



Notes for Completing the Accreditation Policy Revision Application

Overview

This application is for an agency seeking approval from the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) to be added to the list of accrediting bodies. DC PCSB's Accreditation Policy codifies this approved list.¹

Standard for Approval

DC PCSB staff will generally recommend that its Board approve adding an accrediting organization to its list of approved if it meets the following standards.

- Standards: The accrediting agency, in collaboration with educational institutions, establishes standards.
- Self-study: The institution or program seeking accreditation prepares an in-depth self-evaluation study that measures its performance against the standards established by the accrediting agency.
- On-site Evaluation: A team selected by the accrediting agency visits the institution or program to determine first-hand if the applicant meets the established standards.
- Monitoring: The accrediting agency monitors each accredited institution or program throughout the period of accreditation granted to verify that it continues to meet the agency's standards.
- Reevaluation: The accrediting agency periodically reevaluates each institution or program that it lists to ascertain whether continuation of its accredited or pre-accredited status is warranted.

Contact

Before completing the application, please contact Kristie Dennis at kdennis@dcpcsb.org to discuss the proposed changes or to ask general questions about the accreditation process.

¹ See DC PCSB's Accreditation Policy here: <https://bit.ly/4bKTGFe>.

ORGANIZATION NAME: The New England Association of Schools and Colleges

REPRESENTATIVE NAME: George Edwards, Chief Accreditation Officer

SUBMISSION DATE: June 17, 2024

SUBJECT: Accreditation Policy Revisions

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

1. Describe your organization. What is your mission?

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is an independent, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization which partners with over 1500 public, independent, and international schools in the US and worldwide to assess, support, and promote high quality education for all students through accreditation, professional assistance, and pursuit of best practices. NEASC aspires to provide a process for meaningful, ongoing whole school improvement while honoring the unique culture and context of each institution we support. Founded in 1885 by the president of Harvard University, NEASC has a long tradition of school improvement across the six states of New England, other states in the US, and in more than 85 countries around the world.

Today NEASC focuses on the accreditation of schools spanning PK to Grade 12 and, as a deeply mission-driven organization, is guided by key priorities which include advancing equity, promoting innovation and excellence in education, and empowering students.

NEASC is an advocate of educational quality and its ongoing improvement; its purposes are exclusively educational. It serves the public interest, the educational community, and the students within the educational system by:

- establishing and maintaining high standards of educational excellence
- providing a framework for institutional self-reflection and objective peer review
- serving as a resource and support for ongoing, meaningful whole-school improvement and growth.

Drawing upon its considerable experience, NEASC serves as a public policy resource on issues related to the condition of education in New England, the US, and in the international learning communities it serves. The Association is a private, nonprofit corporation that adheres to fundamental principles of fairness and non-discrimination, thus NEASC is uniquely positioned to work in partnership with other organizations on a regional, national, and international scale as it works to sustain and advance the quality of education for all students.

NEASC 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.

Approved by the NEASC Board of Trustees on December 13, 2018

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.

2. What is your rationale for applying to become an accrediting body for DC public charter schools?

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has developed a unique collaboration with the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB). This collaboration has resulted in the development of the Collaborative Learning Protocol.

The Collaborative Learning Protocol (CLP) is a fully aligned process of self and peer evaluation with the IB Programme Standards and Practices and the NEASC Foundation Standards and

Learning Principles. The process synchronizes two key strands of school evaluation and improvement:

- continued authorization to implement IB programmes
- initial or continued NEASC Accreditation for qualifying schools on the ACE Learning Pathway

Aligning the IB authorization and NEASC accreditation processes brings a unified, whole school focus on ongoing growth and transformational learning.

The DC International School contacted the NEASC, at the urging of their IB World School Manager, about this innovative protocol. Our interest in being approved as an accreditor for DC Charter Schools is so we can serve this school or any other similar schools.

3. How will adding your organization to DC PCSB's list of accrediting bodies benefit DC public charter schools?

Our organization can serve DC public charter schools by provide them with a unique option for their IB re-evaluation and accreditation.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Describe how your organization meets each of the five standards.

4. Standards: The accrediting agency, in collaboration with educational institutions, establishes standards.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, works collaboratively with our member schools to develop Standards for Accreditation that are based on research and best practices. These Standards are continuously reviewed and refined to ensure that they meeting the dynamic needs of our member schools.

5. Self-study: The institution or program seeking accreditation prepares an in-depth self-evaluation study that measures its performance against the standards established by the accrediting agency.

All schools seeking NEASC accreditation are required to prepare a self-study. During the self-study, schools reflect deeply on their practices and rate themselves on every applicable Standard. The self-study typically takes between 8 and 12 months. The Association provides training, resources, and support to assist schools in this process.

6. On-site Evaluation: A team selected by the accrediting agency visits the institution or program to determine first-hand if the applicant meets the established standards.

All schools are required to host a series of team visits as an integral part of the accreditation process. Members of the visiting team are selected and trained by NEASC. The purpose of the visits is to determine the degree to which the school is aligned to the Standards for Accreditation, as well as identifying commendations and areas for future growth. After the visits and the evaluation, the visiting team prepares a report for the school that will assess attainment of the individual standards, formulate major recommendations and standard-specific recommendations for school improvement, and submits a separate recommendation to the Commission on the school's accreditation status. Visiting team consist of between 2 and 7 members depending on the type of visit and the size of the school. Members are selected from accredited member schools and are chosen based on their expertise and the needs of the school being visited.

7. Monitoring: The accrediting agency monitors each accredited institution or program throughout the period of accreditation granted to verify that it continues to meet the agency's standards.

Accredited schools are monitored on an ongoing basis. Schools are required to submit reports annually. The purpose of these reports is to ensure that the school continues to meet the Standards for Accreditation and are implementing any recommendations and/or requirements. NEASC provides a Relationship Manager for every school who supports the school in an ongoing basis as a resource for ideas and information on transformation of learning.

8. Reevaluation: The accrediting agency periodically reevaluates each institution or program that it lists to ascertain whether continuation of its accredited or pre-accredited status is warranted.

The NEASC accreditation cycle and the IB re-evaluation cycle are both five (5) years. The two agencies align the cycles as part of the CLP process. Schools are reaccredited/re-evaluated every five years.