

ALIGNING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS TO THE MY VOICE™ SURVEYS: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

The Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) is one of the nation's six acknowledged accreditation agencies. The geographic territory of the Association consists of the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, and other geographical areas designated from time to time by the Board of Trustees. The eight Standards for Accreditation serve as the benchmarks by which the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools makes accreditation decisions for all categories of schools that are accredited.

Schools seeking NAAS accreditation must meet established standards, engage in self-study, host peer reviews, and respond to recommendations. The My Voice Surveys are an innovative tool for schools to evaluate the eight standards as well as to provide insights for overall school improvement. There are three My Voice Surveys: one for students, one for staff, and one for parents. The charts on the following pages align the eight standards with selected statements from each of the surveys. Please note this represents only a sampling of the surveys' statements. Each complete instrument can be viewed at [My Voice Surveys](#).

Before reviewing the charts, the Fourth Standard bears special mention. Standard 4 states:

Assessment - Guiding Principle: Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning as well as course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually analyzed to improve curriculum and instruction.

Among other requirements, Standard 4 calls for schools to

- Assess the success of the school's efforts in achieving its civic and social expectations;
- Use a variety of data to ensure that the school is meeting student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards;
- Use varied strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time;
- Have teachers base classroom assessment on school-wide and course-specific indicators;
- Enable teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments in order to revise the curriculum and improve instructional strategies;
- Provide a professional development program which allows opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies;
- Communicate the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community;
- Use results and analysis of assessment to drive curriculum and instruction.

Based on over twenty years of research and decades of professional experience asking students, staff, and parents about their perceptions of their school, the My Voice Survey can help schools seeking accreditation broaden and deepen their assessment systems by accessing the voice of all stakeholders. In addition to showing evidence of a school's effort to achieve all eight standards, the surveys themselves are a safe, valid, effective, and reliable way to fulfill the Fourth Standard's expectation that "assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process."

My Voice Student Survey—Selected Statements	Accreditation Standards							
	1. Mission	2. Curriculum	3. Instruction	4. Assessment	5. Leadership	6. School Services	7. Facilities & Finance	8. Continuous Improvement
School is a welcoming and friendly place.			√			√	√	
Students respect teachers.			√					
Tests are an important part of my education.		√	√	√				√
I enjoy being at school.	√		√					
I feel comfortable asking questions in class.		√	√					
Student council represents all students at school.					√			
I believe I can be successful.	√							√
I feel accepted for who I am at school.			√			√		
I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.			√					
My teachers present lessons in different ways.		√	√					
I push myself to do better academically.	√	√	√					√
I see myself as a leader.					√			√
I believe I can make a difference in this world.	√							√
I have difficulty fitting in at school.						√	√	
Teachers care about me as an individual.			√					
Teachers make school an exciting place to learn.		√	√				√	
At school I am encouraged to be creative.		√	√				√	√
Other students see me as a leader.					√			√
Teachers expect me to be successful.		√	√					√
Teachers care if I am absent from school.						√		
I give up when schoolwork is difficult.		√	√			√		
My classes help me understand what is happening in my everyday life.		√	√				√	√
I am afraid to try something if I think I might fail.		√	√					
Teachers encourage students to make decisions.					√			√
My parents feel comfortable talking to my teachers.				√			√	
I am proud of my school.							√	√
If I have a problem, I have a teacher with whom I can talk.			√			√		
Teachers recognize me when I try my best.		√	√	√		√		
I enjoy participating in my classes.		√	√				√	
Teachers help me learn from my mistakes.		√	√	√		√		
I work hard to reach my goals.	√	√	√			√		√
Teachers respect students.		√	√			√		
I put forth my best effort at school.		√	√					√
Teachers think I can be successful.		√	√			√		√
I am a good decision maker.					√			
I think it is important to set high goals.		√	√					√
Students respect each other.								
Getting good grades is important to me.		√	√	√				
What I learn in school will benefit my future.	√	√	√					√
I know the goals my school is working on this year.	√				√			√

My Voice Staff Survey—Selected Statements	Accreditation Standards							
	1. Mission	2. Curriculum	3. Instruction	4. Assessment	5. Leadership	6. School Services	7. Facilities & Finance	8. Continuous Improvement
Setting yearly goals with my supervisor is important for my work.	√	√	√		√			√
Central office understands the unique culture of our school.	√				√			√
We communicate effectively in our building.	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
I am proud of my school.	√	√					√	√
I am involved in school-wide decisions.	√	√		√	√			√
I know the goals my school is working on this year.	√	√			√		√	√
Building administration knows my professional goals.	√	√			√			√
Staff respect each other.			√		√	√		
Meaningful professional development opportunities exist in my district.		√	√	√	√	√		√
Building administration is accessible to me.					√	√	√	√
I feel valued for my unique skill and talents.			√		√			√
At school I am encouraged to be creative.		√	√				√	√
I know my students’ hopes and dreams.			√		√			
Students respect me.			√			√		
Our school is a dynamic and creative learning environment.	√	√	√	√			√	√
I respect students.			√			√		
I encourage students to make decisions.			√		√			
I feel confident working with students with special needs.		√	√		√	√	√	√
If I have a problem, I have a colleague with whom I can talk.		√				√		√
I receive constructive feedback from colleagues.		√	√			√		√
I feel confident voicing my honest opinions and concerns.		√		√	√	√		√
I seek out opportunities to learn new things.		√	√	√				√
Continuing my education is important to my future.		√	√					√
I see myself as a leader.					√			√
I have a colleague at school who is a positive role model for me.						√		√
Building administration is open to new ideas.		√		√	√	√	√	√
My colleagues see me as a leader.					√			√
I feel comfortable asking questions in staff meetings.		√			√			√
I communicate effectively with parents.			√	√	√		√	√

My Voice Parent Survey—Selected Statements	Accreditation Standards							
	1. Mission	2. Curriculum	3. Instruction	4. Assessment	5. Leadership	6. School Services	7. Facilities & Finance	8. Continuous Improvement
I know the goals my child's school is working on this year.	√				√			√
School is preparing my child well for the future.	√	√	√			√	√	√
I am actively involved in my child's education.			√			√		√
My input and opinions are valued at my child's school.				√	√	√		√
Teachers help my child learn from mistakes.		√	√		√	√		√
Teachers encourage my child to make decisions.			√		√	√		√
My child feels comfortable asking questions in class.		√	√		√			√
Teachers at my child's school make it exciting to learn.		√	√				√	√
Teachers let me know when my child does well in school.				√		√		√
I am proud of my child's school.	√					√	√	√
Parent evenings/meetings are worth attending.					√	√	√	√
I feel comfortable going to parent-teacher conferences.		√	√	√		√	√	√
Teachers expect my child to be successful.		√	√					√
If my child has a problem, there is a teacher he/she can talk to.		√	√			√		√

KEY TO THE 8 STANDARDS

1. Mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning - The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

2. Curriculum - The curriculum, including coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the commitment and involvement of the professional staff to a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

3. Instruction - The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of the curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with colleagues about instruction and student learning.

4. Assessment - Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning as well as course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually analyzed to improve curriculum and instruction.

5. Leadership and organization - The way a school organizes learning, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices that supports student learning and well-being.

6. School services - Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and

well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

7. Facilities and finance - The school plant (consisting of site, buildings, equipment, and services) is an important factor in the functioning of the educational program. The school plant serves as a vehicle for the implementation of the school mission. The school plant should provide for a variety of instructional activities and programs and for the health and safety of ALL persons. The school plant should incorporate aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere while providing for needed flexibility. In addition to an appropriate facility, sufficient fiscal resources must be available, accounted for and effectively used in order for any school to accomplish its mission and expectations for student learning.

8. Culture of continual improvement - A quality school develops and maintains an externally validated process and plan for school improvement. Goals resulting from the evaluation process should include targeted levels of achievement and be measurable.