

## Action Overview: Core Values and Beliefs

This set of resources is designed to help educators understand the importance of identifying core values and beliefs about learning within a standards-based system. The portal uses the guidance from the Commission on Public Schools and Committee on Public Secondary Schools (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, INC.) “Guide to Developing and Implementing Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations” for foundational content.

### Introduction

It’s important that organizations further define themselves beyond their vision and mission statements to create an effective school culture that promotes improved learning for all students. That next step is to identify core values and beliefs about learning for the system. These values and beliefs not only shape the culture and determine the priorities of the organization, they serve as the guiding force for decision-making related to the organization’s curriculum, instruction, and assessment within a standards-based system.

### What are core values and belief statements?

An organization’s core values define those qualities that are desired to be both modeled by the educational practices within the organization and in the practices of its students. Beyond academic proficiencies, these values are what teachers hope students take with them into their future. The choices of values that an organization can select can be limitless, but here are some examples: honesty, perseverance, respect, personal integrity, equity (NEASC, 2016)

An organization’s beliefs about learning form the basis about teaching and learning practices. There are multiple philosophies about what is fundamental for student success identified in initiatives such as in 21st Century Learning Expectations or Social Emotional Learning. Beliefs about learning can encapsulate these and other philosophies. Examples include:

- All students have the potential to achieve, although at different paces.
- Each student has something uniquely individual to offer their school and community.
- Students learn best when instruction provides students with opportunities to solve authentic problems.
- Students should experience equal opportunities to work alone and also work cooperatively and collaboratively with others to reflect on their learning.
- Students should feel safe, both physically and emotionally, in their school and classrooms.
- The use of technology is a vital tool in teaching students and for students to teach themselves. (NEASC, 2016)

## Considerations

It is important that core values and beliefs about learning are the result of thoughtful conversations about the direction the entire organizational community wishes to pursue and the values that drive them in that direction. To ensure that core values and beliefs about learning reflect the larger community, they should be developed in a collaborative, dynamic and inclusive process. This process should include administrators, teachers, students, families, and community members who have vested interest in shaping the school culture that promotes improved learning for all students.

## Activity:

The [Identify Core Values and Beliefs about Learning Activity](#) is designed to support educators to identify, or review/revise current core values and beliefs about learning within a standards-based system.

## Source

Commission on Public Schools and Committee on Public Secondary Schools. New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. (Revised June, 2016): Guide to Developing and Implementing Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations.