



Commission on Public Schools
Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI)

STANDARDS for Accreditation

2015 EDITION (REVISED 2016)

for comprehensive technical high schools
and career centers

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

INTRODUCTION

Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI) 2015 Standards for Accreditation

(REVISED NOVEMBER 2016)

The NEASC Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI) Standards for Accreditation serve as the foundation for the school evaluation process and as a guide for accreditation decisions. The Standards establish the benchmarks for schools and career centers to ensure an effective and appropriate focus on and support of teaching and learning. Affiliation with NEASC/CTCI requires that candidate or member institutions remain in alignment with the CTCI Standards for Accreditation.

Committed to maintaining qualitative, research-driven and challenging guidelines, CTCI periodically reviews and revises the Standards for Accreditation. NEASC member participation in the revision process ensures that the Standards reflect current best practice in education as well as the values and beliefs of member schools and centers.

This version of the CTCI Standards for Accreditation was authored by the CTCI ad hoc Standards Revision Committee and adopted by unanimous vote of the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions at its October 28, 2015 meeting, with revisions approved at its October 25, 2016 meeting.

Accreditation is a continuous partnership between NEASC and its members. Students, parents, community members, the local governing body, and colleges and universities can depend on the accreditation process and the Standards for Accreditation to support the ongoing efforts of public schools to create quality educational programs for all students throughout New England.

Discover more on the CTCI website: ctci.neasc.org

THE STANDARDS

Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI) 2015 Standards for Accreditation

(REVISED NOVEMBER 2016)

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TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

1 Core Values and Expectations

Effective schools/centers identify their mission, core values, and beliefs about learning that function as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community. Mission, core values, and beliefs manifest themselves in age appropriate, researched-based, school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Every component of the school/center is driven by the mission, core values, and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school/center's learning expectations.

1. The school/center community engages in a collaborative, and inclusive process to identify and commit to its mission, core values, and beliefs about learning.
2. The school/center has challenging and measurable learning expectations for all students which address career, academic, social, and civic competencies. Each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school/center-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
3. The school/center's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school/center, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school/center's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.
4. The school/center regularly reviews and revises its mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations based on current research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school/center community priorities.
5. The school/center's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are widely displayed throughout the facility, on the website, and in all handbooks.

2 Curriculum

The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school/center's 21st century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school/center aligns and personalizes its learning expectations. The curriculum links expectations for student learning to instructional and assessment practices. It includes a purposefully designed set of learning opportunities that reflect the school/center's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The curriculum is collaboratively developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on analysis of student performance and current research.

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school/center's learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
 - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
 - the school/center's learning expectations
 - developmentally appropriate instructional strategies
 - a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment practices.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge at the appropriate developmental levels through:
 - inquiry and problem-solving
 - exploration and creativity
 - higher order thinking
 - collaboration and communication
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school/center
 - informed use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all areas within the school/center.
6. The curriculum is supported by sufficient staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and educational media resources to fully implement the curriculum, co-curricular programs, and other developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.
7. Curriculum is developed, evaluated, and revised using assessment results and current research.
8. Program Advisory Committees are effectively utilized to recommend program modifications based on changing technology; assist with the development of an equipment acquisition plan; assist in the development of the technology plan; and review both the technical and academic curricula. (Their agendas/minutes are maintained on file.)
9. Technical programs are competency-based education identifying specific duties and tasks.
10. Instructional programs offered in career fields requiring licensure or certification are designed to prepare students to meet those requirements.

3 Instruction

The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school/center's 21st century learning expectations. Instruction is responsive to student needs, deliberate in its design and delivery, and grounded in the school/center's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Instruction is supported by research in best practices. Teachers are reflective and collaborative about their instructional strategies and collaborative with their colleagues to improve student learning.

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school/center's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school/center's learning expectations, as evidenced by:
 - personalizing and differentiating instruction
 - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
 - engaging students as active learners
 - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
 - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
 - emphasizing communications skills
 - providing feedback
 - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
 - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
 - using formative assessment
 - strategically differentiating
 - purposefully organizing group learning activities
 - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
 - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
 - examining student work
 - using feedback from a variety of sources, such as students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
 - examining current research
 - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.
6. All technical programs provide safety instruction, instruction in hazardous chemical awareness (safety data sheets), and written and applied safety testing.

Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school/center's 21st century learning expectations. Assessment results are shared and discussed on a regular basis to improve student learning. Assessment results inform teachers about student achievement in order to adjust curriculum and instruction.

1. The professional staff continuously assesses whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school/center's learning expectations.
2. The school/center's professional staff communicate:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school/center's progress in achieving the school/center's learning expectations to the school/center community and stakeholders.
3. Teachers communicate to students the learning expectations and the unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
4. Teachers, individually and collectively, employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
5. Teachers provide specific and timely feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
6. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
7. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of improving instructional practice.
8. A systematic program review is conducted periodically to guarantee effective program design.

SUPPORT STANDARDS

5 Culture and Leadership

The school/center culture is equitable and inclusive, and it embodies the school/center's foundational mission, core values, beliefs, and expectations about student learning. The culture is characterized by reflective, collaborative, and constructive dialogue about researched-based practices that support high expectations for teaching and learning. The leadership of the school/center fosters mutual respect and a safe, positive culture by promoting citizenship, learning, and shared leadership that engages all members of the school/center community in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

1. The school/center community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school/center is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity by using student grouping practices that reflect an understanding of the unique learning and social needs of all students and demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of the population of the school/center.
3. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
 - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
 - use resources inside and outside of the school to maintain current with best practices
 - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
 - have a planned orientation program for new staff
 - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to continually improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment
 - ensure that all faculty and staff meet state and local certification requirements.
4. Research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning are used to evaluate the performance of the administration, faculty, and staff.

5. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
6. The principal/director, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school/center's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
7. All members of the school/center community feel welcome at the school/center and have opportunities for school/center improvement.
8. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school/center and to increase students' engagement in learning.
9. The work, contributions, and achievements of students and school/center personnel are regularly acknowledged and celebrated and appropriately displayed throughout the school/center.
10. The school committee, superintendent, and principal/director are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school/center's learning expectations.
11. The principal/director has sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school/center.
12. Current written policies and procedures are readily available to all personnel and to the public.
13. A written school/center improvement plan with measures of accountability has been implemented.
14. Students are provided opportunities for student government/leadership.
15. The school/center's calendar is designed to ensure minimal disruption of the school's educational program.
16. The school/center encourages non-traditional careers for students and supports gender equity in all programs.

6 Student Services and Support

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon appropriate sufficient support. The school/center is responsible for providing an effective range of coordinated programs and services. These resources enhance and improve student learning and well-being and support the school/center's mission, core values, and beliefs. Student services and support enable each student to achieve the school/center's 21st century learning expectations.

1. All students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school/center's learning expectations.
2. The physical areas provided for student support services are appropriate for the particular service and ensure privacy and confidentiality.
3. The school/center maintains all student, alumni, administrative, and personnel records in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal, state, and local laws or regulations.
4. School/center counseling services have access to an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - provide academic, career, and personal counseling
 - deliver a written, developmental program
 - engage in individual and group meetings with students
 - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
 - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services including emergency care
 - conduct ongoing student health assessments
 - inform faculty and staff of medical conditions of their students when appropriate
 - securely maintain student health records
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school/center community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school/center's learning expectations.
5. The school/center ensures that students have access to educational media services that are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices. There are an adequate number of personnel and support staff who
 - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school/center's curriculum
 - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school/center's curriculum
 - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
 - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school/center community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school/center's learning expectations.

6. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's learning expectations
 - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
 - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school/center community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school/center's learning expectations.
7. The institution has a published Information Resources and Responsible Use policy which is consistent with its mission.
8. An adequate method of student record keeping is in place and individual student files include the following:
 - Attendance
 - Technical competency assessment
 - Academic achievement
 - Test results
 - Individual Education Plan or 504 Plan as appropriate
 - Safety test documentation
 - Industry recognized certifications attained.
9. Graduate follow-up studies are conducted and the resultant data is shared with staff to assist with program and curriculum development.
10. An assessment system is available to assist students with the identification of career aptitudes and interests.
11. The school/center has a comprehensive safety/crisis response plan that ensures:
 - Students, faculty, and staff are trained to assist with emergency situations
 - A written crisis intervention plan has been developed and implemented
 - Evacuation procedures are widely publicized, and regularly scheduled drills are held and results documented.
12. Written admissions policy identifies enrollment criteria for students as well as the process for determining student enrollment allotments, if appropriate, from participating/sending schools.
13. Student transportation is scheduled to ensure that all students will arrive and depart from the school/center with minimal loss of time on task.

Indicator 14 and 15 apply to Job Corps only:

14. Residential Program creates and maintains an environment that allows students to learn and practice independent and community living skills.
15. Residential Program provides a safe, secure, clean, and attractive physical and social living environment for students that is appropriate to their varied needs and levels of maturity.

The achievement of the school/center's mission, core values, beliefs and learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent/guardian advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
 - a wide range of school/center programs and services
 - sufficient professional and support staff
 - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
 - a full range of technology support, including personnel and infrastructure
 - sufficient equipment for CTE and academic programs
 - sufficient instructional materials and supplies
 - a learning environment that supports high levels of learning for all.
2. The school/center community develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure:
 - the replacement of equipment, the maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment, and thorough and routine cleaning of the facility
 - adequate network infrastructure and technological peripherals
 - school/center's plant is effectively and efficiently ventilated, heated, and lighted.
3. There is sufficient funding to ensure the school/center implements a long-range plan that addresses and supports:
 - programs and services
 - enrollment changes and staffing needs
 - capital improvements to protect the financial investment of the site and buildings.
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

5. The school site/facility supports and enhances all aspects of the educational program and is maintained to meet all applicable federal, state, and local laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
6. Appropriate school/center transportation procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the students and in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
7. The professional staff actively engage parents/guardians and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school/center.
8. The school/center develops productive career and technical advisory, community, business, and higher education partnerships to support student learning.
9. Records of all funds collected and disbursed in connection with any part of the school/center's program are kept in an accurate and systemic form.
10. Funds collected are properly safeguarded.
11. The governing board and the administration exercise control over all financial operations. An appropriate system of checks and balances is in place to ensure integrity in the collection and disbursement of all school/center funds.
12. Records of all funds collected and disbursed are audited at appropriate intervals in accordance with local and state requirements.

THE ACCREDITATION CYCLE

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In order to maintain accredited status and NEASC membership, schools must demonstrate — throughout the 10-year accreditation cycle — how they align their educational practice and vision with the Standards.

The three main phases of the accreditation cycle are:

1. a reflective 12-month self-study during which the school assesses the degree to which its educational programs, services, and processes align with the seven Standards;
2. a four-day on-site evaluation visit conducted by a committee of peers from the professional educational community;
3. a multi-year follow-up process, monitored regularly by CPS, involving periodic reporting, long-term strategic planning, and a focus on school improvement.

During the on-site school evaluations, visiting teams tour facilities, engage in conversations with school communities, and review evidence provided by schools in order to determine the extent to which a school's practices align with the Standards. Based on their observations, the visiting team writes an evaluation report identifying a school's strengths and areas for growth. Using the report as a guide, schools must show their commitment to ongoing improvement by continual work toward refining the systems, processes, practices, and conditions that support and enhance student learning.

NEASC

cps.neasc.org

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Commission on Public Schools

3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100

Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Tel 781-425-7700 | Fax 781-425-1001