

CANADA – SCHOOL ACCREDITATION AND LINK CREW

Accreditation is a voluntary process that schools undergo to ensure that they are (1) worthy of the trust placed in them to provide high quality learning opportunities and (2) clearly demonstrating continual self-improvement.

In Canada, the Standards in Excellence and Learning Accreditation Standards (SEAL) and the Canadian Educational Standards Institute (CESI) accredit schools.

Most accreditation standards are common among accrediting agencies. Below is a list of some of the key standards of accreditation for Canada's Standards in Excellence and Learning, with which Link Crew aligns.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND STRATEGY

It is vital that schools have a clear sense of purpose and both a conceptual and practical framework for achieving its strategic goals. SEAL Canada would review this area to ensure that the school has a clearly articulated Vision, Mission, Values and Strategies, and that they are understood and accepted by all constituencies, including the Board, faculty, staff, parents, and students. These statements give direction to the Strategic Plan to ensure that all facets of school life are in alignment.

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS WITH THIS STANDARD

Link Crew sets up a structure within a school for disseminating information and ensuring that the entire school community has the opportunity to engage in and support the school's defined mission and strategic goals.

With Link Crew, trained student leaders (senior students) are able to communicate and demonstrate the school's purpose and direction with and among those who might otherwise be disengaged: grade 9s. Link Crew focuses the information dissemination process through the student-to-student connection both one on one and in small groups. This makes it far more likely that critical information is received and remembered.

Additionally, the Link Leaders and Coordinators themselves become more committed to the beliefs, philosophy and learning results of the school via their roles as messengers.

CO-CURRICULUM AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Independent schools should provide a wide range of activities where all students are actively engaged in areas outside of the classroom. In this standard, the school must demonstrate that it promotes and acts upon the academic, emotional, physical and social potentials of all its members within an ethical community.

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS WITH THIS STANDARD

Link Crew gives students the permission to care about each other and the structure in which to do it. By connecting senior students with grade 9s with the structure and training to make the relationship meaningful, and students have the opportunity to focus on the important aspects of their lives.

Specifically, Link Crew helps address the three fundamental transition needs that students have: Safety, Information and Connection.

In many high schools, the focus is on keeping students safe by keeping bad things from entering the school environment. As a result, money and resources are invested in security to seal off the school.

Those inside our high schools, however, know that the far greater issue for students is keeping them safe from the negative forces within the school walls and halls. Bullying, rumors, isolation, and harassment are far more likely to pose safety risks on the average campus than external violence.

Link Crew allows students to have a trusted source of safety from their first moments on their school.

The more connected students are to their new school, the better they will do in all the measures that are important in tracking their success: grades, test scores, attendance, and discipline. All these measures are positively affected when students are connected.

Schools try to promote this crucial component of transition by offering co-curricular activities, athletics, and special events in the hopes that kids will connect. Unlike the two other components to a successful transition, this one is left to chance. Even the most robust co-curricular programs only involve a percentage of the students.

Link Crew creates a structure that connects every incoming grade 9 with a caring senior student from their first day through the end of their grade 9 year.

Social Follow-ups are events organized by the Link Crew Coordinator team in which the grade 9s and Leaders attend fun school sponsored social events together.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The academic program should be designed to facilitate the school's mission and be implemented to meet the needs of its students. All students at an independent school should be receiving an enriched education. In this Standard, the school's program must be congruent with its mission and strategic plan. The academic program must be based upon an articulated philosophy and supporting research about how students learn and the most effective ways to teach them.

HOW LINK CREW ALIGNS WITH THIS STANDARD

Schools that have implemented the Link Crew transition program indicate that when grade 9s connect with senior students in positive ways, schools can dramatically reduce grade 9 truancies, dropouts, failing grades, hazing, bullying, harassment, disciplinary referrals and detentions. These initial indicators show that grade 9s experience feelings of connection to school, develop trusted relationships with adults and feel part of the community as a whole because they have connected with senior students as mentors.

Link Crew data averaged across schools confirms a 37% reduction in grade 9 disciplinary referrals and a 33% reduction in grade 9 absences.