



Mount Merici School Earns Accreditation!



In December, 2010, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges formally granted Mount Merici School full accreditation! This exciting news comes after nearly two years of planning, rigorous self-evaluation and peer review, involving tremendous work by faculty, staff, parents, Board members and members of our Mount Merici School community.

Why is Accreditation Important?

Accreditation signifies quality assurance and continuous improvement in education. The self-evaluation and professional peer review in which we participated is based on 15 standards affecting mission, governance and administration, finances, physical plant, professional staff, student population, programs and overall quality of student life. These standards benefit every student enrolled at MMS, including decades of graduates whose diplomas are now enhanced by the NEASC seal of approval.

What is NEASC?

Founded 125 years ago, NEASC is the oldest of the six regional accrediting associations in the United States. Its Independent School



Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Ms. Michaud, co-chairs of the MMS Accreditation process, proudly display Mount Merici's NEASC Accreditation plaque at a special announcement during the 2010 Mount Merici School Christmas Program.

Commission works with 627 private schools in various stages of the accreditation process.

Mount Merici School is now one of 33, K-12 independent, non-public schools in Maine and one of only two accredited Catholic elementary schools in the state to earn accreditation!

How Did We Earn Accreditation?

For Mount Merici, the accreditation process began in the fall of 2008, when Mount Merici contacted the Independent School Commission of NEASC. Following the application and reporting process, two administrators from NEASC-accredited schools conducted an on-site survey visit.

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In September, 2009, Mount Merici was granted candidate status.

Two senior faculty members, Mrs. Mary Ellen Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Erinn Michaud, were recruited to serve as co-chairs of our accreditation process. For the next 10 months, every teacher and staff member, as well as some Board members, served on various subcommittees addressing the school's adherence to the 15 standards of educational excellence. Included in this self-study were comprehensive surveys of parents, students and faculty. A committee reviewed recommendations and a comprehensive action plan was developed to address institutional strengths and challenges. This report was submitted to NEASC in June, 2010.

On September 26, 2010, Mount Merici welcomed a visiting committee of professional educators from NEASC, whose members spent four days at our school. The visiting team met with parents, alumni and Board members and had extensive conversations with administrators and students, visited classes and scrutinized every aspect of our school to make certain our self-study accurately described how MMS carries out its mission. The team measured our school against the criteria of each standard and produced a comprehensive report for NEASC with a list of recommendations.

What Does Accreditation Mean for Mount Merici School?

- We are now a member of the family of outstanding private schools throughout New England, adhering to a documented standard of excellence in every aspect of our operation;
- We have received quality assurance that we are adhering to a documented standard of excellence in every aspect of our operation;
- We are faithfully fulfilling our mission, enrolling students appropriate for our curriculum and providing a safe and healthy environment.
- We have experienced administrators to the lead the school forward, qualified faculty to serve our students, and sufficient resources to meet our commitments.
- Additional benefits of anticipation that many more prospective students and families will take a closer look at an accredited Mount Merici School!

Commendations from NEASC:

In December, 2010, the Board of Trustees of NEASC elected Mount Merici School to institutional membership and granted full accreditation by the Association. NEASC commended Mount Merici School for:

- the seriousness with which we developed our Self-Study and embraced the accreditation process;
- the dedication, hard work and collaboration of the faculty, administration, parents and Board of Directors;
- the exemplary way we carry out our Mission.

What's Next?

A team of faculty and administrators will begin the work of organizing the school's implementation of recommendations. We will faithfully file a two-year interim evaluation report in 2012, a five-year report in 2015 and will have a full review of our accreditation status in 2020.

As we approach Mount Merici School's centennial anniversary in 2011, because of this incredible experience, we are strategically positioned for success into the next 100 years!