conflict of Interest.** A transaction in which a Trustee has a conflict of interest may be approved by the Board if the material facts of the transaction and the Trustee’s interest are disclosed to the Board, and the Trustee with the conflict of interest does not engage in discussions or cast a vote with respect to the matter. For purposes of this Section, a Trustee has an interest in a transaction if he/she is a party to the transaction; or if another entity in which the Trustee has a material interest or in which the Trustee is a general partner is a party to the transaction; or if another entity of which the Trustee is a director, officer or trustee is a party to the transaction. The conflict of interest transaction must be approved by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Trustees on the Board who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction. The Board may, from time to time, establish policy guidelines and disclosure requirements regarding conflicts of interest by Trustees. Nothing in this Section shall restrict the Board from adopting a conflict of interest policy which is stricter than this Section, and in that event, the policy shall control.

**Section 3.10  Contracts.** The Board may authorize any officer or agent of the Association, in addition to the President and other officers so authorized by these Bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Association, and such authority may be general or may be confined to specific instances.

**Article IV – Officers**

Section 4.1  **Number of Officers.** The Officers of the Association shall be a Chair, Chair-Elect or Past Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer each of whom has previously served on the Board of Trustees, or is currently on the Board of Trustees, and a President.

**Section 4.2  Duties of Officers.** The duties and powers of the officers of the Association shall be as follows and as shall hereafter be set by resolution of the Board.

**Section 4.2.1 Chair**

A. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board.

B. The Chair shall be elected for a two-year term and shall automatically serve as a Trustee for one-year immediately following the expiration of the two-year term.

C. The Chair shall cause regular and special meetings of the Board to be called in accordance with the requirements of the statutes and these Bylaws.

D. The Chair shall enforce these Bylaws and perform all duties incident to the office and which are required by law, or these Bylaws;

E. If there is a vacancy in the office of Chair, the Chair-Elect or in the absence of a Chair-Elect the immediate Past Chair, shall succeed to the office of Chair.
Section 4.2.2 Chair Elect

A. A Chair-Elect shall be elected to serve a one-year term coterminous with the second year of the Chair's two-year term.
B. The Chair-Elect or the immediate Past Chair, as the case may be, shall succeed to the office of Chair in the event of a vacancy or act as Chair in the event of an absence.

Section 4.2.3 Treasurer

A. The Treasurer shall have general charge of the financial affairs of the Association, keep accurate books of account, have custody of all funds, securities, and valuable documents of the Association, and shall perform such other duties as the Board shall from time to time designate.
B. The Treasurer shall have the care and custody of and be responsible for all the funds and securities of the Association and shall deposit such funds and securities in the name of the Association in such banks or safe deposit companies as the Board may designate.
C. The Treasurer shall render a report of the condition of the finances of the Association at each regular meeting of the Board and at such other times as shall be required.
D. The Treasurer shall be elected for a one-year term and may not be elected to serve more than five consecutive terms of office.
E. The same person may hold the offices of Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 4.2.4 Secretary

A. If the Secretary is a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, he or she may be appointed by the Board as the resident agent for the purpose of service of process.
B. The Secretary shall maintain the book or books of the Association within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at the principal office of the Association or the resident agent, which shall be open at all reasonable times to the inspection of any Member and shall contain the original or attested copies of the Articles of Organization, By-Laws, and records of the meetings of the Members of the Association.
C. The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings of the Association and a record of the names and addresses of all Members.
D. The Secretary shall be elected for a one-year term and may not be elected to serve more than five successive terms of office.
E. The same person may hold the offices of Secretary and Treasurer.
F. The Secretary shall record all votes and proceedings of the Trustees and Executive Committee.
G. The Secretary shall perform the duties incident to the office of the Secretary of the Association as specifically delegated from time to time by the Board of Trustees and as may be required by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
Section 4.2.5 President

A. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Association.

B. The President shall be a full-time employee of the Association and shall be responsible to the Board for the administration and operations of the Association.

C. The President shall have the authority to employ, discharge, assign and reassign all employees of the Association.

D. The President shall manage the affairs of the Association, subject to, and in accordance with, the directions of the Board.

E. The President shall present at each meeting of the Board a report of the condition of the business of the Association, and shall, from time to time, make reports of the work and affairs of the Association to the Board.

F. The President shall fix the compensation of employees in accordance with the budget approved by the Board.

G. The President or at the direction of the President, the Treasurer, is authorized to open bank accounts in the name of the Association and to sign checks, drafts and other papers requiring the payment of money, sign and execute contracts in the name of the Association, subject to, and in accordance with, the directions of the Board.

H. The President shall cause all books, reports, statements and certificates to be properly kept and filed as required by law.

I. The President shall be an ex-officio member of any committees.

J. The President shall prepare budgets in consultation with and reviewed by the Finance and Audit Committee for the approval of the Board.

K. The President shall develop and annually update the strategic plan for the Association, including goals, objectives, and priorities;

L. The President shall implement and monitor approved policies, protocols, and Association programs;

M. The President shall assure that all expenditures are consistent with the approved budget;

N. The President shall insure the proper application of Board-approved personnel policies;

O. The President shall seek new and diversified sources of income;

P. The President shall engage in short-range planning for Board action;

Q. The President shall strive to maintain good relations with the Board, including open communications and sharing of information;

R. The President shall provide leadership to Association Members, Board and staff.

Section 4.3 Removal. Any Trustee/Officer may be removed from office by the Board at any time, with or without cause, by a vote of a majority of the Trustees. In the event that the removed Trustee is a Commission Chair or elected alternate representative, the Commission may not re-elect the removed Trustee. Such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed. Appointment as an officer or agent shall not of itself create contract rights.
Section 4.4  **Vacancies.** Any vacancy in the office of Chair-Elect, Secretary or Treasurer, or Member-at-Large of the Board subsequent to the election shall be filled by vote of the Board.

**Article V – Committees**

Section 5.1 **Standing Committees.** There shall be an Executive Committee, a Nominating and Governance Committee, a Finance and Audit Committee, a Business Development Committee and a Personnel Committee. Members of the standing committees shall be nominated by the Chair after consultation with the President and approved by the Board. Except for the Executive Committee, committees may have non-Board members so long as Board members are in the majority.

Section 5.1.1 **Nominating and Governance Committee.** The Nominating Committee shall have the following duties:

A. To solicit suggestions from each Commission for nominees for Members-at-Large of the Board of Trustees.

B. To submit a slate of nominees to the Annual Meeting for Officers and Members-at-Large. At the Annual Meeting, nominations for officers and Members-at-Large shall also be entertained from the floor.

C. To submit to the Board of Trustees a slate of nominees to fill any pending vacancies of public interest members to sit on the Board.

Section 5.1.2 **Finance and Audit Committee.** The Finance and Audit Committee shall oversee all financial, budgetary and audit matters of the Association.

Section 5.1.3 **Personnel Committee.** The Personnel Committee shall oversee personnel policies, salary increases and benefits for NEASC employees.

Section 5.1.4 **Business Development Committee.** The Business Development Committee shall oversee new market and new service initiatives.

Section 5.1.5 **Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall have and may exercise the authority of the Board in the interim between meetings of the Board, to the extent permitted by law and these Bylaws. All members of the Executive Committee shall be members of the Board. The Executive Committee shall include the Chair, Chair-Elect or immediate past Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and no more than two other directors nominated by the officers. Appointments to the Executive Committee other than of the officers shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of all Trustees in office when the action is taken. The President shall attend all Executive Committee meetings but without a vote.

Section 5.2 **Ad Hoc Committees.** The Board may create such other ad hoc committees as it may from time to time determine necessary and appropriate, and may appoint members to
serve on them, no more than three (3) of whom need be Trustees. Such committees shall have a written charge and a defined duration.

Section 5.3 Required Procedures for all Committees. The sections of these Bylaws that govern meetings, notice and waiver of notice, action without meetings, quorum and voting requirements of the Board apply to the Executive Committee and all other committees of the Board. Except as otherwise provided by law or these Bylaws, the act of a majority of the committee members present at a meeting shall be the act of the committee, provided a quorum is present.

Section 5.4 Authority. All committees shall act within the purview and in furtherance of the mission and vision of the Association, and neither the Executive nor any other committee may:
A. approve dissolution, merger or the sale, pledge or transfer of all or substantially all of the Association’s assets;
B. elect, appoint or remove Trustees or fill vacancies on the Board or on any of its committees; or
C. adopt, amend or repeal the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws.

Article VI – Commissions

Section 6.1 Names of Commissions. There shall be:
A. A Commission on Independent Schools
B. A Commission on Public Schools
C. A Commission on International Education

The Board shall have the authority to add or dissolve Commissions.

Section 6.2 Membership. The membership of each Commission shall be drawn from and be representative of the following groups:
A. Administrators from Members
B. Teaching personnel from Members
C. Other Individuals approved by the Board of Trustees pursuant to Section 6.2.3.

Section 6.2.1 Specific Membership Requirements. Each Commission shall have at least one Member from each of the six New England states. The membership of each Commission shall include, but not be limited to, professional educators representing the constituencies of the Commission.
In addition, each Commission shall have at least one public member who has not been an active full-time educator for the previous one year and who is not currently employed full time with a Member.
Section 6.2.2 **Number and Terms.** Each Commission shall determine the number of its members and their terms of office subject to the approval of the Board and also subject to the following restrictions:

A. No person may serve more than six consecutive years as a Commission member. This restriction may be waived for up to a maximum of four years for Commissioners serving as chair or vice chair of a Commission.

B. In any year in which more than 40% of a Commission membership has terms expiring the Commission shall create varying terms in such a way as to restore a rotation system in which no more than 40% of the terms expire in any one year.

Section 6.2.3 **Nomination and Elections.** Each Commission shall present a slate of nominees to the Board of Trustees for election by the Board of Trustees. In compiling its slate of nominees each Commission shall solicit suggestions from its Members.

Section 6.2.4 **Vacancies.** A vacancy on a Commission occurring at a time other than that of the Annual Meeting of the Association may be filled by the Commission concerned subject to the approval of the Board. A successor filling such vacancy shall serve for the balance of the term of the person he or she succeeds.

Section 6.2.5 **Commission Officers.** Each Commission shall elect its own Chair, and may elect a Vice Chair and Secretary from among its membership, subject to the term limitations in Section 6.2.2.

Section 6.2.6 **Scope, Standards and Procedures.** Each Commission shall adopt a statement describing its scope of accreditation. Such scope statement and any revisions thereto shall be subject to approval of the Board. Subject to Board approval, each Commission shall formulate and modify its statements of standards, protocols, procedures for candidacy for accreditation, and for initial accreditation of institutions within its own group, and to reflect policies and directives of the Board.

Section 6.2.7 **Accreditation.** Each Commission shall have the responsibility and duty to make decisions regarding the affiliation of candidates for accreditation and the election to initial accreditation of institutions within its own group. Each Commission shall have the responsibility and duty to make decisions that are adverse to an institution’s accreditation status, (herein “adverse decision”) including denial of candidacy for accreditation, denial of accreditation, placement of an institution on warning, probation or termination of accreditation. All recommendations and decisions of the Commissions shall be reported to the Board.

Section 6.2.8 **Due Process.** Each Commission shall comply with the applicable provisions of the due process statement then in effect as provided in Section 3.2.3 of these By-Laws.
Section 6.2.9 **Subcommittees.** Subcommittees may be appointed to deal with any phase of a Commission’s work.

**Article VII - Association Meetings**

Section 7.1 **Annual Meeting.** There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Association, the time and place to be determined by the Board of Trustees. If for any reason the Annual Meeting is not held, a special meeting shall be called instead for the same purpose.

Section 7.2 **Elections at the Annual Meeting.** The Officers and Members-at-Large shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association and shall hold office until their successor is chosen and qualified, or in each case until he or she sooner dies, resigns, is removed, or becomes disqualified. The nominating committee of the Board shall bring forward a slate to be elected but there shall be opportunity for nominations from the floor for Officers and Members-at-Large.

Section 7.3 **Regular Meetings.** Notice of every meeting of the Association shall be given by the Secretary or Treasurer or by the person or persons calling the meeting to each Member and each certified official delegate either electronically or by mail at least seven days before the time of such meeting except when greater notice is otherwise required by law or these By-Laws. Such notice shall state the time and place of the meeting and, where these By-Laws or the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts require it, the particular business to be transacted.

Section 7.4 **Quorum.** Representatives from twenty-five of the current Members of the Corporation shall constitute a quorum. A smaller number may adjourn to a particular day by a majority vote of those present, and no further notice shall be required as to the meeting so adjourned. When a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of the votes properly cast by Members duly represented by certified delegates or by proxy shall decide any question, including election to any office, unless otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Organization, or these By-Laws.

Section 7.5 **Voting and Proxies.** At all meetings of the Association each delegate formally certified by the Member that the delegate represents in accordance with the procedures of the Association shall be entitled to one vote, either in person or by proxy in writing which shall be filed with the Secretary before being voted. Unless otherwise specially limited by its terms, any proxy shall entitle the holder thereof to vote at any adjournment of the meeting for which given, but the proxy shall terminate after the final adjournment of such meeting.

**Article VIII – Indemnification**

Section 8.1 **Indemnification.** The Association, to the extent legally permissible, shall indemnify each of the members of the Board of Trustees, Officers, the Chief Executive Officer, Members of the several Commissions, Members of Visiting Committees, Association employees and agents, including their respective heirs, executors, and administrators, ("Indemnitees").
against all liabilities and expenses, including amounts paid in satisfaction of judgments, in compromise of actions, suits, claims or other proceedings, as fines or penalties and counsel fees, reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the defense or disposition of any action, suit or other proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which he or she may be involved or with which he or she may be threatened, while in office or employment or an assignment or thereafter, by reason of his or her being or having been such a Member of the Board of Trustees, Officer, Member or representative of a Commission, Member of a Visiting Committee, Employee or agent, except with respect to any matter as to which he or she shall have been adjudicated in any proceedings not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interest of the Association; provided, however, that as to any matter disposed of by a compromise payment by such Indemnitee, pursuant to a consent decree or otherwise, no indemnification either for said payment or for any other expenses, except interim payment of counsel fees subject to recovery as provided in an undertaking of such person as required below, shall be provided unless such compromise shall be approved as in the best interests of the Association by a majority of the Board at a regular or special meeting which has been duly called.

Section 8.2 Payment of Expenses. Expenses including counsel fees, reasonably incurred by any Indemnitee in connection with the defense or disposition of any such action, suit or other proceeding may be paid from time to time by the Association in advance of the final disposition thereof upon receipt of a statement of intention by the Indemnitee to repay the amounts so paid to the Association if it is ultimately determined that indemnification for such expenses is not authorized under this Article. The right of indemnification hereby provided shall not be exclusive of or affect any other rights to which any Indemnitee may be entitled. The Association may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who may be indemnified under this Article against any liability incurred by him or her in any such capacity, or arising out of his or her status as such Member of the Board of Trustees, Officer, Member or representative of a Commission, Member of a Visiting Committee, Employee or Agent whether or not the Association would have the power to indemnify him or her against such liability hereunder. Nothing contained in this Article shall affect any rights to indemnification to which corporate personnel other than a Member of the Board of Trustees, Officer, the Chief Executive Officer, Member or representative of a Commission, Member of a Visiting Committee, Employee or Agent may be entitled by contract or otherwise by law.

Section 8.3 No Liability to the Association. The officers of this Corporation, its Board of Trustees, and such other members of the Corporation with powers typically vested in members of a Board of Trustees shall not be held personally liable to this Corporation or its members for monetary damages, for breach of fiduciary duty as an officer or trustee, notwithstanding any provision of law imposing such liability, except as shall be provided in the Acts of 1986, Chapter 644.

Article IX - Waiver of Notice

Whenever any notice is required to be given under the provisions of the Act, the Articles of Organization, or the By-laws of the Association, the waiver thereof in writing signed by the
person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be
deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice.

Article X – Amendments

Any of these By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any regular meeting of the Board
of Trustees, seven days previous written notice of the proposed amendments having been given
to all Trustees.

Article XI – Dissolution

In the event that the Association is dissolved or annulled, all property of the Association, or the
proceeds thereof, after payment of the debts due from the Association shall not be distributed to
the Members or divided among them, but shall be distributed and paid over to such non-profit
educational institutions or organizations within the six New England states as are exempt from
Federal Tax under Section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or the corresponding
provisions of any successor act, as the Board, upon such dissolution or annulment of the
Association, shall designate as the beneficiary or beneficiaries for such purpose.

Adopted on December 12, 2018, by Trustees of the New England Association of Schools and
Colleges, Inc.
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE APPEAL OF ADVERSE ACCREDITATION ACTION BY COMMISSIONS OF THE NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.

SECTION 1. Right of Appeal. An institution shall have the right to appeal an adverse accrediting action made by a Commission of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. For purposes of this policy, an adverse accrediting action includes termination of candidacy for accreditation, denial of accreditation, or termination of accreditation.

The accreditation status of the institution shall not change until all rights of appeal pursuant to this Policy and Procedure are exhausted.

Actions regarding adverse accrediting actions and the review of those decisions shall be carried out in a timely and expeditious manner in order to insure protection of the institution, the public interest, and the integrity of the process.

SECTION 2. Adverse Accrediting Action. After the Commission approves an adverse accrediting action, if no notice of intent to appeal is filed as provided in Section 3 below, the adverse accrediting action becomes final. The Commission shall notify the institution in writing and specify the standards and/or criteria not met. A copy of this Policy and Procedure shall be provided to the institution along with the notice of the adverse accrediting action.

SECTION 3. Notice of Intent to Appeal and Filing the Appeal. An institution may appeal the adverse accrediting action of the Commission by filing a notice of intent to appeal no later than seven (7) days following receipt of the written notice of the Commission's adverse accrediting action (see Section 4 for the grounds for an appeal). A notice of intent to appeal may be filed only with the authorization of the governing board of the institution. The notice of intent to appeal must be sent by certified mail or by email to the President of the Association. The notice of intent to appeal should contain a statement of the ground(s) on which the appeal will be made but need not provide evidence in support of the appeal.

Within fifteen (15) days of filing a notice of intent to appeal, the institution must submit its written appeal by certified mail or by email to the President of the Association who will forward a copy of the written appeal to the Commission. The written appeal shall set forth the institution's evidence and its argument in support of its appeal. There shall be no required format for the written appeal.

Within fifteen (15) days following receipt by the Commission from the President of the written appeal, the Commission shall submit its response in writing to the President with a copy to the institution.
SECTION 4. Grounds for Appeal. The grounds on which an appeal may be made are (a) departure by the Commission from the procedures established by written policy or agreement; (b) the citing by the Commission of factually incorrect information as basis for its decision; (c) bias, as evidenced by a demonstrable intent on the part of evaluators, the Commission, or the Commission's professional staff to prejudice the evaluation or other review of the institution's status of accreditation; (d) substantial evidence that was not available to the institution or the Commission at the time of the adverse accrediting action; or (e) the adverse accrediting action is arbitrary and capricious.

SECTION 5. Appeals Committee. Upon receipt of an institution’s appeal the President shall appoint an Appeals Committee consisting of not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) persons. The Appeals Committee shall represent academic or administrative expertise commensurate with the constituency of the relevant Commission. The President shall send a copy of the institution's appeal documents and the Commission's response to each member of the Appeals Committee in advance of its meeting.

SECTION 6. Appeals Review. The President shall establish a date and place for the appeals review which shall be no later than thirty (30) days after the filing of the notice of intent to appeal with the President. The review may take place physically or electronically/virtually as agreed among the members of the Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee shall consider evidence bearing only upon the grounds specified in the appeal. Additional written materials or evidence not presented to the Commission at the time of its original decision as a part of its review may not be presented to the Appeals Committee. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be determined by majority vote. In the event of a tie vote, the appeal shall be deemed denied. The Appeals Committee shall meet in executive session (physically, electronically/ virtually as mutually agreed) to reach its decision following the close of the review.

The Appeals Committee decision shall contain the Committee's ruling together with a rationale as well as any additional information deemed pertinent by the Committee. The Appeals Committee decision shall be communicated to the President within one week following the completion of the review.

The Appeals Committee shall have the authority to affirm, amend, reverse or refer for further consideration by the Commission the adverse accrediting action. The Appeals Committee shall inform the institution, the Commission, and the President of its decision within seven (7) days of arriving at its decision. Notification to the institution shall be sent by certified mail or email, return receipt requested. The decision of the Appeals Committee is the final NEASC action.

SECTION 7. Fees. An institution appealing an adverse accreditation action shall pay a fee of $2,000 at the time of submitting the appeal. If the appeal is granted or subsequent consideration by the Commission leads to a reversal of the adverse accreditation action the fee is refunded to the institution. If the appeal is denied, the fee is forfeited, and the appealing institution shall also be billed for additional expenses incurred by the members of the Appeals Committee, with total additional such expenses not exceeding $5,000. The President may waive or extend any of these provisions concerning dates or fees for good cause.

Approved by the NEASC Board of Trustees, February 2019
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
Commission on Independent Schools

COMPLAINTS AGAINST NEASC AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges is concerned with institutional integrity and performance consistent with Association Standards and policies. While it does not intervene in the internal procedures of institutions or act as a regulatory body, it does address concerns about conditions at affiliated institutions that raise significant questions about the institution’s compliance with the Standards and policies for candidate or accredited institutions.

Complaints are considered only when made in writing and when the complainant is clearly identified. Substantial evidence should be included in support of the allegation that the institution is in violation of identified Standards and policies. Such evidence should state relevant and provable facts. The complaint should demonstrate that a serious effort has been made to pursue all review procedures provided by the institutions.

The Association does not consider allegations concerning the personal lives of individuals connected with its affiliated institutions. It assumes no responsibility for adjudicating isolated individual grievances, nor will it act as a court of appeal in matters of admission, granting of credit, fees, student discipline, collective bargaining, promotion, tenure and dismissals or similar matters. If the Association ascertains that there is litigation/arbitration/mediation between the complainant and the institution, no action will be taken on the complaint until that process is concluded. Upon completion of the conflict resolutions procedure, the complainant may renew its request to have the complaint considered by the Association if issues of compliance with Standards and policies remain outstanding.

Procedures for the Review of Complaints

1. A complaint shall be addressed to the Director of the Commission, or other relevant NEASC entity, responsible for the accreditation of that institution. The complaint will be acknowledged in writing and initially reviewed by the Director of the Commission.

2. If the Director finds the complaint not within the scope of relevant Standards and policies and jurisdiction, the complainant will be so informed, and the Commission will take no further action.

3. If the complaint appears to be within the scope of relevant Standards and policies and jurisdiction and is substantially documented, a copy of the complaint will be forwarded to the institution’s chief executive officer, who will be asked to respond to the complaint.
4. If the institution acknowledges the complaint as valid, it will advise the Director in writing as to actions taken to rectify the situation, and a copy of the institution’s response will be forwarded to the complainant.

5. If the institution denies that the complaint is valid, it will provide a response to the Director indicating why it believes the allegations made are either untrue or do not represent a breach of relevant Standards and policies. Such a response should include supportive documentation where appropriate.

6. If no response is received from the institution, a second request will be forwarded to the institution. If no response to the second request is received, the Director will place the matter on the agenda of the next meeting of the Commission for its determination as to the future course of action.

7. If a response is received from the institution, the Director will review the response from the institution and recommend to the Commission whether (a) the matter should be closed, or (b) the complaint should be investigated further by the Director or committee appointed by the Commission Chair, the number of which shall be within the Chair’s discretion, or (c) the complaint should be referred for action at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission. The Commission Chair may, but is not required to, call a special meeting to act on a complaint.

8. The complainant shall be informed in writing of the steps taken by the Commission in investigating the complaint, including any action taken by the Commission.

9. The Director will provide the Commission with a report of any complaints received since the previous meeting and the action taken with respect to each.

Approved by the NEASC Board of Trustees, February 2019
NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.

Policy and Procedure for Sale or Distribution of NEASC Mailing List

It is the obligation of NEASC to protect the privacy of its members through control of the association’s membership list. In view of this obligation, the NEASC membership list will be distributed or sold in the following circumstances only:

1. The membership list may be released to NEASC members who are engaged in survey research projects of benefit to evaluation/accreditation with the approval of the President/CEO. In such cases, the researcher may obtain the list providing that said researcher agrees to:
   a. “one-time” usage of the list
   b. maintenance of confidentiality regarding membership information
   c. sharing of research results with the association

2. The membership list may be released to other professional associations with the approval of the President/CEO on a reciprocal exchange basis. In such cases, neither association may resell the other’s listings or use it for any purpose except that agreed upon in writing.

3. The membership list may be sold to educational publishers for the purpose of book distribution. In such cases upon the NEASC President/CEO’s receipt of a publisher’s request, the list may be sold at a cost of 25 cents per name.

4. With approval of the President/CEO, the membership list may be released/sold to other educational agencies/organizations that are engaged in activities directly related to education.

The NEASC membership list will not be released for any purpose other than those noted above without special permission from the President/CEO of the Association.

Adopted by NEASC Board of Trustees, May 1992