

May 14, 2021

Dear Parents United Leadership,

Thank you for contacting our organizations on May 11, via email, to share your concerns and to learn more about how we work with our members to uphold and advance their missions and support critical inquiry.

As members of the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA), AISNE and NEASC have accreditation protocols that are aligned with the ICAISA Core Standards, one of which states that “the mission of the school is congruent with principles of academic scholarship, permitting and encouraging freedom of inquiry, diversity of viewpoints, and independent and critical thinking.” Schools accredited by AISNE and NEASC manifest these principles in distinctive ways within the context of the mission of their schools.

In AISNE’s newly revised accreditation protocol, the First Standard states that “The school’s mission and philosophy guide all facets of its operation and program.” Similarly, the Fourth Standard requests that schools “provide a mission-driven educational program that promotes student learning and growth.” The subsequent indicator asks schools to show evidence of a “program that enables students to develop the skills to navigate a complex future” and poses this question for schools to answer: “How does the school encourage intellectual inquiry and teach critical reasoning, analysis, independent thinking, and respect for differing perspectives?”

NEASC Standards ensure that the school’s mission, program, and student experience are aligned. As part of the NEASC accreditation protocol, schools must show a commitment to “broadening students’ perspectives” and demonstrate that “every aspect of the program reflects awareness of and commitment to equity, justice, and inclusion.” In addition, schools are asked to illustrate how “students’ perspectives and opinions are appropriately heard and addressed.”

ICAISA, AISNE, and NEASC share a commitment to the integrity of the accreditation process and believe in its ability to support schools as they bring their different missions to life and create communities that are safe for all.

Again, thank you for contacting us to share your concerns around these essential components of effective education in our country.

Sincerely,

Claire Leheny, Executive Director, AISNE

Bonnie Ricci, Executive Director, ICAISA

Cam Staples, President, NEASC