

May 7, 2026

Dear Ms. Ashley Jacobs,

In response to your letter dated May 5, 2026:

In May and June of 2021, our last communication with your organization (attached), we shared that, 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 School’s program aligns with its mission, and is congruent with the principles of academic integrity, permitting and encouraging freedom of inquiry, diversity of viewpoints, and independent and critical thinking.” We invite you to review our prior correspondence for specific examples of how AISNE and NEASC Standards reflect and implement this expectation.

Additionally, we stated then that “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.” Accreditation is voluntary for independent schools, and schools within our associations hold a wide range of perspectives and educational philosophies. We remain committed to supporting the independence of each school to establish and fulfill its unique mission.

Thank you for your outreach,

Sincerely,
Bonnie Ricci, Executive Director, ICAISA
Cameron Staples, President, NEASC
Sara Wilson, Executive Director, AISNE

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

June 7, 2021

Dear Parents United Leadership,

We hope you are well as this extraordinary school year comes to a close.

Your first email called on us as accrediting bodies to ask schools to demonstrate a commitment to "freedom of inquiry, diversity of viewpoints, and independent and critical thinking." Our reply attempted to outline how our Standards reflect that commitment.

We shared that AISNE's 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?"

We also shared that the NEASC Standards ensure that the school's mission, program, and student experience are aligned. Schools are asked to 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."

We believe in the importance and integrity of the accreditation process, which is designed and developed in collaboration with representatives from our membership. It is not our practice to redraft or change Standards with organizations that are not part of our membership. Thank you for understanding.

With regards,
Claire Leheny, Executive Director, AISNE
Cameron Staples, President, NEASC