



Whole School Assessment Program Overview

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2026-2027

Purpose

The New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) Whole School Assessment is a comprehensive school improvement process designed to help schools make informed decisions regarding the quality, effectiveness, and philosophical intent of their programs and practices. Through a collaborative review conducted by experienced middle-level educators, schools receive valuable feedback, commendations, and recommendations grounded in middle-level research and best practices.

Timeline

A typical Whole School Assessment spans approximately three to five months and culminates in a comprehensive written report delivered to the school within four weeks of the on-site visit.

Assessment Process

Planning

The process begins with an on-site planning meeting involving school and district administrators. During this meeting, NELMS representatives review the assessment process, establish timelines, discuss expectations, and address logistical details.

Self-Study Surveys

Prior to the site visit, surveys are administered to key stakeholder groups, including:

- Faculty
- Support Staff
- Students
- Parents and Guardians

Survey results help provide the Visiting Team with a broad understanding of the school's strengths, challenges, and culture.

Three-Day On-Site Visit

The assessment is conducted by a Visiting Team typically composed of five experienced educators. Team members volunteer their time and may include NELMS staff, Board members, and educators from NELMS member schools.

The review is organized around the seven characteristics identified in *Turning Points 2000*:

1. Curriculum and Assessment
2. Varied Instruction
3. Middle Level Teachers and Staff
4. Relationships for Learning
5. Govern Democratically
6. Healthy School Environment
7. Involving Parents and Community

Additional guidance is drawn from *The Successful Middle School: This We Believe*, ensuring that the assessment reflects current middle-level philosophy, research, and best practices.

During the visit, team members engage in:

- Interviews with faculty and staff
- Classroom observations
- Meetings with grade-level and interdisciplinary teams
- Meetings with leadership teams
- Student focus groups
- Parent and community meetings

Report Development and Submission

Following the visit:

- Each Visiting Team member completes one or more assigned sections of the report.
- The Whole School Assessment Coordinator reviews, edits, and compiles all sections into a cohesive document.
- The completed report is submitted to school and district administrators within one month of the site visit.

The final report includes commendations, recommendations, and practical suggestions to support continuous improvement.

Cost of a Whole School Assessment

\$7,000 plus expenses

Expenses include:

- Travel at the current IRS reimbursement rate
- Tolls and parking
- Lodging for the Visiting Team during the three-day visit
- Meals during the assessment

Optional Follow-Up Support

For an additional **\$2,500**, NELMS will provide up to **10 hours of consultation** during the school year following the assessment. Consultation may be provided in person or via Zoom to building administrators, leadership teams, faculty, or other designated stakeholders to assist with implementing recommendations and advancing school improvement efforts.

Eligibility

To participate in the Whole School Assessment Program, schools must hold a current **Comprehensive School Membership** with the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS).