



## **Model Core Standards**

### Introduction

Model Core Standards are those that define the culture of independent schools and relate directly to the first of the Criteria for Effective Accreditation. While they do not serve as a template, these standards reflect the core elements of our schools and their operation and should be represented in some form in a regional or state association's accreditation instrument. Associations are expected to check that these areas are covered in their own standards and report on any discrepancies.

### Mission

1. The school has a clear statement of educational mission. The stated mission and philosophy guide the school's admissions, program, planning, and decision-making.
2. The mission of the school is congruent with principles of academic scholarship: permitting and encouraging freedom of inquiry, diversity of viewpoints, and independent/critical thinking.

### Full Disclosure

The school makes full, accurate, and truthful disclosure of its mission, policies, expectations, programs, and practices.

### Governance and Fiscal Responsibility

1. The governing board of the school is a deliberative body with clearly defined roles and responsibilities that are communicated to all constituents. It provides for,
  - a. Continuity of mission;
  - b. Stability in transitions of leadership;
  - c. Establishing and monitoring needed school policies;
  - d. Comprehensive strategic and financial planning;
  - e. Financial oversight, accountability, and stability;
  - f. Evaluation and support of the development of the head of school;
  - g. Clearly defined and regularly applied procedures to orient, educate, and evaluate the governing body;
  - h. A model of inclusive decision making for the school community; and
  - i. Adequate risk management policies.
2. The governing body consistently exercises its fiduciary responsibility.

3. There is evidence of efficient and effective management of resources sufficient to advance the mission of the school.
4. There are effective policies and procedures for management of operating and capital funds in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and practices.
5. The board delegates the operational and educational functions of the school to the head of school.

#### Program

1. The educational program stems from the school's beliefs about teaching and learning that are regularly reviewed and are consistent with the mission of the school.
2. All school programs (including early childhood, residential, extended care, etc.) demonstrate consideration for the appropriate intellectual, social, physical, aesthetic, emotional, and ethical development of students in all aspects of school and student life.
3. The school has sufficient resources to support the program of the school and the needs of the students and professional staff.
4. Instructional materials and equipment are of sufficient quality, quantity, and variety to provide effective support to the goals and methods of the program.
5. The school has in place a procedure for follow-up on graduate success and utilizes resulting data to assess its goals and programs.
6. Requirements and expectations for students, parents, faculty, trustees, and employees clearly reflect the values and mission of the school.
7. Procedures are in place to assess and communicate effectively individual student progress toward meeting the goals of the program.
8. The school demonstrates that its educational programs, instructional practices, and institutional culture are informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

#### Professional Staff

1. Faculty and staff are well qualified through education and training and/or experience to fulfill the responsibilities of their positions.
2. The school ensures that there are sufficient and trained administrators, faculty, and staff members dedicated to supporting students and their families across all cultures.
3. The administration actively supports the professional development of faculty and staff through allocation of time and resources.
4. The school implements clearly defined programs for supervision and regular performance evaluation of the administration, faculty, and staff.
5. Personnel practices provide ethical treatment among all faculty, administrators, and staff with respect to compensation, workloads, and working conditions.

### Culture and Climate

1. In keeping with its mission, the school promotes an equitable, just, and inclusive community of adults and students, fosters a culture of learning, and inspires students to respect and value diversity.
2. The school promotes environments that provide opportunities to enhance positive interaction among domestic and international students, and to develop sensitivity and understanding regarding cultural differences and needs that are specific to international students.
3. The school recognizes global connectedness, promotes a culture of global understanding, and fosters a commitment to the values of sustainability in all areas including preservation of the environment for current and future generations.

### Health, Safety, and Well-being

1. The school has a process to ensure that it demonstrates compliance with all state, local, and federal regulations.
2. The school ensures that it provides appropriate care and support of all students, including their health and well-being.
3. The school ensures that boarding personnel and/or homestay host families receive specific training, supervision, and evaluation that address the needs of international students.

### Recruitment, Admission, Enrollment, and Retention

1. The school has procedures in place to ensure that students are mission appropriate and can be served by the program.
2. The school is transparent in its admission and retention policies and provides information that accurately describes tuition, fees, and all other expectations.
3. The school provides specific training, supervision, and evaluation of all recruitment personnel.

**Adopted by the NAIS Commission on Accreditation on April 18, 2016. ICAISA, formerly the Commission, is using these Standards effective July 1, 2018.**