

## ALIGNING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS TO THE MY VOICE™ SURVEYS: THE NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Founded in 1885, the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc. (NEASC), is the nation's oldest accrediting association, serving more than 2,000 public and independent schools, colleges and universities in the six states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont and American/international schools in more than sixty-five nations worldwide. It is characterized by a commitment to establishing and maintaining high standards for all levels of education (pre-K to doctoral level) within one association. Since 1990, it remains the only one of the nation's six accrediting agencies to promote collaborations for educational improvement beyond the region. Through the office of the Executive Director, the Association contributes to public policy and conducts research with a variety of national and international groups and develops assessment processes for other educational providers.

Schools seeking NEASC 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 seven 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 seven 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 of Student Learning** - 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 and course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction.

Among other requirements, Standard 4 calls for schools to

- Assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations;
- Use varied strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time;
- Enable teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies;
- Provide a professional development program with 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.

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 seven standards, the surveys themselves are a safe, valid, effective, and reliable way to fulfill the Fourth Standard's expectation of adjusting "the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students."

My Voice Student Survey—Selected Statements	Accreditation Standards						
	1. Mission & Expectations	2. Curriculum	3. Instruction	4. Assessment	5. Leadership	6. School Resources	7. Community Resources
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 & Expectations	2. Curriculum	3. Instruction	4. Assessment	5. Leadership	6. School Resources	7. Community Resources
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 & Expectations	2. Curriculum	3. Instruction	4. Assessment	5. Leadership	6. School Resources	7. Community Resources
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 7 STANDARDS**

- 1. Mission 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, which includes 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 professional staff’s commitment to and involvement in 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 and expectations for student learning, 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 their colleagues about instruction and student learning.
- 4. Assessment of Student Learning** - 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 and course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction.
- 5. Leadership and Organization** - The way in which a school organizes learning for students, 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 which supports student learning and well-being.
- 6. School Resources for Learning** - 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. Community Resources for Learning** - Active community and parent participation, facilities which support school programs and services, and dependable and adequate funding are necessary for the school to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning.