

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.**



SELF-STUDY GUIDE

1

***CORE VALUES, BELIEFS,
AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS***

**FOR 2015 SCHOOLS
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Teaching and Learning Standard

1

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Effective schools identify core values and beliefs about learning that function as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community. Decision-making remains focused on and aligned with these critical commitments. Core values and beliefs manifest themselves in research-based, school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Every component of the school is driven by the core values and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations.

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.
2. The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.
3. The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.
4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

Directions for the Committee on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

This Standard Committee is charged with the responsibility of developing a document that demonstrates the extent to which the school is adhering to the Standard for Accreditation on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations. Committee members should remember that the process of determining adherence to the Standard is a reflective one. It begins with the Committee developing a deep and rich understanding of the Standard and the Rating Guide. As evidence is gathered and discussed, the Committee's conclusions may change and evolve, be altered and refined. Once the evidence has been fully discussed and conclusions have been finalized, the Committee will begin the writing of the Narrative. The final step in the process is for the Committee to write an Executive Summary and to assess the extent to which the school is adhering to the Standard using the Rating Guide. This rating, and the Committee's list of strengths and needs for the Standard, will become part of the Executive Summary.

I. Gaining an Understanding of the Standard and Preparing to Begin

- A. Make a copy of this Self-Study Guide for each member of the Standard Committee from the website: <http://cpss.neasc.org>.
- B. Read and discuss the Standard for Accreditation on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations so that all members of the Standard Committee develop a common understanding of the effective practices in the Standard. The Standard is comprised of both the narrative portion and the numbered indicators. The concepts in the narrative portion are manifested through the indicators. As part of your discussion, use the guiding questions from the document, *Explanation of the Standards for Accreditation*. Also, establish common definitions for terms in the standards with which school staff may not be familiar. Additional information is available in the bibliography which is organized by Standard and by Indicator. Both documents can be located at <http://cpss.neasc.org> under the "Getting Started" tab.
- C. Engage all members of the Committee in an activity to review the Rating Guide for the Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations. Assess the extent to which the school is adhering to the Standard using the Rating Guide.

II. Collecting Data Related to the Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

A. Data Already Gathered

1. Opinion Surveys

Review the results of the Endicott College opinion surveys administered to parents, students, and teachers with regard to each indicator in this Standard. While you are reviewing the results of the survey look at both areas of agreement and areas of disagreement. Use areas of agreement as evidence to support your conclusion. Examine and reflect on areas of disagreement. Look for other data and evidence to help explain the disagreement and to develop strategies to address the areas.

B. Data to be Gathered by the Committee

1. Gather the following information as evidence you will need later in this process. You will eventually need to **attach this evidence to the self-study narrative essay**.
 - a. The school's approved statement of (1) core values, (2) beliefs about learning, and (3) its 21st century learning expectations, labeling those learning expectations that are academic, civic, and social and labeling the school's core values and beliefs about learning. (1.1 and 1.2) *Please note – You are labeling your school's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations for the purpose of your self-study committee's analysis and for the visiting committee, not to create a document that has a particular prescribed format or design.*
2. Gather the following evidence you will need for each indicator in the Standard (as noted in parenthesis). **You are required to organize this evidence and make it available in the workroom at the school for use by the visiting committee.** *Please note: it is possible that you may not find evidence for all indicators.*

Indicator 1

The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

- a. The names of individuals and the constituent group he/she represents involved in the most recent review of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations as well as the time period during which the review process took place (1.1)
- b. A one-page description of the process used, including the specific educational research examined, to identify the school's core values and beliefs about learning (1.1)
- c. The dates that the document was approved by the school board/board of education, the faculty, and any other group.

Indicator 2

The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.

- d. The analytic rubrics developed for the school's 21st century learning expectations (academic, civic, and social), with the targeted level of achievement indicated for each (1.2)

Indicator 3

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

- e. A list of examples of ways that the culture of the school reflects the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations (1.3)
- f. A list of examples of specific changes made to the (a) curriculum, (b) instruction, and (c) assessment in response to the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations (1.3)
- g. A list of examples of specific changes to, or adaptations of, school policies, procedures, and decisions resulting from examination of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations (1.3)
- h. A list of resource allocations that have been made in response to supporting the school's core values, beliefs, and its 21st century learning expectations (1.3)

Indicator 4

The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

- i. Provide the school's plan for the regular review of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations with a list of dates and processes used in recent reviews of the school's guiding documents (mission, core values, etc.) since the last decennial evaluation (1.4)
- j. A list of data (standardized test data, local assessment data, et.al.) reviewed by the committee and used to develop the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations (1.4)
- k. A list of educational research reviewed in the process of developing the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations (1.4)
- l. A list of district and school community priorities that were reviewed in the process of developing the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations (1.4)
- m. Other evidence deemed relevant by the committee, especially relating to innovative thinking and practices, that relates to core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

III. Analyzing the Evidence, Drawing Conclusions, and Providing Supporting Details

Once you have gathered the data requested, use the prompts that follow to analyze and discuss all the gathered evidence and information as it relates to the various indicators in the Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations. Only after these steps have been completed should the Committee begin the process of writing the Narrative.

Prompts for Analyzing Evidence and Drawing Conclusions

1. **The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.**

Analyzing the Evidence

- a. Based on a review of the evidence, including opinion survey results and any other relevant evidence, what does the evidence show about how the school community engaged in a *dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive* process that was *grounded in research* to identify its core values and beliefs about learning?

Drawing a Conclusion

- b. State the **extent** to which the process to identify the school's core values and its beliefs about learning was *dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive* and the school's foundational beliefs about learning are *grounded in research*.

2. **The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.**

Analyzing the Evidence

- a. Based upon a review of the evidence, including opinion survey results, what does the evidence show about the *level of challenge and measurability* of the school's 21st century learning expectations in academic, civic, and social areas, *the existence of specific school-wide analytic rubrics* for each of the 21st century learning expectations, and the *identification of targeted high levels of achievement* in each rubric?

Drawing a Conclusion

- b. State the **extent** to which the school's 21st century learning expectations are *challenging, measurable, inclusive of academic, civic, and social competencies, and have school-wide analytic rubrics with targeted high levels of achievement*.

3. **The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.**

Analyzing the Evidence

- a. Based on a review of the evidence, including opinion survey results, what does the evidence show about how the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations *are actively reflected in the culture of the school, are deliberately used to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and are used to guide specific school policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations?*

Drawing a Conclusion

- b. State the **extent** to which the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are *actively reflected in the school's culture, deliberately drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.*

4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

Analyzing the Evidence

- a. Based on a review of the evidence, including opinion survey results, what does the evidence show about the *regularity* of the school's review and revision of its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations and whether such reviews are based on *research, multiple data sources, and district and school community priorities?*

Drawing a Conclusion

- b. State the **extent** to which the school has a *regular process* to review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations and the **extent** to which the process was *based on research, was informed by the analysis of multiple data sources, and was informed by district and school community priorities.*

IV. Writing the Narrative

- A. Write at least one paragraph for each indicator in the Standard; for some indicators with bullets, you may need to write several paragraphs.
- B. Write a conclusion for each indicator that includes the extent to which the school is meeting the indicator and underline the conclusion in the paragraph. For example, for Indicator #4, “The school has a process for the regular review of their core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations that consistently includes multiple data sources as well as school and district priorities; however current research is rarely considered.”
- C. Write sentences to complete your paragraph that justify or support your underlined conclusion. Your evidence in these sentences forms the details that justify or support your underlined conclusion.
- D. This Narrative Essay should be 6-9 double-spaced pages and should be written in the third person. Sample Narratives can be found on the CPSS website located at <http://cpss.neasc.org>

V. Writing the Executive Summary

Write the Executive Summary of the conclusions and evidence. Consult the Guidelines for Review of Standards Essays and Executive Summaries in the *Accreditation Handbook* (page 39).

Content of the Executive Summary

- Identify and list the school’s strengths in adhering to the *specific indicators* in the Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations.
- Identify and list the school’s needs in adhering to the *specific indicators* in the Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations.
- Use the rating guide provided on page 11 to determine the school’s level of adherence to the Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations, based on the conclusions and supportive evidence in the narrative essay.
- Write a one-page summary of the evidence in the Narrative Essay to support the Committee’s judgment of the school’s level of adherence to the Standard on Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations, making sure you include the rating, e.g., “acceptable.”
- Attach a list of the names, positions, and signatures of the Committee members responsible for the preparation of this Narrative Essay and Executive Summary. Signatures of Committee members attest to the thoroughness of the Committee’s work and to the veracity of the Narrative Essay and Executive Summary.

VI. Using the Rating Guide

Purpose

The Rating Guide which follows has been developed:

- To assist schools in assessing their level of adherence to the Standard and thus to further understanding of the important concepts in the Standards
- To assist visiting teams in assessing the school's level of adherence to the Standard
- To inform the Committee on Public Secondary Schools as it considers the school's evaluation report, adherence to the Standards, and accreditation status

Please note: The Rating Guide is a guide for helping the school to determine the extent to which it adheres to the Standard. The Rating Guide should be applied to the Standard as a whole; the value and importance of individual indicators has been incorporated into the levels of adherence in the Rating Guide.

Directions

1. Begin with the *Deficient* category.
 - a. It is important to emphasize that every word in the Rating Guide has meaning, including transitional words and words such as *all, any, every, and, or*.
 - b. Because there are concepts within the indicators of a Standard that are at the core of a school's ability to adhere to the Standard, those concepts are critical and are used to make the decision for the *Deficient* category. This is the reason that *Deficient* is the starting place for use of the Rating Guide.
2. Read aloud the stem (the wording that begins, "A Rating of Deficient...") in the *Deficient* category and then move through each of the bulleted items that follow.
 - a. If the Committee members agree that each bulleted item is present, move on to the *Limited* category.
 - b. If the Committee members believe that the school has not met all (or most or a majority, depending on the language used in the Rating Guide) of the bulleted items, the school will then assign a rating of *Deficient* to this Standard, and its work is complete.
3. Read aloud the stem (the wording that begins, "A Rating of Limited...") in the *Limited* category and then move through each of the bulleted items, paying careful attention to the guiding words provided at the end of the stem, e.g. "but lacks:"
 - a. If the participants agree that each bulleted item is present, move on to the *Acceptable* category.
 - b. If the Committee members believe that the school has not met all of the bulleted items, the school will then assign a rating of *Limited* to this Standard. If the participants agree that each bulleted item is present, move on to the *Acceptable* category.
 - c. If the Committee members believe that the school has not met all (or most or a majority, depending on the language used in the Rating Guide) of the bulleted items, the school will then assign a rating of *Limited* to this Standard, and its work is complete.
4. Continue the process through the *Acceptable* category and to the *Exemplary* category, if appropriate.

RATING GUIDE

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

A rating of **DEFICIENT** is appropriate if any of the following exist:

- The absence of a statement of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
- The failure of the statement to identify a set of core values and beliefs for the school beyond generic goals
- A statement of core values, beliefs about learning, and learning expectations that is not informed by current research
- A statement of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations that was not developed through a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process
- A lack of challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and a lack of school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement for all 21st century learning expectations

A rating of **LIMITED** is appropriate if the school has engaged in a dynamic process informed by current research to identify its core values and beliefs about learning and has developed challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement, but lacks:

- School-wide rubrics that clearly define in observable, measurable terms the 21st century learning expectations of the school
- An active commitment by all members of the school community to using the core values and beliefs about learning to guide the school

A rating of **ACCEPTABLE** is appropriate if the school has engaged in a dynamic process informed by current research to identify its core values and beliefs about learning to which all members of the school community are committed and has developed challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined in observable and measurable terms by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement, and:

- the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations at least minimally drive school initiatives, policies, and procedures and decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
- the culture of the school, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations generally reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

A rating of **EXEMPLARY** is appropriate if all the descriptors in the **ACCEPTABLE** rating are met and:

- The school's formal processes to ensure that the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations
- The school has in place an established, ongoing process with prescribed timelines, research and data sources, and identified members of the stakeholders to guide the regular review and revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations in keeping with district priorities