

Focus on  
**Learning**  

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**THE ACCREDITATION MANUAL**



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**2010 WASC EDITION**

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10/10/11

# Focus on **Learning**

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**THE ACCREDITATION MANUAL**

Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200  
Burlingame, CA 94010



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**2010 WASC EDITION**



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## Preface

If educational organizations are to concentrate all their energies and resources on successful student learning, a holistic, honest examination of the actual program for students is required. Through the use of empowering criteria, new communication patterns, evidence gathering techniques, and insight from fellow educators, the appropriate accreditation process can serve as a vehicle to move school community members into meaningful schoolwide improvement and accountability. The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), utilizes a protocol for accrediting schools entitled *Focus on Learning* as part of a cycle of continuous school improvement.

The *Focus on Learning* process has been widely accepted throughout the WASC region as integral to the “heart” of education — successful student learning. This has been demonstrated through a variety of *Focus on Learning* adaptations as WASC works jointly with numerous educational associations. Public, independent and church-related private K–12 and adult schools value the “basic components” of *Focus on Learning* that can be “institutionalized” as the schools address growth areas that impact student learning. These include: (1) the defining of quality achievement of expected schoolwide learning results for every student by all stakeholders; (2) schoolwide interdisciplinary dialogue based on evidence gathering and analysis about what students are doing and producing; and (3) the development, implementation, and accomplishment of a schoolwide action plan. Therefore, all schools view the *Focus on Learning* process as a living document.



# **The Big Picture**



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# Focus on Learning: Overview

## Background

The accreditation process for WASC resulted from intensive work of an advisory group composed of representatives from the WASC region. They synthesized the issues and concerns from the WASC constituency with current thinking and research-based knowledge about teaching and learning. The basic concepts addressed in this process focus upon student success in meeting the expected schoolwide learning results or schoolwide learner outcomes [i.e., what each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit (graduation) from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program]. They are:

1. How are the students doing with respect to the expected schoolwide learning results or schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards?
2. Is the school doing everything possible to support high achievement of these results for all its students?

## Focus on Learning and School Change

To ensure that the critical elements of school change were integral to the *Focus on Learning* design, the following specific features are included:

- The clarification of the school's purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes or schoolwide learner outcomes for all students
- The involvement of the school community in self-directed problem-solving
- The opportunity for the following:
  - analysis of the actual program for students
  - meaningful dialogue
  - collaboration and shared decision-making
- The use of high quality criteria to analyze the program for students
- The development of a schoolwide action plan to support desired learning results
- The opportunity for an outside perspective regarding the proposed changes through the Visiting Committee's dialogue and findings
- The monitoring of progress in meeting or redefining goals and actions through accreditation reviews and reports

## Criteria

The criteria are research-based guidelines of systemic school improvement that address accreditation's central tenet: a school operates with a clear understanding of its purpose.

The criteria were developed with the assistance of numerous practicing educational leaders and theorists. The objective was to develop criteria that brought attention to concepts and factors that differentiate between effective and ineffective schools. Since most formal education occurs in an institutional setting, factors that impact institutional effectiveness were considered along with curriculum, instructional strategies and assessment.

Specifically, in *Focus on Learning*, the schools will be assessed against four categories of criteria. These are:

- Organization for Student Learning
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
- Resource Management and Development

## Importance of School's Purpose and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

An essential element of systemic school improvement is the collective vision or statement of purpose on the part of the members of the school community: What should students know and be able to do upon exit from the school? What does it mean to be an educated person? What is the most effective preparation of students for the future?

The purpose provides the school's foundation for establishing expected schoolwide learning result or schoolwide learner outcomes. These state the global knowledge, skills, and understanding students should possess upon exit from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program. The attainment of these schoolwide learner outcomes drives the instructional program and the support operations of the school and therefore is integral to the school's accreditation process. These learner outcomes complement the more specific curricular standards.

## Importance of Evidence

Translating the school's purpose into expected schoolwide learning results or schoolwide learner outcomes for all students is a beginning. The self-study phase of the accreditation process revolves around an in-depth gathering of evidence that will enable a school to take an honest look at what is and isn't working based upon the criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes. This verification is key to learning about the actual instruction experienced by students.

Observable evidence includes analyzing the following:

- what students are doing and producing (student work)
- student interviews and observations
- hard data and information, e.g., student indicators for attendance, special needs, schoolwide performance
- other interviews, observations, etc.

## Accreditation Cycle

The accreditation process is a perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring, and reassessment (self-study, visit, and follow-up). During the year prior to the visit, a school clarifies or redefines its expected schoolwide learning results and begins the formal self-study process that assesses the actual student program with respect to the criteria. The self-study process culminates in the development of a 3–5 year schoolwide action plan. The completed school report is sent to the visiting committee members for careful study at least four to five weeks prior to their spring visit. Using the results of the visit, the school modifies and implements its action plan in this ongoing cycle of improvement.

### WASC Six-Year Cycle for Schools

**Past Cycle — *Year Six:*** Completion of Self-Study/Visit/Refinement of Strategic Plan

**New Cycle:**

***Year One:*** Profile Update, Progress Report, Refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan

***Year Two:*** Profile update, Progress Report, refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan

***Year Three:*** Profile update, Midterm Progress Report and One-Day Review),  
Refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan

***Year Four:*** Profile Update, Progress Report, Refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan

***Year Five:*** Review of all profile data, Progress Report, Progress and Program  
Analysis (beginning of next Self-Study), revision of Schoolwide Action  
Plan

***Year Six:*** Completion of Self-Study, including refinement of Schoolwide Action  
Plan, visit by WASC Team, revision of Schoolwide Action Plan after Visit

## Parameters for Analysis in Self-Study

The school's self-study is predicated on five key components. Through the completion of the accreditation process, the school will have accomplished:

1. the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.
2. the clarification of the school's purpose and the schoolwide learner outcomes.
3. the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

4. the development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs.
5. the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan.

## Flexibility

As long as the school adheres to the parameters for analysis, there is flexibility in the self-study process. For your assistance a model is provided. If the school modifies the model to accommodate a particular school community, it should explain how the previously listed parameters have been met.

## Model Self-Study Process

The committee structure should provide a vehicle for the school and community members to examine the program for students collaboratively. After gathering of evidence, including the examination of student work from their respective areas of expertise, the various Subject Area/Support Committees contribute much of the information for these interdisciplinary group discussions. The resulting schoolwide action plan reflects the analyses by all school and community stakeholders.

The tasks of the self-study focus on evaluating the school against the criteria and assessing the degree to which all students are achieving the expected schoolwide learning results. These steps are given below:

**Task 1:** Refine the student and community profile.

Responsible Committees: Student/Community Profile Committee  
Leadership Team

**Task 2:** Clarify the school's purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results or schoolwide learner outcomes.

Responsible Committee: Leadership Team

**Task 3:** Summarize progress on schoolwide action plan that integrated identified critical areas for follow-up since previous full self-study.

Responsible Committee: Leadership Team

**Task 4:** Using the WASC Criteria, the schoolwide learner outcomes (including the identified critical academic needs):

- Analyze the quality of the school program.
- Synthesize and summarize the findings.
- Determine aligned strengths and growth needs.

Responsible Committees: Schoolwide Focus Groups and Home Groups

**Task 5:** Revise or create a comprehensive action plan that will drive achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results or schoolwide learner outcomes.

Establish an ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan.

Responsible Committee: Leadership Team

## Visit

After careful study of the School Report, a Visiting Committee composed of fellow educators spends three and one-half days at the school. The purpose of the visit is to provide an outside perspective from educators who are thoroughly familiar with the criteria used by the school.

The Visiting Committee gives insight to the school through dialogue with the Schoolwide Focus Groups and the Stakeholder/Program Committees or Home Groups about the self-study findings and by its own gathering of evidence and analysis of student work. In collaboration the Visiting Committee and the Leadership Team/Schoolwide Focus Groups compare findings. The resulting discussion and written results assist the school in refining the schoolwide action plan with respect to the criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

## Accreditation Term Factors

The Accrediting Commission for Schools grants accreditation based on the findings of the Visiting Committee. Accreditation factors have been developed by the Commission that reflect the overall aspects of the ongoing school improvement process or accreditation. These factors have incorporated the five parameters of analysis in the self-study process, the WASC criteria organized by categories, and important emphases already present within the WASC criteria. These factors are the following:

1. Involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study that accomplishes the five parameters of the self-study.
2. The defining of the school's purpose through schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards.
3. The use of a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student performance data.
4. The acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.
5. An *Organization for Student Learning* that supports high achievement for all students.

6. *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* that supports high achievement for all students.
7. *Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth* that supports high achievement for all students.
8. *Resource Management and Development* that supports high achievement for all students.
9. The alignment of a long-range schoolwide action plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.
10. The capacity to monitor and implement the schoolwide action plan.
11. The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.

## **Follow-up**

Subsequent to the visit, the school refines and implements the action plan. The Leadership Team will coordinate this implementation, annual review of progress, and the refinement of the "next steps" in meeting the goals. All follow-up is done with respect to evidence that students are accomplishing the established schoolwide learner outcomes. The governing authority is involved in the ongoing improvement process to ensure that the follow-up process is integral to planning and goal setting. Essentially, every year between intervening self-studies, the school does the following to ensure an ongoing "nonhyperventilating" process.

- An updated student/community profile
- Refinement of the Schoolwide Action Plan, as needed

## **Focus on Learning: WASC Schoolwide Criteria**

### **A. Organization for Student Learning**

#### ***School Purpose***

1. The school has established a clear statement of purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution. The purpose is defined further by adopted expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) that form the basis of the educational program for every student.

#### ***Governance***

2. The governing authority (a) adopts policies which are consistent with the school purpose and support the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) for the school, (b) delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff and (c) monitors results.

#### ***School Leadership***

3. The school leadership (1) makes decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), (2) empowers the staff and (3) encourages commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning.

#### ***Staff***

4. The school leadership and staff are qualified for their assigned responsibilities, are committed to the school's purpose and engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.

#### ***School Environment***

5. The school has a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school's purpose and is characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student.

#### ***Reporting Student Progress***

6. The school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and report student progress to the rest of the school community.

### ***School Improvement Process***

7. The school leadership facilitates school improvement which (a) is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students, (b) has school community support and involvement, (c) effectively guides the work of the school, and (d) provides for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan.

## **B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

### ***What Students Learn***

1. The school provides a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose and results in student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) through successful completion of any course of study offered.

### ***How Students Learn***

2. The professional staff (a) uses research-based knowledge about teaching and learning, and (b) designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

### ***How Assessment is Used***

3. Teacher and student uses of assessment are frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process. The assessment results are the basis for (a) measurement of each student's progress toward expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), (b) regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction, and (c) allocation of resources.

## **C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth**

### ***Student Connectedness***

1. Students are connected to a system of support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular and co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

***Parent/Community Involvement***

2. The school leadership employs a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the school's established support system for students.

**D. Resource Management and Development**

***Resources***

1. The resources available to the school are sufficient to sustain the school program and are effectively used to carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

***Resource Planning***

2. The governing authority and the school leadership execute responsible resource planning for the future.

July 14, 1997



## Key Terminology

To ensure common understanding of the terms, which are used in the criteria and the *Focus on Learning* process, the following definitions are provided and will be operational for *Focus on Learning*.

### **Accreditation:**

A process of ongoing school improvement that examines all aspects of the school program and operations in relation to the impact on high quality student learning. A school conducts self-study that serves as the basis for a review by a visiting committee of professional educators who assist the school in assessing the school's effectiveness of the school's program and operations and its impact on student learning. The school is assessed on the degree to which the school is meeting the WASC Criteria and related accreditation factors that emphasize the key self-study outcomes and important aspects of the ongoing school improvement process.

### **Action Plan:**

A school's step by step process that details specific activities using existing resources that can address a school's identified growth needs.

### **All Students:**

A reference to the belief that all students can learn at high levels and should have sufficient support to enable them to achieve the schoolwide learner outcomes. Every student enrolled in the school, regardless of sub-population or unique characteristics, is included.

### **Challenging Relevant Curriculum:**

A demanding curriculum based on themes and concepts that encourages the student to achieve at high levels, to use "higher order thinking skills," and to apply and synthesize knowledge.

### **Coherent Curriculum:**

A curriculum that is viewed as a broadly conceived concept and makes sense as a whole with subparts unified, connected and integrated.

### **Competency:**

A performance objective.

### **Course Competencies/Subject Area Results:**

Established goals, objectives and expectations for what students are to know and be able to do upon the completion of a class, course or sequence of courses within a subject area or program. These results are aligned with the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and "enable" students to progress toward accomplishing these results.

### **Current Educational Research and Thinking:**

Research and related discourse and publications on education and learning. Examples include: the work of such authors as Richard Elmore, Doug Reeves, Grant Wiggins, Jay

McTighe, Michael Fullan, Robert Marzano, Lauren Resnick and Richard Sagor; work and publications on state, national, and subject area standards; and government, business and industry research.

**Diverse Population:**

The variety of subpopulations in the school, populations defined by ethnicity, gender, religious affiliations/beliefs, ability levels, socio-economic status, etc.

**Expected Schoolwide Learning Result or Schoolwide Learner Outcome:**

What each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit (e.g., graduation) from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program. These learning results are collaboratively developed and represent the focus of the entire school community.

**NCCT:**

National Center for School Textbook and Curriculum Development, a non-governmental agency affiliated to the Ministry of Education of China, authorized by the Chinese Ministry of Education to provide Chinese accreditation to Schools for Children of Foreign Nationals (international schools) in China.

**Portfolio:**

A collection of representative student work.

**Purpose:**

A clarification of the beliefs, vision, and mission held by members of the school community about what the school can do for students with respect to knowledge, skills, and understandings through the school program.

**School Community:**

The school community includes (1) local business and industry, educational institutions, agencies, and service organizations; (2) parents, students, school board; and (3) all employees.

**Schoolwide Action Plan:**

The overall improvement strategies as a result of the self-study process.

**Special Needs:**

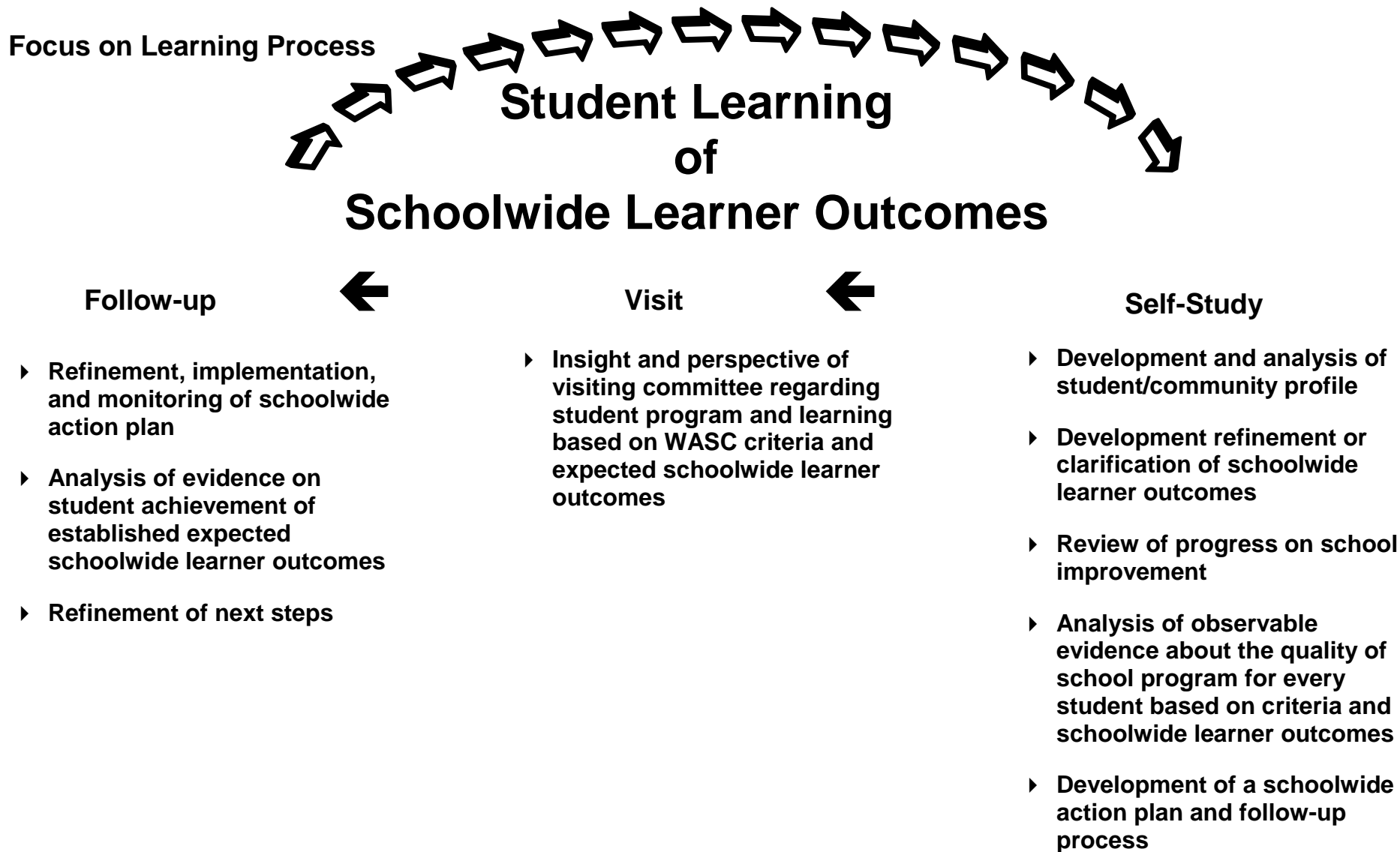
Students who need additional physical and/or mental support services to accomplish the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) at their maximum potential.

**Subject Area:**

A specific body of information or knowledge; a discipline.

**Self-Study Coordinator (SC):**

The facilitator/leader of the school's accreditation process in collaboration with the school leadership.



\* Observable evidence includes analyzing results of what students are doing and producing; student interviews and observations; hard data and information; other interviews, observations, etc.



# **The Self-Study: Background Information**



## Self-Study Coordinator Guidelines

### **Getting Started: School Year Prior to Year of Self-Study/Visit, September–June**

- \_\_\_1. Chief Administrator/Self-Study Coordinator (SC) participate in training
- \_\_\_2. Chief Administrator and the SC establish (1) a general calendar for the major self-study events and (2) a more detailed timeline of specific committee meetings and tasks to be accomplished

The self-study coordinator works backwards from the date of the visit, and makes plans to submit the report to the Visiting Committee at least four to five weeks prior to the visit to allow the team enough time to review the report.

- \_\_\_3. Chief Administrator and SC establish support mechanisms

Working with the SC, the chief administrator ensures there are support mechanisms, such as governing authority and district understanding and assistance, professional time for staff members, financial resources and clerical/technical help.

- \_\_\_4. SC orients staff and other school community member groups

This orientation should include:

- a. An explanation of the WASC accreditation process and its benefits to the school community
- b. An overview of the *Focus on Learning* self-study process
- c. The nature and purpose of the visit
- d. Accreditation term factors
- e. The importance of the ongoing improvement process for successful student learning

- \_\_\_5. SC and chief administrator appoint chairs for all committees

The committees for the model self-study process include: Schoolwide Focus Groups, Student/Community Profile Committee, Student/Parent Groups, Subject Area/Program Committees, Support Staff Groups. The Leadership Team is composed of the Schoolwide Focus Group chairs, the SC, the chief administrator and other selected members.

- \_\_\_6. SC prepares self-study packets

Suggested information for the self-study packets include: the overview, general and specific timeline, committee structure and membership, summary of products (self-study report format), self-study steps, and all criteria with indicators, suggested areas to analyze, and sample prompts. *Add to the packets after their development or refinement, the student/community profile and the expected schoolwide learning results.*

\_\_\_7. SC trains Leadership Team and chairs of all committees

Training should emphasize:

- a. A review of the basic purpose of the self-study, visit, and follow-up: a staff development/school improvement process
- b. The parameters of the self-study
- c. The importance of verification: in-depth gathering of evidence
- d. The five steps of the model self-study or the school's modifications
- e. The extreme importance of all committee members understanding the use of the assigned criteria, suggested areas to analyze and the schoolwide learner outcomes in the accreditation process
- f. The key connection between the conversations and data gathered by the Home Groups and the evidence needed in the response to the criteria indicators, suggested areas to analyze, and sample prompts by the Schoolwide Focus Groups
- g. The role of the chairs as:
  - (1) Trainers of committee members in the use of criteria suggested areas to analyze
  - (2) Coordinators for gathering of information/data that needs to be examined and analyzed in comparison to the criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes
  - (3) Group facilitators of committee discussions and syntheses based on criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes
- h. The essential participation in regular meetings to review progress of the self-study

\_\_\_8. SC coordinates the formations of the committees

\_\_\_9. SC coordinates the availability of pertinent information for self-study

This information will be used by the Student/Community Profile Committee, the Schoolwide Focus Groups and the Home Groups. (See Task 1)

Subject area/program staff members will utilize curricular references, which can be obtained from a variety of sources.

## A Few Notes

***Taking Those First Steps: School year prior to year of self-study/visit, September–January***

### **Task 1**

- ✓ **Student and Parent Committees administer surveys or conduct interviews, share results with Student/Community Profile Committee**

The school is not required to conduct student/parent surveys for the self-study process; data may be gathered through other means, e.g., interviews. The school will be expected to explain how the information was gathered.

***Creating the Whole: School year prior to and year of self-study/visit, February–January***

### **Tasks 4–5**

- ✓ **Chief administrator and SC serve as a continual resource to Schoolwide Focus Groups and Home Groups. Chief administrator and SC meet regularly with the Leadership Team.**

Throughout the self-study, the SC helps the committees understand the process, assists in arrangements for collecting information, and helps with any difficulties. Essentially, the SC is a leader, coordinator, facilitator, and troubleshooter.

10. **The SC submits the self-study report after final Leadership Team review.**

**The SC arranges for the printing of an adequate number of copies and distributes them to the following people/organizations four to five weeks before the visit:**

- a. **The Visiting Committee members**
- b. **One copy of the report on any of the following forms of electronic media: CD or DVD (reference and support materials are not required) to:**

**Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Boulevard, Suite 200  
Burlingame, CA 94010**

- c. **Copies for staff members and members of the school community**



## Timeline: Flow of Activities

<b>Year Prior to Self-Study September–January Activities</b>	<b>Players</b>	<b>Product</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in training/orientations</li> </ul>	Principal/SC/Staff and other School Community Members	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Student/Community Profile</li> </ul>	Student Profile Committee	Summary Support Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification of schoolwide learner outcomes</li> </ul>	Leadership Team	List and process description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of progress from last full self-study and subsequent reports and revisits/reviews</li> </ul>	Staff and other Stakeholders	Summary of progress on action plan, areas of follow-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding use of WASC criteria</li> </ul>	Schoolwide Focus Groups	None
<b>Year Prior to and Year of Self-Study February–January Activities</b>	<b>Players</b>	<b>Product</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Programs: What should be, what exists</li> </ul>	Home Groups	Notes/evidence for self-study use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data gathering based on WASC criteria</li> </ul>	Home Groups	Notes/evidence for Focus Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesis of all information/evidence. Determination of growth needs</li> </ul>	Schoolwide Focus Group	Summary, evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a schoolwide action plan using Schoolwide Focus Group findings</li> </ul>	Leadership Team	Written plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assurance of schoolwide consensus and development of action steps to support the plan</li> </ul>	School Committee	Support steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of follow-up process</li> </ul>	Leadership Team	Description
<b>March–Ongoing Activities</b>	<b>Players</b>	<b>Product</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The visit</li> </ul>	School/Visiting Committee	Visiting Committee Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation and monitoring of schoolwide action plan and its impact on student learning</li> </ul>	School	Ongoing reporting of progress

## MAKEUP

### Home Groups:

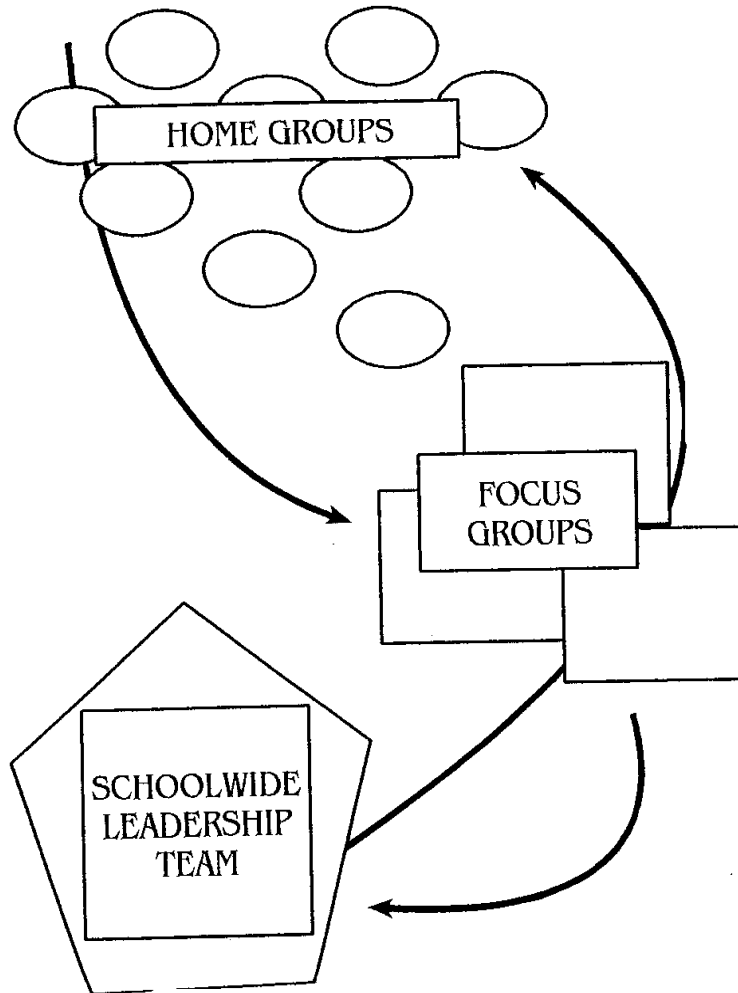
Can be organized by subject, by program, grade levels, or other criterion.

### Schoolwide Interdisciplinary Focus Groups:

Constituencies that should serve on focus groups: students, all administrators and instructions and support staff, parents, community/business, district or corporate leadership.

### Leadership Team:

Chair of each Focus Group, principal, self-study coordinator, and other members of school community.



## TASKS

### Home Groups:

Program analysis, evidence collection, and assessment, based on schoolwide learner outcomes and criteria. Findings shared with focus groups.

### Focus Groups:

Synthesize findings from home groups, based on schoolwide learner outcomes and criteria, identify growth areas, validate through home groups.

### Leadership Team:

Facilitate the clarification of schoolwide learner outcomes and development of a schoolwide action plan, based on focus group findings supported by observable evidence.

## School Committees

- ✧ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #1: The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.

A typical committee structure includes three types: home groups, interdisciplinary focus groups, and the leadership team. Each level of responsibility serves a different function. Home groups engage all staff within their local communities of interest or responsibility. Focus groups create teams incorporating representatives from all the home groups who examine criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes from an interdisciplinary perspective; and the Leadership Team coordinates the entire process and synthesizes focus group findings into a workable schoolwide action plan.

### Leadership Team

#### Leadership Team Tasks:

- Facilitate entire self-study process
- Facilitate completion of Progress Report on action plan since last full self-study (Chapter III)
- Guide school through development and refinement of schoolwide learner outcomes (Chapter II)
- Create a schoolwide action plan for identified growth areas using findings of Schoolwide Focus Groups (Chapter V)
- Obtain feedback from Focus Groups and Home Groups and gain consensus regarding the schoolwide action plan (Chapter V)
- Coordinate the follow-up process to monitor the implementation and the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan (Chapter V)

### Student/Community Profile Committee

The Student/Community Profile Committee is typically made up of one or more administrators, certified staff members, students, community members or parents where applicable, and sometimes a central office representative. They undertake to create the first concrete product of the self-study process: the profile of the school and its community, which provides context to the rest of the self-study. Members of this committee will also serve on the other school committees as the self-study proceeds.

#### Student/Community Profile Committee Tasks:

- Select, gather, and analyze all pertinent data that is relevant to the success of students in the school.
- Draft the student/community profile, including student achievement data, important socio-economic and demographic data and perception data. Analyze the data.
- Validate through communication with all staff and prepare a summary that includes appropriate charts, graphs, and tables.

## Home Groups

Home groups can be organized by subject, by site, by program or employee job type, or according to other criteria. However they are constructed, home groups provide much of the core evidence collection and evaluation work upon which the self-study process is based.

### Subject Area or Program Group Tasks:

- Study and understand the student/community profile
- Participate in the development of schoolwide learner outcomes
- Understand concepts of WASC criteria related to student learning
- Gather and analyze the evidence to demonstrate student performance within group's program or curricular area in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, curricular program standards, and WASC criteria
- Provide results of this analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on the schoolwide action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth areas

### Support Staff Group Tasks:

- Study and understand the student/community profile
- Participate in the development of schoolwide learner outcomes
- Understand concepts of WASC criteria related to student learning
- Gather and analyze evidence to demonstrate how support services (1) contribute to student performance in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, (2) meet program or service standards for various support areas, and (3) meet the WASC criteria
- Provide results of analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on schoolwide action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth areas

### Parent/Community Group Tasks:

- Contribute to development of the student/community profile
- Study and understand the student/community profile
- Participate in the development of schoolwide learner outcomes
- Understand concepts of WASC criteria related to student learning
- Gather and analyze evidence which illustrates from a community perspective how well school programs and services contribute to student performance in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, current and emerging community needs, and the WASC criteria
- Provide results of analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on schoolwide action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth needs

### Student Group Tasks:

- Contribute to development of the student profile
- Study and understand the student/community profile
- Participate in the development of schoolwide learner outcomes

- Understand concepts of WASC criteria related to student learning
- Gather and analyze evidence which illustrates from a student perspective how well school programs and services contribute to student performance in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, current and emerging student needs, and the WASC criteria
- Provide results of analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on schoolwide action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth areas

### **Focus Groups**

A Focus Group is composed of certified staff members representing all the home groups, and other stakeholders; the suggested size of a group is twelve to fifteen. Focus groups are schoolwide and interdisciplinary. There will usually be one focus group for each of the criteria categories (Organization for Student Learning; Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth; and Resource Management and Development). Focus groups synthesize the findings from the home groups in terms of the WASC criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Every certified staff member is expected to serve on both a home group and a focus group; the ideal is for all other support staff and representatives of other stakeholders to do likewise. However, in some situations, the membership of focus groups may not all be inclusive. Large schools may have more than one focus group for each category, while smaller schools may find that using a “Committee of the Whole” to work with all categories will be more effective.

#### **Focus Group Tasks:**

- Obtain ongoing feedback from Home Groups throughout process of Focus Group synthesis.
- With respect to each WASC criterion, examine and analyze the data from the Home Groups about student learning in relation to the schoolwide learner outcomes and current program standards. This analysis should be organized by WASC criteria and cut across curricular, role, and program boundaries.
- Identify the school’s growth needs.
- If more than one Focus Group is examining the same criterion, integrate their findings, supporting evidence, and growth areas into the final self-study report.
- Obtain feedback from Home Groups on the growth areas with respect to the schoolwide learner outcomes.
- Synthesize findings and supporting evidence, and identify growth areas for each of the WASC criteria (3–7 pages per criterion, Chapter IV).
- Have available for the Visiting Team evidence for review that has been examined by the school’s Home and Focus Groups.



# Summary of Products: Focus on Learning Report Format

## Title Page/Table of Contents

### Preface

Explanation of the school self-study process used to accomplish the parameters of the self-study, i.e., any modifications from the model self-study process.

### Chapter I: Student/Community Profile and Supporting Data

- A. Student/Community Profile that includes findings, appropriate charts, tables, graphs (at least three years of data, if possible)
- B. Overall Summary from Analysis of Profile Data
  - a. Implications, interpretations, trends, patterns
  - b. Identified critical academic needs
  - c. Important questions (3–4) raised by the analysis of the student performance, demographic, and perception data (These will be used by the Home and Focus Groups.)

### Chapter II: School Purpose and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

- A. Statement of the school’s purpose (e.g., core values, vision, mission)
- B. List of the schoolwide learner outcomes and explanation of the process used to determine these.

### Chapter III: Progress Report

- Summary of progress on the schoolwide action plan that incorporated all critical areas of follow-up from the last full study.

### Chapter IV: Self-Study Findings

For the criteria categories, prepare a 3–7 page summary of the findings for each criterion in the categories. Include the following: (1) the findings based on the concepts of each criterion in the category; (2) the evidence that supports these findings, and (3) the identification of strengths and growth needs (prioritized).

- A. Organization for Student Learning
    - 1. School Purpose
    - 2. Governance
    - 3. School Leadership
    - 4. Staff
    - 5. School Environment
    - 6. Reporting Student Progress
    - 7. School Improvement Process
- Strengths  
Growth Areas

- B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  - 1. What Students Learn
  - 2. How Students Learn
  - 3. How Assessment is UsedStrengths  
Growth Areas
  
- C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
  - 1. Student Connectedness
  - 2. Parent/Community InvolvementStrengths  
Growth Areas
  
- D. Resource Management and Development
  - 1. Resources
  - 2. Resource PlanningStrengths  
Growth Areas

## Chapter V: Schoolwide Action Plan

- A. The schoolwide action plan.

### **For each action plan section include:**

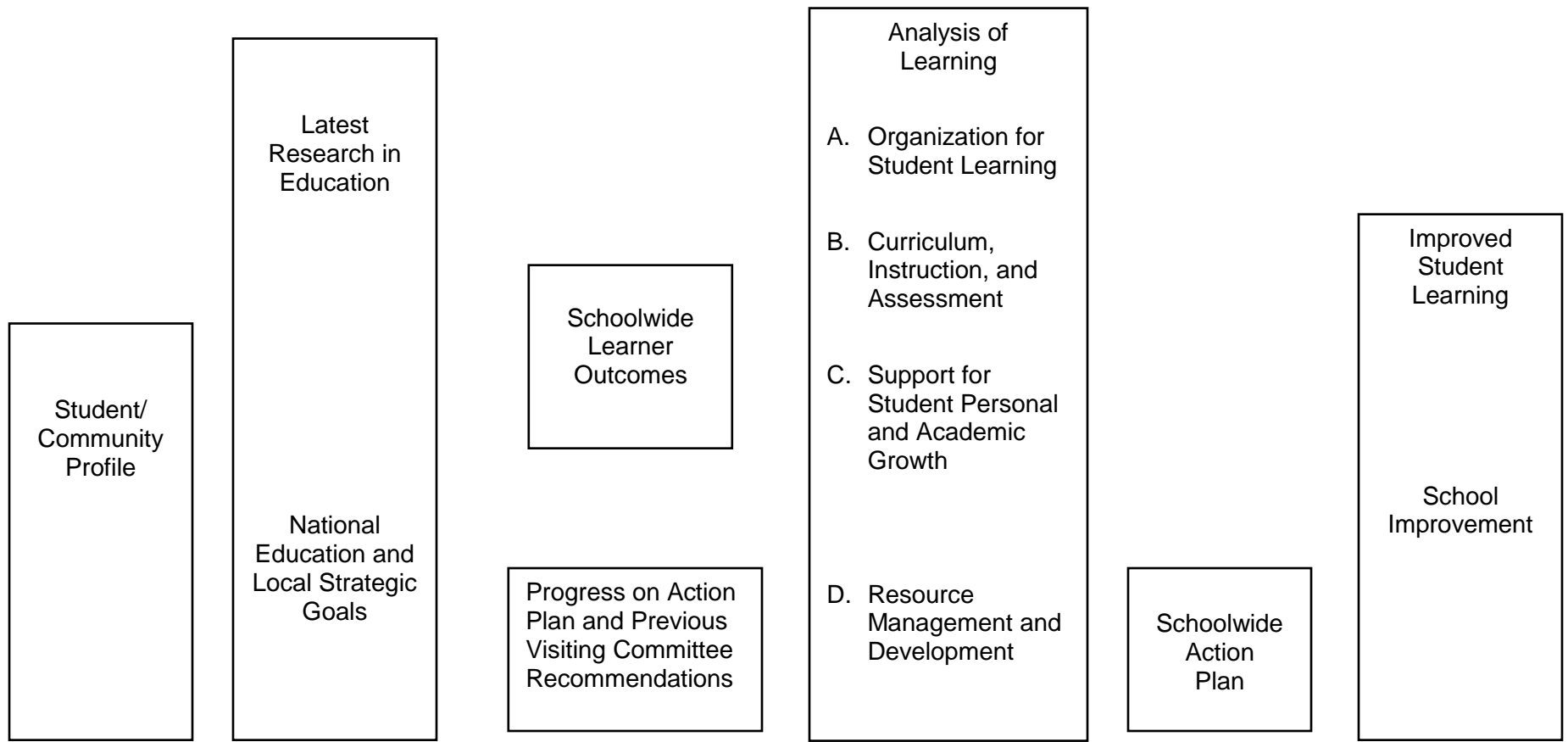
- statement of area for improvement (goal)
  - rationale for area based on self-study findings
  - one or more schoolwide learner outcomes addressed
  - ways of assessing progress, including student achievement of the learning results (and curricular standards)
  - specific steps, including professional development
  - timeline (month, year)
  - person(s) responsible (designate by asterisk) and involved resources
  - means to monitor and report progress to all members
- B. Specific strategies to be used by all the staff within each subject area/support program in order to accomplish the sections of the schoolwide action plan, if needed. (Note: *only if different from the schoolwide steps.*)
  - C. Description of the school's follow-up process.

## Appendix

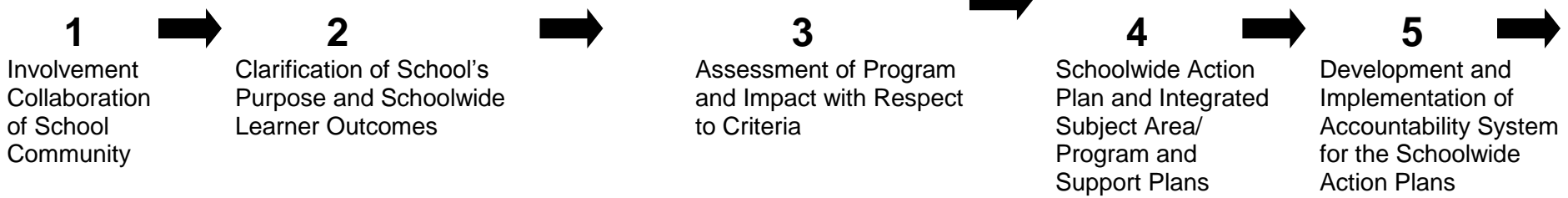
Results of questionnaires, interviews, and support material.

# **The Self-Study**





Parameters for the Improvement Process





## **WASC Focus on Learning Self-Study Self-Check Questions**

### **1. The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study**

#### ***School Committees***

- Is the leadership team representative of the school community?
- Is the suggested FOL committee structure being adapted to build upon and strengthen the school's current organization for schoolwide communication?
- Are all certified staff serving on two groups—a Home Group and a Focus Group?
- Has the school reflected upon the type of committee organization that will be most effective in the implementation of the schoolwide action plan? For example, should the school maintain the focus groups after the visit to oversee action plan sections?

#### ***Student/Community Profile (FOL, Task 1)***

- Has the school community gathered and analyzed all pertinent data in order to clarify the characteristics and achievement of ALL the students?
- Has the leadership team or profile committee produced a “user-friendly” profile for all stakeholders?
- Have the certified staff members and other stakeholders discussed the profile?
- Will the stakeholders use the profile to guide the inquiry into the school programs?
- Will the questions raised from the profile analysis be integral to the work of the home and schoolwide focus groups?
- Will the profile be regularly updated and used by the stakeholders as the school focuses on student achievement?

#### ***Progress Report (FOL, Task 3)***

- Did the school address each section of the action plan?
- Did the school show how all critical areas of follow-up from the last full self-study were integrated into the action plan?
- Does the report show how each section impacted student accomplishment of one or more of the schoolwide learner outcomes?

### **2. The clarification of the school's purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes.**

#### ***Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (FOL, Task 2)***

- Has the school obtained input from all members of the school community?
- Is there commitment to accomplishing the school's purpose and the schoolwide learner outcomes from all certified staff, all students and other stakeholder groups?
- To what extent has the school developed measurable indicators of the schoolwide learner outcomes and defined their quality accomplishment?
- Is the school beginning to discuss quality accomplishment of the schoolwide learner outcomes, as well as the curricular content and performance standards?

**3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes.**

***Assessment of Program for Students (FOL, Task 4)***

- Are all subject areas comparing themselves to appropriate curricular references and current educational thinking?
- Are the schoolwide learner outcomes and high quality curricular standards driving the school program?
- Are learning opportunities being provided in order for all students to meet the schoolwide learner outcomes through the implementation of the curricular standards and other aspects of the school program?
- Through the analysis of representative student work and observation of students' working, is there evidence of quality accomplishment of the schoolwide learner outcomes for all students?
- Have the groups discussed student achievement in relation to the WASC criteria and the school's operation?
- Was the analysis of the school program done in relation to the concepts of the criteria, the accomplishment of the schoolwide learner outcomes, and curricular standards?
- Was the accuracy of the findings discussed?
- Did discussion occur about how the findings relate to supporting the learning needs of all students?

**4. The development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs.**

**5. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan.**

***Development of Schoolwide Action Plan and Follow-up Process (FOL, Task 5)***

- Are the action plan sections addressing the major identified areas for improvement and the visiting committee's critical areas for follow-up?
- Will the action plan sections enhance the learning of all students as identified in the student/community profile?
- Are the schoolwide learner outcomes being addressed through the action plan?
- Has the school integrated other initiatives to create one "umbrella" schoolwide action plan?
- Is the action plan feasible and realistic? Are resources considered for each action plan section?
- Do the ways of assessing progress include the analysis of student learning?
- Is there sufficient schoolwide commitment to the action plan?
- Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the action plan?

## Task 1: Refine the student/community profile

- ✪ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #1: The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.

The student/community profile or school portfolio is a summary of demographic, achievement, perception and other data that will answer questions such as: What are the characteristics of the community served by the school? What are their needs in relation to education and employment? Who are the students? How are the students performing? Through this profile the school clarifies its identity, purpose and documents the client's needs and resources. This profile is a critical piece in the subsequent analytical work based on the WASC criteria in which the school evaluates the existing program to determine its effectiveness in supporting high quality student learning.

### Players

Student/Community Profile Committee

### Procedures

1. Select all pertinent data that is relevant to the success of students in your school. (Suggested categories of information are listed in this task).
2. Gather and analyze the data.
3. Draft succinct narrative descriptions that profile the students and community served by the school. This narrative should include important socio-economic and demographic data about the students and community, a specific summary of current student performance and any identified trends that have impacted the school.
4. Disseminate the draft to all staff, make modifications.
5. Prepare final summary profile.
  - Include in the Self-Study Report along with supporting charts, graphs and data.
  - Disseminate to all staff.

### Product

Self-Study Report, Chapter I:

- A. Student/Community Profile that includes findings, appropriate charts, tables, graphs (at least three years of data, if possible)
- B. Overall Summary from Analysis of Profile Data
  - a. Implications, interpretations, trends, patterns
  - b. Identified critical academic needs and show relationship to the schoolwide learner outcomes or expected schoolwide learning results
  - c. Important questions (3–4) raised by the analysis of the student performance, demographic, and perception data (These will be used by the Home and Focus Groups.)

Appendix: Include additional pertinent information such as more specific results from the questionnaires, interviews, or achievement data

## Categories of Information for Profile Development

- **School/Community**
  - School Description
  - Brief description of the community served by the school
  - External political/economic influences
  - Population breakdown — ethnic, socio-economic
  - Summary of instructional and support programs provided by school
- **WASC Accreditation History for School**
- **Student Demographics**
  1. Student indicators
    - Enrollment and program selection patterns schoolwide and by class or program
    - Mobility of students
    - Nationality
    - English Proficiency
    - Gender/age mix
    - Special populations
    - Health/safety issues
  2. Attendance patterns
  3. Data on student performance by sub-populations (three years of data, if possible). Include comparative data, e.g., nationally.
  4. Student follow-up data (i.e., trends of student data upon leaving or graduating.)
  5. Staff
    - Composition/ethnicity/attrition of all staff
    - Qualifications/certification/credentialing for assignments
    - Professional development
  6. Student participation in academic and co-curricular activities
  7. School financial support (include expenditures per pupil and type of services funded)
  8. Internal and external factors
    - School growth needs
    - School/business relationships
    - Parent/community/foundation organizations/programs
    - National/international community projections/trends

## **Task 2: Clarify the school’s purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results or schoolwide learner outcomes**

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #2: The clarification of the school’s purpose and expected schoolwide learning results or schoolwide learner outcomes.

### **Players**

Leadership Team

### **Procedures**

1. Review the school’s purpose, the current expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), the updated student/community profile data, and literature on the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
2. Involve all stakeholders in discussion related to the school’s purpose for what students ought to know, be able to do upon exit (graduation) from the school or by the time the student completes the planned program.
  - What are the current needs of the students?
  - What are the challenges that students will be facing in the future?
  - What competencies should students possess when they pursue postsecondary education/training and the world of work?
3. Develop, clarify or refine schoolwide learner outcomes.
4. Disseminate these and gain consensus from stakeholders.
5. Have each committee use these schoolwide learner outcomes throughout the self-study.
6. Include the schoolwide learner outcomes in the Self-Study Report along with a description of how they were determined.

### **Product**

- Self-Study Report, Chapter II: School Purpose and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes:
  - A. State the school’s purpose (e.g., core values, vision, mission)
  - B. State the schoolwide learner outcomes and briefly explain the process to determine these.



### Task 3: Summarize progress since previous full self-study

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #1: The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.

#### Players

Leadership Team

#### Procedures

1. In this progress report or in the student/community profile, describe any significant developments that have had a major impact on the school or specific curricular programs since the last full visit.

**Note: If a school's last visit was an initial visit, the report should respond to the recommendations left at that time.**

2. Describe the school's procedures for the implementation and the monitoring of the schoolwide action plan. Include how annual progress reports, including the third year report, have been prepared.
3. Comment on the accomplishment of each current schoolwide action plan section; cite evidence, including how each area has met identified growth targets and contributed to the accomplishment of one or more schoolwide learner outcomes for all students. Show how the school's plan accomplished the critical areas of follow-up from the last full self-study visit (i.e., cross-reference).
4. Comment separately on critical areas for follow-up that have already been addressed and are currently not in the plan but in "maintenance" mode. In addition, comment on those "just do its" or isolated critical areas for follow-up that were not included in the ongoing schoolwide action plan.

#### Product

- Self-Study Report, Chapter III: Progress Report
  - Summary of progress on the schoolwide action plan that incorporated all critical areas of follow-up from the last full study.

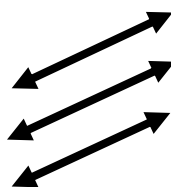


## Intertwining Tasks of the Schoolwide Focus Groups and Home Groups Task 4

Schoolwide Focus  
Group (four categories)  
analysis and  
discussions *around*  
*schoolwide criteria using*  
*suggested evidence*



Schoolwide Focus  
Group analysis and  
synthesis *around the*  
*criteria and preparation*  
*of three to seven page*  
*summary for each*  
*criterion within the four*  
*categories*



Home/Support Groups  
analysis and  
discussions *around*  
*subject area/support*  
*curricular/program*  
*references and the*  
*WASC criteria*



## **Task 4: Using the WASC criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes, analyze the quality of the school program, synthesize and summarize the findings and determine aligned strengths and growth needs**

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #3: The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

### **Players**

Schoolwide Focus Groups  
Home Groups  
Leadership Team

### **Procedures:**

Through Schoolwide Focus Group and Home Group work:

1. Ensure awareness of the summary information from the student/community profile, especially the critical academic needs, and the schoolwide learner outcomes. Ensure understanding of the relationship between the identified critical academic needs and the schoolwide learner outcomes. (See Tasks 1 and 2.)
2. Ensure all stakeholders are aware of the concepts of the WASC criteria as the basis for evaluating the school's program. Use the criteria indicators, suggested areas to analyze, and sample prompts. (See the Tools section.)

Schoolwide Focus Groups:

3. Identify what data or information, especially the student work, should be examined to facilitate this comparison. Begin to discuss how the data or information should be obtained. What is needed from the Home Groups? Refer to the criteria indicators, suggested areas to analyze, and sample prompts. (See the Tools section.)
4. Work with the Leadership Team (includes leaders of Schoolwide Focus Groups) to schedule and plan the Home Group and additional Schoolwide Focus Group meetings to accomplish this gathering and analyzing of pertinent data.

➔ **Note:** *To facilitate data gathering and analysis, concentrate on one category of criteria at a time; for example, start with curriculum, instruction, and assessment, then move to student support, organization, and resources.*

Home Groups:

5. At the request of the respective Schoolwide Focus Groups, gather and examine the needed information with respect to the WASC criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes. (The Schoolwide Focus Groups will guide the Home Groups in this analysis)

making use of the *criteria indicators, the suggested areas to analyze, and the suggested prompts*).

- a. Use appropriate methods to gather the information, especially focusing on what all students are doing and producing currently. Examples of ways to gather evidence include:
  - observing what all students are doing and producing
  - examining samples of work for all students from all subject areas/programs
  - interviewing students about their studies and school life
  - examining student performance-based assessment data
  - reporting by teachers
  - examining the student/community profile data
  - examining student/parent survey/interview results
  - interviewing other members of the staff/school community about program
- b. Discuss, analyze and synthesize this gathered evidence with respect to the WASC criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes, including the critical academic needs.
- c. Compile this data and share with the appropriate Schoolwide Focus Group.
- d. Have on exhibit for the Visiting Committee members representative student work that was examined and other analyzed information (results of observations, interviews, etc.).

#### Schoolwide Focus Groups:

Based on the following question:

How does the current school program impact student learning, especially for the identified critical academic needs, related schoolwide learner outcomes and curricular standards?

6. Discuss the information and data gathered and analyzed by Home Groups. (Were the important questions related to identified critical academic needs discussed?)
7. Determine what additional information and data is needed in the analysis of the schoolwide program. This will necessitate well-organized meetings of Home Groups and Schoolwide Focus Groups over an extended period of time (see timeline).
8. Synthesize the information and data from all the Home Groups in preparation for a 3–7 page summary of findings for each criterion that includes supporting evidence and identified growth needs.

#### Product

- Initial Products
  - ❖ Home Group notes/evidence for use in Schoolwide Focus Group discussions of WASC criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes and critical academic needs

- Self-Study Report
  - Chapter IV: Self-Study Findings
  - Prepare a 3–7 page synthesis of the evidence examined and analyzed in support of *each criterion* in the following categories. Include in the following: (1) the findings based on the concepts of each criterion in the category; (2) the evidence that supports these findings, (3) the identification of strengths and growth needs (prioritized).
    - A. Organization for Student Learning
    - B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
    - C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
    - D. Resource Management and Development
- Analyzed representative samples of student work from each subject area/program for review by Visiting Committee.



**Task 5: Revise or create a schoolwide action plan that will drive achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes; establish an ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan**

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameters #4 & #5: The development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan.

**Players**

Leadership Team

**Procedures**

1. Review and discuss the summary analyses from all Schoolwide Focus Groups. (See Chapter IV of the Self-Study Report.) Synthesize the growth needs into themes or strands.
2. Revise or create a schoolwide action plan addressing the 4–5 major areas for change. All schoolwide learner outcomes do not need to be addressed by the action plan.

Include in each section of the plan:

- statement of area for improvement (goal)
  - rationale for area based on self-study findings
  - one or more schoolwide learner outcomes addressed
  - ways of assessing progress, including student achievement of the learning results (and curricular standards)
  - specific steps, including professional development
  - timeline (month, year)
  - responsible (designate by asterisk) and involved person(s)
  - resources
  - means to monitor and report progress to all members
3. Ensure schoolwide consensus on the action plan and the specific action steps to support the plan
  4. Establish an ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan
    - a. Develop strategies that provide for ongoing involvement of all stakeholders.
    - b. Discuss/develop strategies to ensure that the schoolwide action plan will be implemented and monitored and revised annually based on the progress and impact on student learning.

- c. Develop ways to keep the entire school community informed about the progress being made.

### **Product**

- Self-Study Report  
Chapter V: Schoolwide Action Plan
  - A. For each schoolwide action plan section, include the elements listed above.
  - B. State specific strategies to be used by Home Group within each subject area/support staff, community/parent, student support program to accomplish sections of the schoolwide action plan. (*only if different from the schoolwide steps*):
  - C. Describe the school's follow-up process.

**Tools:  
WASC Criteria with  
Indicators with Sample  
Prompts and  
Suggested Areas to Analyze**



## Introduction

Within this section are tools to assist the school in the analysis of the program based on the WASC criteria. The purpose is to integrate the accreditation processes to ensure an effective, efficient, and relevant improvement process for the schools. Indicators have been listed to assist in the deeper understanding of the criteria. In addition, suggested areas to be examined and prompts or questions have been provided for the criteria. These should assist the school in their work of determining the effectiveness of the school's program and operations to support high-quality student learning.

A Self-Study Report template is available and can be found on the WASC website.

The criteria suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Task 4.



**Category A:  
Organization for Student Learning**



## Category A: Organization for Student Learning

### A1. School Purpose

The school has established a clear statement of purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution. The purpose is defined further by adopted expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) that form the basis of the educational program for every student. (**Note:** school purpose is a general term for terminology used by schools such as vision, mission, or philosophy and objectives.)

Examples include: every student will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures that fosters tolerance for individual differences; every student will be a collaborative worker; and every student will demonstrate higher order thinking skills of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

#### Indicators with Sample Prompts

##### Beliefs and Philosophy

The written statement of purpose reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the school and its constituency.

*Comment on the written purpose in relationship to the beliefs and philosophy of the school and its constituency served.*

##### Purpose, Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes) and Profile Data

The student/community profile data has impacted the development of the school purpose and schoolwide learning results.

*Comment on pertinent student/community profile data that has impacted the development of the school purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).*

##### Involvement of All

The school has a process for involving representatives of the entire school community in the development/refinement of the purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

*Examine the effectiveness of the processes to ensure involvement of representatives from the entire school community in the development/refinement of the purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).*

##### Consistency of Purpose, Expected Schoolwide Learning Results, and Program

There is a strong degree of consistency between the school purpose, the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), and the school program.

*Provide a range of examples that the school purpose, expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and program are consistent.*

##### Communication about Purpose and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes)

The school has means to publicize the purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) to the students, parents and other members of the school community.

*Examine the effectiveness of the means to publicize the purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) to the students, parents and other members of the school community.*

### **Regular Review/Revision**

The school has a process for regular review/revision of the school purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) based on student needs, global and local needs, and other trends and community conditions.

*Examine the effectiveness of the process for regular review/revision of the school purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) based on student needs, global, national and local needs, and community conditions.*

### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

### **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the written statement of purpose reflecting the beliefs and philosophy of the school and its constituency
- student/community profile data and its impact on the school purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- national and state educational issues
- the degree of involvement by representatives of the entire school community in the development of the purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- the process for reaching consensus among the stakeholders regarding the purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- the level of understanding and commitment to the purpose of the staff, students, parents and other stakeholders
- the process for regular review or revision of the school purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) based on student needs and challenges students will face in the future
- the means by which the purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) are publicized to the school and its constituency
- the degree of consistency between the school purpose, the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), and the school program
- publications used to inform parents and community members about the school program.

## **A2. Governance Criterion**

The governing authority (a) adopts policies which are consistent with the school purpose and support the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) for the school, (b) delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff and (c) monitors results.

### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

#### **Clear Policies and Procedures**

There are clear policies and procedures with regard to the selection, composition and specific duties of the governing authority.

*Comment on the clarity of the policies and procedures regarding the selection, composition and specific duties of the governing authority.*

#### **Pretraining of Potential Board Members**

Individuals who seek board membership or are being considered as appointees by the board will have some form of training in the principles and skills essential to the effectiveness of the school board.

*Comment on the training that is offered to prospective or new school board members.*

#### **Relationship of Policies**

The governing authority's policies are directly connected to the school's purpose and vision and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

*Comment on the degree to which the governing authority policies are directly connected to the school's purpose and vision and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).*

#### **Involvement of Governing Authority**

The governing authority is involved in the regular review and refinement of the school's purpose and learning results. The governing authority uses a variety of strategies to remain current in research-based knowledge about effective schools.

*How is the governing authority involved in the regular review and refinement of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results?*

#### **School Community Understanding**

The school community understands the governing authority's role.

*To what degree does the school community understand the governing authority's role?*

#### **Relationship to Professional Staff**

There is clear understanding about the relationship between the governing authority and the responsibilities of the professional staff. The governing authority constrains its actions to policy making and strategic planning, while authorizing the administration to implement its decisions.

*To what degree is there clear understanding about the relationship between the governing authority and the responsibilities of the professional staff?*

### **Evaluation Procedures**

The governing authority carries out clearly defined evaluation procedures.

*Comment on the clarity of the evaluation procedures carried out by the governing authority.*

### **Evaluation of Governing Authority**

There is a process for evaluating the governing authority.

*Review and assess the process for evaluating the governing authority.*

### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

### **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the legal ownership and organization of the school
- the selection, composition and specific duties of the governing authority
- board policies
- the connection between the governing authority's policies and the school's purpose/expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- the nature and extent of the school community's understanding of the governing authority's role
- the relationship between the governing authority and the responsibilities of the professional staff
- the evaluation procedures carried out by the governing authority
- the process for evaluation of the governing authority
- the degree of participation of board and district personnel in the development of the vision and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- additional evidence

### **A3. School Leadership Criterion**

The school leadership (a) makes decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on students achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) (b) empowers the staff and (c) encourages commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning.

#### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

##### **Defined Responsibilities, Practices, etc.**

The school has administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

*Evaluate the administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff. Determine the clarity and understanding of these by administration and faculty.*

##### **Existing Structures**

The school has existing structures for internal communication, planning and resolving differences.

*How effective are the existing structures for internal communication, planning and resolving differences?*

##### **Involvement of Staff**

The school leadership has processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, collaborative structures and actions, and accountability to focus ongoing improvement on teaching and learning that supports student learning.

*How effective are the processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, actions, and accountability to support student learning?*

##### **Review of Existing Processes**

The school leadership regularly reviews the existing processes to determine the degree to which actions of the leadership and staff focus on successful student learning.

*To what extent does the school leadership regularly review the existing processes to determine the degree to which actions of the leadership and staff focus on successful student learning?*

##### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

## **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities and relationships
- the existing structures for internal communications, planning and resolving differences
- strategies for team building used at the school
- examples of collaboration across the school
- the process for regular review of the existing structures
- the leadership's processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, actions, and accountability to support student learning
- the level of actual staff involvement in actions focusing on successful student learning
- the degree to which the actions of the leadership are directly linked to student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- additional evidence

#### **A4. Staff Criterion**

The school leadership and staff are qualified for their assigned responsibilities, are committed to the school's purpose and engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.

##### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

###### **Employment Policies/Practices**

The school has clear employment policies/practices related to qualification requirements of staff.  
*Evaluate the clarity of the employment policies/ practices related to qualification requirements of staff.*

###### **Qualifications of Staff**

The school reviews all information regarding staff background, training and preparation.  
*Evaluate the procedures to ensure that staff are qualified based on staff background, training, and preparation.*

###### **Maximum Use of Staff Expertise**

The school assigns staff members to maximize the use of their expertise in accomplishing quality student learning.  
*How effective is the process to assign staff members in order to maximize the use of their expertise in accomplishing quality student learning?*

###### **Support of Professional Development**

The school leadership supports professional development with time, personnel and fiscal resources based upon a written professional development plan.  
*How effective is the support of professional development with time, personnel and fiscal resources based upon a written professional development plan?*

###### **Supervision and Evaluation**

The school has supervision and evaluation procedures that promote professional growth of staff.  
*How effective is the school's supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff?*

###### **Measurable Effect of Professional Development**

The school leadership and staff develop processes to determine the measurable effect of professional development on student performance. The school leadership evaluates the effectiveness of professional development and uses the data to inform planning and future decision-making.  
*Comment on the processes and their effectiveness in determining the measurable effect of professional development on student performance.*

###### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*  
*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

## **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- employment policies/practices related to qualification requirements
- information on staff background, training and preparation
- staff assignments to maximize use of their expertise that will result in student achievement
- the feeling of the teachers about their sense of efficacy in their work as they translate the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) into reality in their classes
- the degree to which school leadership supports professional development with time, personnel and fiscal resources
- the written professional development plan
- the description of how the plan was developed and how priorities were set the description of follow-up to professional development activities
- the perceptions of the staff members about the purpose and effectiveness of professional development
- the evaluation procedures utilized and their effectiveness in promoting professional growth
- the degree of participation in professional opportunities that will promote student learning
- the degree to which the environment enables teachers to focus on students accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- the types of collegial strategies used to implement innovations and encourage improvement, such as shadowing, coaching, observation, mentoring, group presentations
- the process used to determine the measurable effect of professional development on student work and accomplishment of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- the means to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development to inform planning and future decision-making
- additional evidence

## **A5. School Environment Criterion**

The school has a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school’s purpose and is characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student.

### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

#### **Caring, Concern, High Expectations**

The school demonstrates caring, concern, and high expectations for students in an environment that honors individual and cultural differences.

*To what extent does the school demonstrate caring, concern, and high expectations for students in an environment that honors individual differences and is conducive to learning?*

#### **Student Self-Esteem**

The school fosters student self-esteem through high expectations for each student and recognition of successes.

*To what extent does the school foster student self-esteem through high expectations for each student and recognition of successes?*

#### **Mutual Respect and Communication**

Mutual respect and effective communication among and between staff, students, and parents is evident.

*What evidence supports mutual respect and effective communication among and between staff, students, and parents?*

#### **Teacher Support and Encouragement**

There is a level of support and encouragement for teachers to use innovative approaches to enhance student learning.

*How effective is the level of support and encouragement for teachers to use innovative approaches to enhance student learning?*

#### **Policies, Codes, Procedures, Resources**

The school has policies, codes, and procedures and resources (e.g., facilities) that ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment.

*Does the school have policies, codes, procedures and resources (e.g., facilities) that ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that is conducive to learning?*

#### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school’s addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

## **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the policies, codes and use of resources to ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that is conducive to learning
- the level of understanding of the codes of student conduct by students, teachers and parents
- the degree to which caring, concern, and high expectations for students is demonstrated on a daily basis
- the degree to which specific strategies demonstrate an atmosphere of trust, respect, and professionalism
- understanding and acceptance of cultural and individual differences
- the level of mutual respect, two-way communication, and support in relationships among the staff, between staff and students, between staff and parents, where applicable, and between staff and leadership
- the level of teacher support and encouragement to utilize innovative approaches to enhance student learning
- the degree to which student self-esteem is fostered through high expectations for each student and recognition of their successes
- student work
- students working together in a supportive manner academically or personally as appropriate
- interview data from students, staff and leadership
- teachers working with students during non-class hours
- telephone and written communication to and from the home
- additional evidence

## **A6. Reporting Student Progress Criterion**

The school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and report students progress to the rest of the school community.

### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

#### **Student Progress**

The school has existing standards and procedures to assess student progress towards the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and the curricular objectives.

*How is student progress based on schoolwide learning results and curricular objectives determined and monitored?*

#### **Existing Standards and Procedures**

The school has procedures to communicate to the governing authority and members of the school community about student progress.

*How effective are the procedures to ensure staff, students, parents, and other school community members understanding about student progress toward the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and the curricular objectives?*

#### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

### **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- how student progress is determined and monitored
- existing standards used in the determination of learning
- the degree to which the linkage between what is learned and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) is understood by staff, students and parents (if applicable)
- student/work performance to determine the degree to which students are achieving the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- student follow-up studies
- the procedures to communicate to the governing authority and members of the school community about student progress
- the degree of correlation between school improvement, professional development activities/topics and student progress of the schoolwide learning results

- published lists of
  - graduates
  - students progressing from one level to another
  - students pursuing further education
- additional evidence

## **A7. School Improvement Process Criterion**

The school leadership facilitates school improvement which (a) is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students, (b) has school community support and involvement, (c) effectively guides the work of the school, and (d) provides for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan.

### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

#### **Broad-based and Collaborative**

The school can document that the school planning process is broad-based, collaborative and has commitment of the stakeholders.

*Document that the school planning process is broad-based, collaborative and has commitment of the stakeholders.*

#### **School Plan Correlated to Student Learning**

There is correlation between the school plans and analysis of student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

*What evidence supports that there is a correlation between the schoolwide action plan and analysis of student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)?*

#### **Systems Alignment**

Within the school there is evidence of systems alignment in areas such as professional goals, teacher evaluation, and strategic planning for the purpose of ongoing school improvement.

*What evidence supports the systems alignment in areas such as professional goals, teacher evaluation, and strategic planning for the purpose of ongoing school improvement?*

#### **Correlation between All Resources, Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes), and Plan**

There is correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/ personnel/material resources, expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), and the improvement plans.

*What evidence supports the correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/ personnel/material resources, expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), and the improvement of the schoolwide action plan?*

#### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

## **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- rosters, minutes of meetings, interview/survey data or other indicators of inclusion showing that the school planning process is broad-based, collaborative and has commitment of the stakeholders
- the degree of correlation between the school plans and analysis of student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- the degree of systems alignment in areas such as professional goals, teacher evaluation and planning
- the degree of correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/personnel resources, improvement plans, and learning results
- appropriate levels of specificity in the school plans
- the specific benchmarks and accountability tools used in the monitoring process
- indications of the number of staff involved in school action plans
- evidence of student involvement in implementing action plans
- evidence of employer involvement in school improvement or implementation of action plans
- data or information gathered from ongoing contact with graduates
- additional evidence

**Category B:  
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**



## **Category B: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

### **B1. What Students Learn Criterion with Indicators**

The school provides a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose and results in student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) through successful completion of any course of study offered.

“Expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) are interdisciplinary statements about what all students should know, understand and be able to do by the time they complete the planned program or graduate.” One example: every student will demonstrate higher order thinking skills of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

#### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

##### **Current Educational Research and Thinking**

The school provides a comprehensive and sequential documented curriculum that is articulated within and across grade levels for the improvement of programs, learning, and teaching. The curriculum is modified as needed to address current educational research and thinking, other relevant international/national/community issues and the needs of all students.

*Provide examples that document the use of current educational research related to the curricular areas in order to maintain a viable, meaningful instructional program for students.*

##### **Learning Results Complementing Standards**

The school provides evidence that the schoolwide student goals or expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), such as critical and creative thinking, form the basis for curricular goals, teaching processes, instructional competencies, and evaluation of learning.

*Provide evidence that the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), such as critical thinking, form the basis for curricular standards/goals, teaching processes, instructional competencies, and evaluation of learning.*

##### **Curricular Standards**

The school provides a comprehensive and sequential documented curriculum that is articulated within and across grade levels for the improvement of programs, learning, and teaching.

*To what extent are there defined curricular standards for each subject area, course, and/or program?*

##### **Student Work — Engagement in Learning**

The examination of student work and snapshots of student engagement in learning demonstrates the implementation of a standards-based curriculum that also addresses the schoolwide student goals (ESLRs).

*From the examination of student work and snapshots of student engagement in learning, to what extent is there implementation of a standards-based curriculum that also addresses the schoolwide student goals?*

### **Acceptable Student Achievement**

The school demonstrates acceptable student learning of the curricular goals and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) through defined performance indicators.

*What evidence demonstrates acceptable student achievement of the curricular standards and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) through defined performance indicators?*

### **Curricular Review, Revision, and Evaluation**

The school implements a regular cycle of curriculum review and evaluation that leads to further curricular development and revision for the purpose of improving learning and teaching.

*Comment on the curriculum review, evaluation, and review processes for your program area and its impact on providing a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum for all students.*

### **Collaborative Work**

The administrators and teachers use various collaborative strategies to examine curriculum design and student work in order to refine lessons, units and/or courses.

*Comment on the collaborative strategies used to examine curriculum design and student work and its effect on refining lessons, units and/or courses.*

### **Accessibility of all Students to Curriculum**

All students have accessibility to a challenging, relevant, and coherent curriculum.

*What have you learned about the accessibility of a challenging, relevant and coherent curriculum to all students? What have you learned from examining the demographics and distribution of students throughout the class offerings, e.g., master class schedule and class enrollments?*

### **Policies — Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Curriculum**

There are clear policies regarding course completion, certification, credits, grades, homework, etc. that guide student progression through the program.

*What have you learned about the curriculum and its rigor, relevancy and coherency after examination of policies regarding course completion, credits, grading policies, homework, etc.?*

### **Articulation and Follow-up Studies**

The school conducts student follow-up studies that provide insight to the effectiveness of the instruction to prepare students for pursuing further education, entering the work force, or meeting their personal goals.

*Share examples of articulation with feeder schools and local colleges and universities, including comments on the regularity of their occurrence. What has been revealed through the follow-up studies of graduates and others regarding the effectiveness of the curricular program?*

### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

### **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the degree of consideration by the school to citations and indications of current educational research and thinking related to various subject areas and curricular programs in order to maintain a viable, meaningful instructional program for students
- the degree of consideration by the school of international/ national/ community issues and student needs in the modification of the curricular program
- the written curriculum for each subject area and level
- minutes of meetings where curricular issues are discussed
- evidence that expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) have been used as the basis for development of:
  - curricular goals
  - teaching processes
  - evaluation of learning
  - instructional competencies
- articulation processes among and between levels and other schools/programs
- evidence of student work and engagement in learning that demonstrate the implementation of the curricular goals including effective communications, critical thinking, problem solving and application of concepts and skills in realistic situations
- the procedures used for curriculum development, evaluation and revisions
- policies regarding course completion, credits, grades, homework, etc., that guide student progression through the program
- evidence of a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum accessible to all students, given legal parameters
- class schedules
- class enrollment lists
- the assessment processes used by the professional staff to measure the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and curricular goals or standards
- student follow-up studies that provide insight to the effectiveness of the instruction in the preparation of students for pursuing further education, entering the work force, or meeting their personal goals
- additional evidence

## **B2. How Students Learn**

The professional staff a) uses research-based knowledge about teaching and learning; and b) designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

#### **Research-based Knowledge**

The administrators and teachers use a variety of strategies to remain current in research-based professional knowledge and apply the knowledge to improve teaching and learning. All students regardless of background and ability are actively involved in the learning based on the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and curricular objectives.

*Provide a range of examples that demonstrate teachers are current in the instructional content taught and research-based instructional methodology.*

#### **Planning Processes**

The planning processes, including the use of formative assessment results, focus on the engagement of all student activity at a high level of learning consistent with the curricular standards and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

*Comment on the planning processes, including the use of formative assessment results, to engage all students actively at a high level of learning consistent with the curricular standards and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).*

#### **Professional Collaboration**

Administrators and teachers use various collaborative strategies to examine curricular design and student work to improve learning and teaching, including demonstrating critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge and application. This would include examples of the selection of the instructional approaches based on the learning purpose(s) desired.

*Comment on how administrators and teachers use various collaborative strategies to examine curricular design and student work to improve learning and teaching, including demonstrating critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge and application. Include examples of the selection of the instructional approaches based on the learning purpose(s) desired.*

#### **Professional Development**

The school uses ongoing professional development to enhance the curriculum and improve learning and teaching.

*Comment on how the school uses ongoing professional development to enhance the curriculum and improve learning and teaching.*

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**Challenging and Varied Instructional Strategies**

The teachers strengthen student understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes through the use of a variety of instructional strategies that are selected on the basis of the learning purpose(s) and effectively engage students at a high level of learning.

*Provide a range of examples from examining students working and their work that give insight to the degree to which all students are actively engaged in learning, including demonstrating critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge and application.*

**Technological Integration**

Teachers systematically integrate technology within the school so that all students develop a wide range of technological skills.

*Comment on the integration of technology within the school so that all students develop a wide range of technological skills.*

**Evidence of Results based upon Challenging Learning Experiences**

Students working and their work demonstrate critical and creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application skills.

*Comment on the student work and how it demonstrates critical and creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application skills.*

**Perception of Students**

Through interview and dialogue with students representative of the school population able to share their level of understanding of the expected level of performance based on the standards and the schoolwide learning results and their perceptions of their learning experiences.

*Comment on the level of understanding of representative students of the expected level of performance based on the standards and the schoolwide learning results and their perceptions of their learning experiences.*

**Student Needs**

Teachers address various learning styles and student needs through the instructional approaches used.

*How do teachers address the variety of ways in which students learn and their individual needs through instructional approaches appropriate for the subject?*

**Student Use of Resources**

Students use resources for learning beyond the limits of the textbook such as effective use of collaborative activities, technology, library/media resources and community resources.

*To what extent do students use resources for learning beyond the limits of the textbook such as effective use of technology, collaborative activities, and community resources?*

**Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

## **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the planning processes for implementation of a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning that is consistent with the school's purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- demonstration that students are actively engaged in learning, especially through examination of students working and their work
- student use of resources for learning beyond the limits of the textbook such as effective use of collaborative activities, technology, library/media resources, and community resources
- the degree of student understanding of the expected level of performance
- the degree to which teachers implement teaching techniques that enhance the active involvement of students appropriate to the subject matter
- students' working and their work that demonstrates critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge, and application
- student portfolios, projects/performances/discussions
- the degree of involvement of students with diverse backgrounds and abilities
- observations of students working
- perceptions of students about the learning experiences and their relationship to the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- the degree to which various learning styles are addressed through the instructional approaches
- the level of teacher currency and master of instructional content relative to the subject matter
- additional evidence

### **B3. How Assessment is Used**

Teacher and student uses of assessment are frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process. The assessment results are the basis for (a) measurement of each student's progress toward the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), (b) regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction, and (c) allocation of resources.

#### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

##### **Appropriate Assessment Strategies**

The teachers regularly use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring understanding of a specific body of knowledge or skills, such as critical thinking and communication skills; examples of assessment strategies include essays, portfolios, individual or group projects, tests, etc.

*To what extent do teachers use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring a specific body of knowledge or skills? Examples of these strategies include essays, portfolios, individual or group projects, tests, etc.*

##### **Correlation**

The teachers correlate assessment to expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), curricular objectives, course competencies and instructional approaches used.

*Comment on the correlation of assessment of expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), curricular standards, course competencies and instructional approaches used.*

##### **Changes/Decisions based on Assessment Data**

Assessment data is collected and analyzed and used to make changes and decisions about curriculum, instruction, professional development activities and resource allocation. Teachers modify and revise the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment, both collectively and individually.

*Evaluate the effectiveness of how assessment data is collected, analyzed, and used to make changes and decisions about curriculum, instruction, professional development activities and resource allocation.*

##### **Student Work and Other Assessments**

Student work and other assessments demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful learners of the curriculum.

*Provide a range of examples of how student work and other assessment demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful learners of the challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum.*

### **Student Feedback**

Student feedback is an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and the curricular objectives.

*To what extent is student feedback an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and the curricular standards?*

### **Teacher Monitoring**

Teachers monitor student progress over time and use student feedback as appropriate to determine whether course objectives have been met.

*How do teachers regularly monitor student progress over time and use student feedback as appropriate to determine whether curricular standards have been met?*

### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

### **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the nature and types of assessment that teachers regularly use to measure student progress towards acquiring a specific body of knowledge or skills such as portfolios, oral or group projects, etc.
- the correlation of assessment to expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), curricular objectives, course competencies and instructional approaches used
- student work that demonstrates understanding and application of knowledge and skills
- student portfolios, projects/performances/discussions
- student assessment of the learning
- the monitoring of student progress over time
- the degree of effective use of student feedback as appropriate to determine whether course objectives have been met
- the modifications and revisions in the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment, both collectively and individually
- the degree to which parents and community are active in the learning assessment process
- the allocation of resources, including the provision for professional development opportunities, based upon assessment of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- additional evidence

**Category C:  
Support for Student Personal  
and Academic Growth**



## Category C: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

### C1. Student Connectedness Criterion with Indicators

Students are connected to a system of support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular and co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

#### Indicators with Sample Prompts

##### Personalized Student Support

The school provides personalized student support correlated to student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and the curricular goals for all students including those admitted with special needs and those learning English as an additional language.

*How do the school leadership and staff provide personalized student support correlated to student achievement of the curricular standards and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)?*

##### School Support Systems

The school coordinates a system of support services that provides for maximum effectiveness, including the processes for intervention and referral.

*Is the level of school coordination of the system of support services allowing for maximum effectiveness? Are the processes for intervention or referral effective?*

##### Strategies Used for Student Growth/Development

The school uses strategies to develop students' self-esteem, a personalized approach to learning, and connections to the learning environment.

*Evaluate the types of strategies used by the school leadership and staff to develop students' self-esteem, personalized approaches to learning, and connections to the learning environment.*

##### Support Services and Learning

The school ensures that the support services and related activities have a direct relationship to student involvement in learning.

*To what extent does the school leadership and staff ensure that the support services and related activities have a direct relationship to student involvement in learning, e.g., within and outside the classroom?*

##### Co-Curricular Activities

The school ensures that the co-curricular activities are linked to the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

*To what extent does the school leadership and staff link co-curricular activities to the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)?*

### **Adequate Available Services**

The school has available adequate services, including referral services, to support students in such areas as English language support, special needs, academic assistance, and, career and personal counseling.

*To what extent does the school have available adequate services, including referral services, to support students in such areas as health, career and personal counseling, and academic assistance?*

### **Student Involvement in Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities**

The school regularly evaluates the level of student involvement in curricular/co-curricular activities and student use of support services.

*Comment on the effectiveness of the school process for regularly evaluating the level of student involvement in curricular/co-curricular activities and student use of support services.*

### **Student Perceptions**

Interviewing and dialoguing with students assists the school in evaluating the effectiveness of the academic and personalized student support.

*Comment on the student view of student support services after interviewing and dialoguing with student representatives of the school population.*

### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

### **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- student profile
- the correlation of personalized student support with student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and the curricular goals for all students including those admitted with special needs and those learning English as an additional language.
- the availability of adequate services, including referral services, to support students in such areas as English language support, special needs, academic assistance, and, career and personal counseling
- the level of school coordination of a system of support services that allows maximum effectiveness, including the processes for intervention and referral
- the relationship of the support services and activities to the classroom instruction
- the level of involvement of teachers with students within and outside the classroom
- the strategies to develop students' self-esteem, a personalized approach to learning, and connections to the learning environment

- the degree to which the co-curricular activities are linked to the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
- the level of involvement of students in curricular/co-curricular activities such as student leadership organizations and service projects
- student use of support services
- student interview and survey data on the effectiveness of all support services
- the relationship of support services and activities to continuing education, career planning and preparation
- additional evidence



## **C2. Parent/Community Involvement Criterion**

The school leadership employs a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the school's established support system for students.

### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

#### **Regular Parent Involvement**

The school has regular processes for the involvement of parents and community.

*Evaluate the processes for the regular involvement of parents and the community, including being active partners in the teaching/learning process.*

#### **Use of Community Resources**

The school uses community resources to support students such as professional services, business partnerships, speakers, etc.

*How effective is the school use of community resources to support students, such as the use of professional services, business partnerships, and speakers?*

#### **Parents/Community and Student Achievement**

The school ensures that the parents and school community understand student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) through the school's program.

*How does the school ensure that the parents and school community understand student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) through the curricular/co-curricular program?*

#### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

### **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the level of parent and community involvement in the school's program
- the procedures for keeping parents and community members involved
- the degree to which community resources are utilized to support students such as career days, business partnerships, speakers, professional services
- the level of understanding regarding student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results through the school's program
- additional evidence



**Category D:  
Resource Management and Development**



## Category D: Resource Management and Development

### D1. Resources Criterion with Indicators

The resources available to the school are sufficient to sustain the school program and are effectively used to carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

#### Indicators with Sample Prompts

##### Allocation Decisions

There is a relationship between the decisions about resource allocations, the school's purpose and assessment of students accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and the curricular objectives.

*Evaluate the relationship between the decisions about resource allocations, the school's purpose and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and the curricular standards. Additionally, comment on the extent to which leadership and staff are involved in the resource allocation decisions.*

##### Practices

The school develops an annual budget, has an annual audit, and at all times conducts quality business and accounting practices, including protections against mishandling of institutional funds.

*Evaluate the school's processes for developing an annual budget, conducting an annual audit, and at all times conducting quality business and accounting practices, including protections against mishandling of institutional funds.*

##### Facilities

The facilities are adequate to meet the school's purpose and are safe, functional, and well-maintained.

*Determine if the facilities are adequate to meet the school's purpose and are safe, functional, and well-maintained.*

##### Instructional Materials

There are procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials, such as textbooks, other printed materials, audio-visual, support technology, manipulatives, laboratory materials and library/media resources.

*Evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials, such as textbooks, other printed materials, audio-visual, support technology, manipulatives, and laboratory materials.*

##### Well-Qualified Staff

There are resources available for hiring and nurturing a well-qualified staff.

*Determine if the resources available enable the hiring and nurturing of a well-qualified staff, including ongoing professional development.*

### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

### **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the relationship of decisions about resource allocations to the school's purpose and assessment of the expected schoolwide learning results
- the degree of involvement of leadership and staff in the resource allocation
- the annual budget
- the most recent audit
- protections against mishandling of institutional funds
- the business and accounting practices
- the adequacy of the facilities to meet the purpose of the school, i.e., safe, functional, and well-maintained
- the procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials, such as textbooks, other printed material, audio-visuals, support technology, manipulatives, laboratory materials and library/media resources
- the resources available for hiring and nurturing a well-qualified staff
- advisory committee minutes, if appropriate
- additional evidence

## **D2. Resource Planning Criterion**

The governing authority and the school leadership execute responsible resource planning for the future.

### **Indicators with Sample Prompts**

#### **Master Resource Plan**

The school has a master resource plan. The school has a process for regular examination of the master resource plan to ensure the continual availability of appropriate resources that support the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).

*Does the school have a master resource or long-range plan to ensure responsible planning for the future? Evaluate the process for regular examination of the master resource plan to ensure the continual availability of appropriate resources that support the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes).*

#### **Use of Research and Information**

The school uses research and information to form the master resource plan.

*To what extent does the school leadership and staff use research and information to form the master resource plan?*

#### **Involvement of Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are involved in the future planning.

*Is there effective involvement of stakeholders in the school's future planning?*

#### **Informing**

The governing authorities and school leaders are involved in informing the public and appropriate governmental authorities about the financial needs of the organization.

*Is there evidence that the governing authority and school leaders are involved in informing the public and appropriate governmental authorities about the financial needs of the organization?*

#### **Marketing Strategies**

The school has marketing strategies to support the implementation of the developmental program.

*How effective are the marketing strategies to support the implementation of the developmental program?*

#### **Additional Findings**

*From examining additional relevant evidence, what has been learned regarding the extent to which this criterion is being addressed?*

*Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school's addressing of one or more of the identified critical academic needs.*

## **Suggested Areas to Analyze**

Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- a master resource plan
- a procedure for regular examination of the master resource plan to ensure the continual availability of appropriate resources that support the school's purpose and learning results
- the marketing strategies used to support the implementation of the developmental program
- the research and information used to form the master resource plan
- the involvement of stakeholders in the future planning
- governing authorities and school leaders involved in informing the public and appropriate governmental authorities about the financial needs of the organization
- additional evidence

# **The Visit**



## Self-Study Coordinator Visit Guidelines

1. Self-Study Coordinator (SC) and Visiting Committee Chairperson communicate prior to visit.

Prior to the visit, the Visiting Committee chairperson will be in communication with the SC and chief administrator to answer questions and give assistance. The chief administrator and the chairperson should establish a date for a preliminary visit for schools located in California. Chairs for schools in Hawaii, other Pacific Islands, and East Asia should communicate by letter, fax, phone, or email. Through this contact, the chair will become familiar with the school, determine the self-study progress, offer guidance in conducting the self-study, and begin to develop a detailed schedule for the visit. Chairs in California may spend more than one full day at the school in preparation for the visit.

Questions the chairperson will discuss during the preliminary visit and through continual contact with the school include:

- a. How are the parameters of the self-study addressed in the self-study process? In what ways have the school leaders modified the model self-study process to accommodate the school community?
  - b. How is the school developing or clarifying expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) for the school?
  - c. What is the plan for involving all staff members and representatives of the other stakeholders in reviewing the instructional program with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)?
  - d. How are the staff members and other stakeholders taking an in-depth look at the program for *all* students: access to and participation in the core curriculum, support, and attainment of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)? What methods are they using? (e.g., observing and examining what students are doing, interviewing students and others, examining pertinent student and other data)
  - e. Is the schoolwide action plan based on findings of the Schoolwide Focus Groups and is it realistic, specific, and meaningful with respect to the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)? How has the school provided a “feedback loop” to all stakeholders regarding the action plan? Can the action steps be implemented immediately within existing resources?
  - f. How will the schedule for the visit permit adequate dialogue with the Leadership Team and Schoolwide Focus Groups regarding self-study findings, thereby building the trust and rapport necessary for communication and collaboration?
  - g. How will the Leadership Team ensure that there is a workable follow-up process to implement and monitor the action plan?
2. SC makes housing and visit arrangements for the Visiting Committee.  
The SC arranges housing and adequate work space for the Visiting Committee. There should be an area for exhibit materials that support the self-study in the work space. Word processing and copy services should be made available to the Visiting Committee.

3. After the Self-Study Report is completed, the SC and Visiting Committee Chairperson finalize the schedule for the visit.
4. During the month prior to the visit, the SC and the Leadership Team continue discussion of the implementation of the schoolwide action plan.

Staff members and other stakeholders review the schoolwide action plan, their respective subject area/support strategies, and the reports by the Schoolwide Focus Groups; they provide feedback to their committee chairpersons. Using this information, the Leadership Team continues to refine the schoolwide action plan. The Leadership Team will share these ideas with the Visiting Committee.

5. SC completes preparation for the WASC Visiting Committee visit.  
SC verifies all preliminary Visiting Committee visit arrangements: housing, word processing and copy services, school map, school master classroom schedule, parking facilities, name tags, etc. SC ensures the workroom and exhibits, including portfolios, are available.
6. During the three and one-half day visit, the stakeholders discuss specific issues of the self-study with the Visiting Committee.  
In this process, the Visiting Committee will have extensive dialogue with the schoolwide Focus Groups and the Leadership Team. Important to these sessions and the subject area/support group meetings will be the Visiting Committee's examination and understanding of the information and evidence that supported the schoolwide findings. Throughout the visit the Visiting Committee chairperson will regularly communicate with the chief administrator, the self-study coordinator and the Leadership Team regarding the visiting team's findings.
7. The Visiting Committee prepares a report and presents findings.
8. The SC sends 10 (ten) copies of the Visiting Committee Report to WASC and distributes copies to all stakeholder groups.
9. After the visit, the SC facilitates the integration of the narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up left by the visiting committee in the report into the schoolwide action plan. The school sends one copy of the modified plan to the WASC office and distributes copies to all stakeholder groups.

**→ IMPORTANT REMINDER:** The SC should distribute the Self-Study Report after final Leadership Team review. The SC arranges for the printing of an adequate number of copies and distributes the report to the following people/organizations **four to five weeks before the visit:**

- The Visiting Committee members
- One copy of the report on any of the following forms of electronic media: CD or DVD (reference and support materials are not required) to:  
  
Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Boulevard, Suite 200  
Burlingame, CA 94010
- Copies for staff members and members of the school community

# Visiting Committee Chairperson Checklist

## Previsit Preparation

- \_\_\_1. Attend WASC chair training.
- \_\_\_2. Study the school description, the *Focus on Learning* manual, and the reference cards. Sections of *Focus on Learning* to emphasize: The Big Picture; the Self-Study: Background Information; The Self-Study; The Tools; The Visit; The Follow-up; Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes); Gathering Evidence.
- \_\_\_3. Review the parameters to be accomplished through the self-study:
  - The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study
  - The clarification of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
  - The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria
  - The development of a schoolwide action plan and integrated subject area/support program action steps to address identified growth needs
  - The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan
- \_\_\_4. Review the WASC criteria, suggested evidence, and appropriate curricular and educational references.
- \_\_\_5. Begin regular communication with the chief administrator and self-study coordinator (SC) to answer questions or give assistance.
- \_\_\_6. Arrange a one-day preliminary visit. During the visit, plan to meet with the chief administrator or head of school, self-study coordinator, leadership team, and other staff members (possibly speak briefly to entire staff). Discuss the logistics of the visit.
- \_\_\_7. Communicate with school about the following issues (many of these issues can be discussed at the preliminary visit):
  - a. The calendar and timeline for the self-study process
  - b. Orientation of staff: overview of accreditation process
  - c. Committee organization/membership/designated criteria

**Note:** As long as the school adheres to the parameters, there is flexibility in the self-study process. If the school modifies the suggested self-study process, an explanation of how the parameters have been met should be included.

  - Is there active involvement of all staff members, including the school's administration, and strong representation of other school community groups, i.e., members of Home Groups and Schoolwide Focus Groups?
  - How is the Leadership Team taking an active role in facilitating the entire self-study process?

- d. Development of student/community profile
  - How is the Leadership Team ensuring that the school is considering ALL student characteristics/subpopulations in the self-study process?
- e. Clarification of expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
  - How is the school using the student profile information in the process of developing/refining its expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)? How is the school defining quality accomplishments of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) for all students through all its programs?
  - Are the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) driving the work of the school? To what degree are they measurable? **Note:** It is expected that there will be a range/continuum in the development of these results.
  - Is the school examining student success in meeting the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) as an integral part of its comparison to the criteria?
- f. Progress since previous full self-study
  - Is the school prioritizing and responding to each recommendation from the previous full self-study?
- g. Analysis of student program, both discipline-specific and support areas
  - How has evidence been gathered and analyzed with respect to curricular references, the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), and the criteria?
- h. Use of WASC criteria and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), collection and analysis of evidence, synthesis of findings, and the writing of the focus group summaries.
  - Are all certified staff members/or other representative stakeholders using the criteria and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) as the basis for determining “what exists,” “how effective is it,” and “where do we want to be”?
  - Is the information from the student/community profile being used to ensure that the comparison to the criteria is being conducted with respect to all students?
  - How are all staff members and other school community members taking an in-depth look at the program for all students?
  - How is this evidence being organized and used in the schoolwide focus group discussions?
  - How is additional evidence needed by the respective schoolwide focus groups being gathered and analyzed?
- i. Review of school report’s table of contents, a sample of schoolwide focus group summary, and an action plan section
  - Does each schoolwide focus group summary provide the critical findings and evidence that supports the identified growth needs and suggested “next steps”?
  - Are the action plan sections supported by the subject area/support committees? Are they realistic, specific and meaningful? Will the action plan sections effectively guide the work of the school and ensure quality learning for students?

- Can the action plan sections be implemented immediately within existing resources? Action plan sections include:
- a statement of the areas of improvement
  - brief statement of the rationale for identifying this area
  - expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) addressed
  - ways of assessing progress
  - specific steps, including professional development
  - timeline (month, year)
  - person(s) responsible (indicate with asterisk) and involved
  - resources
  - means to report progress to all members of the school community
- j. School's follow-up process (including school board/district understanding and support of accreditation process)
- Have the administrators, SC, Leadership team and district representatives begun discussion of a sound follow-up process that includes:
    - ways of monitoring progress
    - accountability of all stakeholders
    - individual commitment
    - benchmarks/celebration of progress
- k. Exhibit of representative evidence for the Visiting Committee
- How will exhibit materials that reflect the evidence analyzed in the self-study be organized for the visiting committee?
  - Will the evidence reflect:
    - a linkage to expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and criteria?
    - a linkage to identified “growth needs” and action plan sections?
    - all students?
- l. The visit schedule
- How can the schedule maximize time for dialogue with the schoolwide focus groups, the gathering of evidence (class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work, and possible meetings with Home Groups)?
  - Does the schedule for the visit permit regular (i.e., daily) dialogue with the Leadership Team regarding preliminary findings, thereby building the trust and rapport for ongoing communication and collaboration?
- m. Visiting Committee work room and exhibit area at the school site
- n. Meeting room at school committee meetings (school to provide LCD projector and other technological equipment as needed)
- o. Computer access and compatibility with the system the chair will be using for the draft report
- p. Clerical support throughout process
- q. Housing and visit arrangements
- r. Copies of previous self-study, midterm report, and /or revisit committee reports, current schoolwide action plan, student/community profile, and other pertinent background materials

\_\_\_8. Receive roster of Visiting Committee members by January; begin communication, i.e., letters, calls, fax, or email.

\_\_\_a. Send initial letter, including the school description to the members; WASC will send *Focus on Learning* manual and reference cards directly to Visiting Committee members

\_\_\_b. Ask for preferred areas of coverage during the visit

\_\_\_c. Remind members that they are required to participate in Visiting Committee training

\_\_\_9. Maintain contact with school to determine:

\_\_\_a. If school needs further direct assistance

\_\_\_b. Progress on report, including actual critique of a sample focus group summary and action plan section

Self-check for self-study committees

✓ Do the summaries address all the important concepts of the criteria found within the category?

✓ Is there an indication that appropriate evidence was collected to verify findings?

✓ Was the comparison done with respect to evidence of student learning and success?

✓ Was the comparison done with respect to the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)?

✓ Will the action plan section realistically impact quality learning for students?

\_\_\_c. Progress on housing and visit arrangements for Visiting Committee team.

\_\_\_d. Appropriate clerical support

\_\_\_10. Send second letter to Visiting Committee members:

a. Provide writing assignments of areas to be covered

b. Ask the members to review the criteria as the entire self-study report is being analyzed

c. Compare the school's self-study to the concepts of the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)

d. Prior to the visit, require written questions about issues, concerns, clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit

e. Prior to the visit, require written tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of the Visiting Committee Report

**Note:** The questions and tentative narrative statements should be sent to the Visiting Committee chair prior to the visit. The chair will create a tentative report that will be used at the initial team meeting. The members will receive a sample Visiting Committee report and worksheet at the training.

f. Provide the schedule for the visit

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- \_\_\_11. Maintain regular contact with the school to double check the following:
    - a. Progress of the report by actual critique of sample report sections and/or action plan sections
    - b. Date the school mailed the self-study report
    - c. Preparation of reference and evidence materials for visit
    - d. Receipt of list of reference and evidence
    - e. Availability and knowledge of clerical support
  
  - \_\_\_12. If two or more schools are being evaluated, work with a WASC-appointed “coordinator” (one of the chairpersons) to schedule meeting(s) with district office representatives.
  
  - \_\_\_13. Make final contact with Visiting Committee members:
    - a. Confirm the receipt of the self-study
    - b. Offer assistance with understanding of assigned tasks and pre-writing assignments
    - c. Remind members to send questions and tentative writing
    - d. Offer additional assistance to special Visiting Committee members
    - e. Confirm the initial meeting time
    - f. Remind members to take cash/credit card for any expenses that will be reimbursed
  
  - \_\_\_14. Develop a basic Visiting Committee Report format correlated to Self-Study Report chapters. Ahead of time, begin writing the following: additional comments about pertinent items not included in the profile summary (Chapter I); response to school’s Progress Report (Chapter III); comments on the self-study process with respect to accuracy and the degree to which the parameters have been met (Chapter III). Include all writing from the visiting committee members. Have the tentative report ready for the initial orientation Visiting Committee meeting (i.e., Sunday or Monday afternoon).
  
  - \_\_\_15. Plan orientation meeting for Visiting Committee members prior to initial meeting at school (e.g., Sunday afternoon). The meeting should cover:
    - a. Purpose of visit
    - b. Conducting the visit in an atmosphere of collaborative and open communication
    - c. Emphasis upon criteria and school’s expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) as the basis for the self-study and the visit
    - d. Discussion of school direction(s) and where school is with respect to the development and refinement of the expected schoolwide learning results
    - e. Discussion of Self-Study Report: trends/perceptions, (questions, concerns and tentative written comments); relationship to concepts of criteria and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes); alignment of schoolwide action plan to findings
    - f. Discussion of ways to gather evidence
    - g. Review of initial meeting with school and overall schedule
    - h. Review of accreditation term determination and summary for the Commission
    - i. Reminder members to keep expenses to a minimum

**The Visit:      How Do We Know Students Are Learning?  
                         What Is The Actual Program For Students?**

- \_\_\_1. Conduct orientation meeting for Visiting Committee members. **Note:** See #15 above.
- \_\_\_2. Conduct initial meeting with school that includes a reflective discussion on the general perceptions gleaned from study of the School Report (planned jointly with chief administrator/self-study coordinator prior to visit) on first day of visit (i.e., Sunday).
- \_\_\_3. Facilitate the visit:
  - a. Maintain a positive atmosphere
  - b. Keep to the task
  - c. Maintain open communication and collaboration at all times
  - d. Ensure that all Visiting Committee members are active participants in the school committee meetings
  - e. Ensure that the gathering of evidence (class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work and other data, subject area/support group meetings) is occurring throughout the school
  - f. Ensure that no area is overlooked
  - g. Assist committee members
  - h. Avoid issues related to school policies or negotiations
  - i. Stress with Visiting Committee to avoid prescription and “how we do it at our school” discussion
  - j. Lead all visiting committee discussions on the findings, relating them to the WASC criteria in the four categories
  - k. Coordinate the preparation of the Visiting Committee Report
- \_\_\_4. Facilitate the thorough discussion and synthesis of the key concepts of the criteria in the four categories, the school report, and the visiting committee findings at all visiting committee meetings during the 3–½ days.
- \_\_\_5. Regularly communicate with the school leaders, including the Leadership Team, about Visiting Committee findings.
- \_\_\_6. At the final meeting with the Leadership Team, facilitate the thorough discussion of the synthesis of 1) the key concepts of the criteria, 2) the school report, 3) student learning based on the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), 4) the schoolwide action plan, and 5) the visiting committee findings, as reflected in the draft Visiting Committee Report.
  - a. Ensure the Leadership Team has an opportunity to ask questions and clarify areas of the report.
  - b. Work with Visiting Committee members to discuss and investigate any issues or questions raised in the dialogue with the Leadership Team.
- \_\_\_7. Facilitate necessary Visiting Committee Report modifications as the Visiting Committee Report is finalized.

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- \_\_\_8. Have Visiting Committee members individually review each WASC criterion within the four categories. Have them individually make decisions regarding the quality of the school’s educational program with respect to the four categories of criteria and the other factors impacting the term.
  - \_\_\_9. Facilitate the Visiting Committee discussion of the term of accreditation that will be recommended to the WASC Commission.
  - \_\_\_10. Coordinate the completion of the Recommended Term of Accreditation page and the confidential Visiting Committee Summary for the Commission.  
 Ensure:
    - \_\_\_ Alignment between the Visiting Committee report and the recommended term
    - \_\_\_ Member signatures on the term recommendation sheet
    - \_\_\_ Brief description of the discussion and term options considered by the Visiting Committee
    - \_\_\_ A clearly stated rationale based upon factors impacting the term of accreditation
  - \_\_\_11. Have Visiting Committee members complete expense vouchers and give them an opportunity to complete the optional chairperson evaluation form. Review expense forms.
  - \_\_\_12. Edit final Visiting Committee Report with the assistance of the Visiting Committee members. Ensure all key topics of chapters are addressed.
  - \_\_\_13. Facilitate the presentation of the Visiting Committee findings to the entire staff at the close of the visit. Do not imply the recommended term of accreditation. The term recommendation is to be kept confidential.
  - \_\_\_14. Continually stress the importance of immediate follow-up to integrate the Visiting Committee narrative suggestions and recommendations into the schoolwide action plan for yearly implementation and assessment.
  - \_\_\_15. Work with the self-study coordinator to decide who will send ten (10) copies to the WASC office.

**After the Visit**

- \_\_\_1. Submit the member expense vouchers to the school for reimbursement. Send the completed member evaluations to the WASC office.
- \_\_\_2. Finalize the WASC forms: The Recommended Term of Accreditation and the Visiting Committee Summary for the Commission. In addition, complete final editing on the Visiting Committee Report. Ensure school has final copy of the Visiting Committee Report and ten (10) copies are received by the WASC office as soon as possible after the visit.
- \_\_\_3. Keep copies of ALL WASC forms and Visiting Committee Report.
- \_\_\_4. Send appropriate letters of appreciation.
- \_\_\_5. Communicate to Visiting Committee members the decision of the Commission on the final accreditation term awarded to the school. This decision is reached at the January, April or June WASC Commission meeting. (A copy of the official letter will be sent to the Chair.)



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# Visiting Committee Member Checklist

## Previsit Preparation

- \_\_\_1. Receive the first letter from Visiting Committee chairperson that addresses:
  - a. Requests for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
  - b. Training session schedule reminder
  - c. The review of accreditation materials
- \_\_\_2. Attend WASC member training.
- \_\_\_3. Study the school description, the *Focus on Learning* manual, and the reference cards Sections of *Focus on Learning* to emphasize: The Big Picture; The Self-Study: Background Information; The Self-Study; The Visit; The Follow-up; The Tools: Criteria/Suggested Evidence; Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes); Gathering Evidence.
- \_\_\_4. Become aware of the parameters of the self-study followed by the school:
  - the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study
  - the clarification of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
  - the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria
  - the development of a schoolwide action plan and integrated subject area/support program that addresses identified growth needs
  - the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan
- \_\_\_5. Review the WASC criteria and suggested evidence and appropriate curricular/ educational references.
- \_\_\_6. Receive additional instructions from chairperson, including:
  - a. Writing assignments
  - b. Review of the criteria as the self-study report is analyzed
  - c. Prior to the visit, the chair will request members to prepare questions to pursue during the visit. Members will be assigned tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of the school report. The chair should receive these prior to the initial team meeting in order to compile a tentative Visiting Committee Report.
  - d. Visit schedule
- \_\_\_7. After receiving the School Report, complete previsit preparation:
  - a. Review the criteria with respect to the analysis of the School Report; study other

- pertinent materials.
  - b. Compare the school's findings to the concepts of the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes). Critique action plan.
  - c. Write questions regarding issues, concerns, clarifications, and evidence that should be pursued during the visit and develop tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of the Visiting Committee report. Send these to Visiting Committee chair prior to visit.
- \_\_\_8. Receive final communication from chairperson that:
- a. Confirms receipt of school self-study
  - b. Offers assistance and clarification of tasks
  - c. Confirms initial meeting time and visit logistics
  - d. Reviews how reimbursable expenses are to be handled
- \_\_\_9. Bring the following materials to the visit:
- a. *Focus on Learning* manual
  - b. Reference cards
  - c. Self-Study Report
  - d. All notes
  - e. Credit card or cash to cover reimbursable expenses
- \_\_\_10. Arrive on time for initial meeting and have no other commitments during the time of the visit.

**The Visit:      How Do We Know Students Are Learning?  
                          What Is The Actual Program For Students?**

- \_\_\_1. Demonstrate an interest in the school's welfare and express a desire to be helpful. Establish a rapport with the staff.
- \_\_\_2. Utilize the concepts of the WASC criteria as a comparison base throughout entire visit.
- \_\_\_3. Look at the quality of program experienced by students and evidence of successful student learning — the degree to which the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) are being accomplished.
- \_\_\_4. Look for evidence of an ongoing process for school improvement.
- \_\_\_5. Let the program unfold — don't prejudge. Validate, verify, and document. Be aware of personal biases that can influence observation.
- \_\_\_6. The gathering of evidence (class/program, observations, interviews, examination of student work and other information, dialogue with Home Groups) should be scheduled so the appropriate information is obtained.
- \_\_\_7. Assure teachers that classroom visits are not evaluative, but are planned to observe the

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general instruction atmosphere and climate of the school.

- \_\_\_ 8. Frame open-ended questions to all school committee members and individuals to elicit information without reflecting a value judgment.
- \_\_\_ 9. Allow adequate time for responses and give appropriate feedback in responses to questions.
- \_\_\_ 10. Concentrate on being a good listener. Be aware of nonverbal feedback.
- \_\_\_ 11. Meet and lead discussions with school committees that are pertinent to your assigned areas of writing responsibility.  
**Note:** Time is limited, so don't overemphasize particular concerns. The goal is to clarify information already in the School Report and secure information not yet provided.
- \_\_\_ 12. Don't allow pressure groups or individuals to distract you from the main task and schedule.
- \_\_\_ 13. Make every effort to avoid involvement in school issues that are not pertinent to the self-study and visit.
- \_\_\_ 14. Work cooperatively with all other Visiting Committee members as findings are discussed and decisions made.
- \_\_\_ 15. Write quality responses according to the suggested guidelines. Make sure they reflect the important concepts of the criteria in order to serve as guidelines for an effective educational curricular program.
- \_\_\_ 16. Provide regular feedback to the Leadership Team and other staff members regarding findings as a result of the ongoing visit.
- \_\_\_ 17. Meet with the Leadership Team to present and thoroughly discuss the synthesis of the concepts of the criteria, the school report, and the findings during the visit, as reflected in the draft Visiting Committee Report.
- \_\_\_ 18. Meet with other Visiting Committee members to investigate any issues or questions raised during the Leadership Team meeting.
- \_\_\_ 19. Make necessary Visiting Committee Report modifications and finalize the report.
- \_\_\_ 20. Individually review each WASC criterion within the four categories and overall findings. Individually make decisions regarding the quality of the school's educational program with respect to the four categories of criteria and the other factors impacting the term.
- \_\_\_ 21. Participate in the Visiting Committee discussion of the Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation with respect to the WASC criteria categories and all findings.

- \_\_\_22. Assist the chair in preparing the confidential Visiting Committee summary for the Commission ensuring that the correlation is evident between the recommended term and the Visiting Committee report.
- \_\_\_23. Complete the expense voucher and the optional chair evaluation form.
- \_\_\_24. Participate in the presentation of the findings to the entire staff. The recommended term of accreditation is confidential; don't imply the recommended term of accreditation.
- \_\_\_25. Support and encourage the school in its ongoing school improvement process.

## Accreditation Term Determination\*

The visiting committee will recommend a term of accreditation which will be acted upon by the Accrediting Commission. A term of recommendation is the period of time that best reflects the degree to which (1) the school is a trustworthy institution of learning and (2) the school is implementing an improvement process that will improve student learning. Current terms are six years; six years with a one-day review; three years, two years, one year; or denial. The Commission reserves the right to grant additional conditions of accreditation other than those listed above. Such action will follow a Commission review of the visiting committee report.

**An accreditation term will be based upon a school demonstrating the following:**

1. Involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study that accomplishes the five parameters of the self-study.
2. The defining of the school's purpose through expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and academic standards.
3. The use of a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student performance data.
4. The acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.
5. *An Organization for Student Learning* that supports high achievement for all students.
6. *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* that supports high achievement for all students.
7. *Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth* that supports high achievement for all students.
8. *Resource Management and Development* that supports high achievement for all students.
9. The alignment of a long-range schoolwide action plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.
10. The capacity to monitor and implement the schoolwide action plan.
11. The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.

\*Revised 8/00



# Visiting Committee Report Format

## Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

- Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the school. Include the following:
  - Brief description of the students and community served by the school
  - School analysis of student achievement data
  - Other pertinent data

**Note:** The entire profile does not need to be included.

- Comment on significant findings revealed by the profile and/or pertinent items that were not included in the profile.

## Chapter II: Progress Report (suggested length: 2 pages)

- Briefly comment on the school's major changes and follow-up process since the last self-study.
- Discuss how the school through its action plan has accomplished each of the critical areas for follow-up, including the impact on student learning.

## Chapter III: Self-Study Process (suggested length: 1–½ pages)

- Comment on the school's self-study process with respect to the parameters and accuracy.
  - Did the school accomplish the five parameters of the self-study? (*See Focus on Learning, page 3 or Reference Card #1*)
  - Does the self-study accurately reflect the school's program for students?
  - Does the observable evidence reflect a sampling of what ALL students are doing and producing with respect to the WASC criteria and the school's expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)?
  - Does the observable evidence support the school's identified areas for growth?

## Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

Part A: For each category:

- Organization for Student Learning*
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment*
- Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth*
- Resource Management and Development*

- Summarize an analysis of what currently exists and its impact on student learning (suggested length: 10–20 pages)
  - highlight areas of strength (if any)
  - highlight the key issues (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students
  - list important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues

Part B: Synthesize the strengths and key issues from all categories into *schoolwide strengths and schoolwide critical areas for follow-up*. Include the information given below (suggested length: 2 pages).

- general comments about the emerging *schoolwide strengths* and *critical areas for follow-up*
- *schoolwide areas of strength* (list numerically) *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*
- *schoolwide critical areas for follow-up* that will do the following: (list numerically) *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*
  - *support* those areas already identified by the school in the action plan sections
  - *strengthen* those identified areas in the action plan sections
  - address *additional* areas identified by the visiting committee. *This includes areas related to student achievement and other profile data, the school program and operation, and the action plan.*

## Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement (suggested length: 2 pages)

- Include a brief summary of the schoolwide action plan.
- Comment on the following school improvement issues:
  - adequacy of the schoolwide action plan in addressing the *critical areas for follow-up*  
Consider these questions:
    - Do the action plan sections address the *critical areas for follow-up*?
    - Will the action plan steps enhance student learning?
    - Is the action plan a “user-friendly” schoolwide action plan that has integrated all major school initiatives?
    - Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?
    - Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and system wide?
  - existing factors that will support school improvement
  - impediments to school improvement that the school will need to overcome in order to accomplish any of the action plan sections
  - soundness of the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan

## Sample Schedule for Visit

The following sample schedule is provided for full self-study visits. This sample schedule should be adjusted by the school and the Visiting Committee (VC) Chair to fit the local situation. In this process, it is very important to allow enough time for extensive dialogue with the schoolwide focus groups and the leadership team; this discussion will include the examination of evidence used to determine growth needs by the stakeholders. The focus of the subject area and support staff meetings will be to understand their information and evidence that led support to the schoolwide findings. The VC chairperson should be in regular communication with the chief administrator and self-study coordinator to discuss the progress of the visit.

### Day before Visit (Usually Sunday)

(12:00 NOON)	(Visiting Committee may meet for Sunday brunch)
1:00 PM	Meeting of VC members to begin group discussion on perceptions of self-study — planning of questions and group processes for forthcoming Sunday meetings
3:00 PM	Meeting with the chief administrator, self-study coordinator, and leadership team to clarify issues in the self-study and explain the visit; the VC and school leaders participate in a reflective discussion of the self-study
4:30–5:00 PM	School leaders conduct a brief school tour for VC
5:00–6:00 PM	Brief meeting with the governing authority, school and/or community representatives
6:00–7:00 PM	Meeting with parent/community committee
7:30 PM	Dinner and meeting of VC to debrief, receive instructions from the chair, organize the work of the committee, and examine supplementary materials

### First Day

7:15–8:00 AM	Meeting with Leadership Team (Total VC Team)
8:00–8:30 AM	Meeting with principal and VC chair (possibly other VC members)
8:00–11:45 AM	Gathering of Evidence: class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work
11:00–11:45 AM	Meeting with student committee (VC reps.)

11:45 AM–12:00 PM	Brief meeting of VC
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch in school cafeteria; informally talk with students and staff
1:00–2:30 PM	Gathering of Evidence: class visits, etc.
2:30–4:30 PM	Meeting with Focus Groups for 1-½ to 2 hours (at least two VC per focus group meeting) [Suggestion: possibly meet with Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Focus Group and another area]
4:30–7:00 PM	VC debrief/discussion and writing individually or in pairs
7:00–8:00 PM	Dinner/Discussion of Findings (VC alone — may order food and keep working at school)
8:00 PM–	Discussion of findings continued and individual/paired work on written summaries

**Second Day**

7:15–8:00 AM	Meeting with Leadership Team (VC reps)
8:00–8:30 AM	Meeting with principal and VC chair (possibly other VC)
8:00–11:45 AM	Meetings with subject area staff, counselors, support staff, classified staff, and administration (Suggestions: 45 minute meetings with VC reps; subject areas may be clustered)
	Gathering of Evidence: class/program observations, interviews examination of student work
11:45 AM–12:00 PM	Brief Meeting of VC
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch in the school cafeteria Informal contact with student and staff
1:00–2:30 PM	Meeting with the Ad Hoc student group (VC reps for 45 minutes)
	Gathering of Evidence: class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work
2:30–4:30 PM	Meeting with Focus Groups for 1-½ to 2 hours (at least two VC reps per focus group meeting)
4:30–7:00 PM	VC debrief/discussion and writing individually or in pairs; identification of schoolwide strengths and critical areas for follow-up
7:00–	Dinner (VC alone) and work on draft report

<b>Third Day</b>	(Check out of hotel)
7:15–8:00 AM	Meeting with Leadership Team (Total VC)
8:00–8:30 AM	Meeting with principal and VC chair
8:00–11:00 AM	Completion of draft report, contacting school staff as needed
11:00 AM–1:00 PM	Meeting with the Leadership Team and other invited by the school to <b>discuss/clarify findings</b> of visit and the VC Report — <b>All Leadership Team members have copy of draft VC</b>
1:00–3:00 PM	Closure on issues raised in the earlier session discussing the draft VC Report; The VC may revise the report as a result of this meeting; VC members complete the final draft of the VC Report  Completion of the Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation and the “Documentation/Justification Statement”  Finalization of expense forms, evaluations, PowerPoint exit presentation for closing session
3:00–3:30 PM	<b>Oral Report</b> to staff/stakeholders using PowerPoint presentation; the chief administrator is encouraged to invite representatives of students, classified staff, and community to attend
3:30–4:00 PM	<b>Final draft of report left with principal;</b> departure of VC







## Sample Documentation and Justification Statement for WASC FOL

**[This form is NOT to be used for California public schools; it is for WASC FOL only]**

For proper processing, please complete the following information:

Chair Name	Name and City of School Visited
Chair's Work Phone	Chair's Home Phone
Alt. number during end of June (if applicable)	
E-mail address (if applicable)	

Complete the Narrative Rationale for each factor. Check the box to the left of the rating that best fits the results of the self-study and the visit that was selected through Visiting Committee dialogue and consensus. [To check a box, double click on the box and select the "Checked" box value.]

- **Highly Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a high degree of impact on student learning, the school's program and the school's operation.
- **Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a satisfactory level of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Somewhat Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a limited impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Ineffective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had little or no impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.

**An accreditation term will be based upon a school demonstrating the following:**

- 1. Involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in doing the self-study that accomplishes the five parameters of the self-study.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**2. The defining of the school's purpose through expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) and academic standards.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**3. The use of a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student performance data.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**4. The acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes), academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**5. *An Organization for Student Learning* that supports high achievement for all students.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**6. *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* that supports high achievement for all students.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**7. *Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth* that supports high achievement for all students.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**8. *Resource Management and Development* that supports high achievement for all students.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**9. The alignment of a long-range schoolwide action plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**10. The capacity to implement and monitor the schoolwide action plan.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**11. The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.**

**Visiting Committee Rating:**  Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

**Provide a brief narrative, which summarizes the Visiting Committee's rationale for the recommended term: *(If there is an unresolved minority opinion please indicate and explain.)***

- **Term options seriously considered**
- **Reasons for the term recommended**

In the comments reflect upon the following:

- The Visiting Committee's discussions and process (summarize as needed in the narrative)
- The degree to which students are learning
- The strengths and growth needs of the school in all areas of the program and operation
- The capacity of the school to implement and monitor the action plan

## WASC Accreditation Term Determination Worksheet

**Directions**

1. Discuss the evidence reviewed through the self-study and the visit for each of the factors. Particularly examine the schoolwide strengths and the schoolwide critical areas for follow-up.
2. Individually, read the factors and the supporting rubrics. Mark an "X" for the most appropriate rating in the box provided.
3. As a visiting committee, come to **consensus** on the most appropriate rating. NOTE: The rubrics are guides to assist in the **synthesis of the visiting committee's findings from the self-study and visit**. Other points may need to be brought into the discussion.
4. Complete the official "Documentation and Justification Statement."

- ✓ **Highly Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a high degree of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- ✓ **Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a satisfactory level of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- ✓ **Somewhat Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a limited impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- ✓ **Ineffective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had little or no impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.

An accreditation term will be based upon a school demonstrating the following:	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<p><b>1. Involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in doing the self-study that accomplish the five parameters of the self-study.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All school instructional staff and other stakeholders involved in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived strengths and areas of need</li> <li>• Self-study occurs in an environment of ongoing systemic analysis of school effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All school instructional staff and other stakeholders involved in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived strengths and areas of need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partial involvement of all school instructional staff and other stakeholders in the in-depth review, analysis and dialogue of data and information to determine schoolwide strengths and needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of involvement of all school instructional staff and other stakeholders in an in-depth review of data and information</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Defining of the school's purpose through expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholders involved in a consensus building process that determined expected schoolwide learning results based on a clearly understood vision and purpose</li> <li>• Understanding and buy-in of the expected schoolwide learning results by all stakeholders</li> <li>• Indicators of quality developed that assist in the measurability of the expected schoolwide learning results</li> <li>• Staff understand the importance of the expected schoolwide learning results and their integral relationship to the academic standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process involved all administrative/ instructional staff and some of the other stakeholders</li> <li>• Clearly understood vision and purpose</li> <li>• Understanding and buy-in of the expected schoolwide learning results by most instructional staff and other stakeholders</li> <li>• Staff currently working on indicators that assist in the measurability of quality for the expected schoolwide learning results</li> <li>• Staff gaining greater understanding of the importance of expected schoolwide learning results and their relationship to academic standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process focused on a leadership team developing the expected schoolwide learning results</li> <li>• Clearly understood vision and purpose; however need for further consensus and understanding of the expected schoolwide learning results by all school administrative/ instructional staff and other stakeholders</li> <li>• School administrative/ instructional staff and other stakeholders just beginning to understand the importance of defining indicators of quality for the schoolwide expected schoolwide learning results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative team developed the expected schoolwide learning results</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of the school's purpose and the relationship of the expected schoolwide learning results</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of the relationship of expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. The use of a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student performance data.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate disaggregation of all data with clear supporting interpretations</li> <li>• Trends and possible issues identified</li> <li>• Disaggregated data used by the instructional staff and all other stakeholders as an integral part of the self-study process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data disaggregated where possible with clear supporting interpretations</li> <li>• Trends and possible issues identified</li> <li>• Disaggregated data used by the instructional staff and other stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some data disaggregated but with unclear or limited interpretations</li> <li>• Trends and possible issues identified to a limited degree</li> <li>• Disaggregated data presented to staff and a few other stakeholders in a general manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incomplete data presented and little interpretation provided for instructional staff and others</li> <li>• Data summarized for self-study as time permits and is not used throughout the self-study process</li> </ul>

	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
4. <i>Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined expected schoolwide learning results, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple measures show acceptable progress for all students—i.e., all subgroups of students</li> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of the subgroups of students for which stronger achievement is needed and multiple measures show growth targets being reached for these students</li> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple measures show growth targets are not being reached for many subgroups of students</li> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth targets just beginning to be defined and addressed</li> <li>Multiple measures indicate student achievement is not occurring for many subgroups of students <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
5. <i>Organization for Student Learning that supports high achievement for all students.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
6. <i>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment that supports high achievement for all students.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
7. <i>Support for Personal and Academic Growth that supports high achievement for all students.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
8. <i>Resource Management and Development that supports high achievement for all students.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in Attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
9. <i>The alignment of a long-range schoolwide action to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of all appropriate data/information about student achievement, school operation and program supports the identified prioritized growth areas</li> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of most data/information about student achievement, school operation, and program supports the identified prioritized growth areas</li> <li>Review criteria in Attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of some data/information about student achievement, school operation and program supports the identified growth areas</li> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of little, if any, data/information about student achievement and program supports the identified prioritized growth areas</li> <li>Review criteria in attachment before making determination <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
10. <i>The capacity to implement and monitor the schoolwide action plan.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process that includes both formative and summative evaluation in place</li> <li>Plan developed collaboratively</li> <li>All stakeholders aware and consent to be involved in implementation</li> <li>Actions will be evaluated in terms of impact on student achievement and results shared regularly with all stakeholders</li> <li>Evaluation results will be used to identify priorities and further actions for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process includes some formative evaluation but focus is on mainly summative</li> <li>Plan developed collaboratively</li> <li>General awareness and consent to be involved in implementation</li> <li>Plan evaluated annually</li> <li>School staff and periodically other stakeholders informed of action plan progress</li> <li>Actions may be evaluated in terms of student achievement and other factors</li> <li>Evaluation results used to identify further actions for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General understanding by school administrative and instructional staff about the need for implementation</li> <li>Link of action plan to student learning weak not clearly understood by administrative and instructional staff and other stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process of implementation not clarified as to who and what will be accomplished</li> <li>Understanding of need and value of action plan linked to high student achievement not understood by administrative and instructional staff and other stakeholders</li> </ul>
11. <i>The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing systemic improvement integral to school's culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing prior accreditation findings occurs but not rooted in systemic change at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sporadic addressing of prior accreditation findings occurs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little, if any, addressing of prior accreditation findings</li> </ul>

## **The Follow-up: Making Headway**



## **School Coordinator Guidelines: Follow-up Checklist**

- **After the visit the SC and chief administrator meet immediately with the Leadership Team to review the Visiting Committee Report and begin the follow-up process.**

The Leadership Team coordinates the refining and implementation of the action steps for each section of the schoolwide action plan. The narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up left by the Visiting Committee should be integrated into the schoolwide action plan. A copy of the modified schoolwide action plan must be sent to the following office:

**Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Boulevard, Suite 200  
Burlingame, CA 94010**

Some schools may continue to use the schoolwide focus groups as “change agent” committees in the follow-up process. The leadership team involves the total staff in annual assessment of progress, including data analysis about student learning in relation to expected schoolwide learning results and curricular objectives; this may result in modifications of the action plan. If the school annually reviews its plan and progress, the reports generated will comprise the major portion of the next self-study. Most schools will conduct one more annual review in relation to their expected schoolwide learning results, curricular objectives, and WASC criteria and refine their action plan areas for the next three to five years.

- **At the midpoint of the term of accreditation, the Leadership Team prepares a third year progress report summarizing the school’s major accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan and other changes since the visit.**

The Governing Authority reads, reviews, and formally accepts the report which is forwarded to the Accrediting Commission for Schools. Depending upon the term of accreditation, a school may be required to have a one- or two-day review by two or more members of the original Visiting Committee.



## WASC Accreditation Process: Ongoing Improvement

In preparation for the self-study every six years the school should be engaged in an ongoing improvement process. Below are brief comments about the **ongoing nature** of WASC Accreditation that focus on student learning and school improvement.

1. Annually update the student/community profile and discuss with all stakeholders.
2. Annually summarize progress on the schoolwide action plan sections, noting key evidence, and make any necessary modifications or refinements in the plan.
3. Periodically, review the schoolwide student goals (expected schoolwide learning results) and school purpose.
4. Synthesize all progress and complete a three-year progress report for submission to WASC; obtain Board approval of the report.
5. Host a midterm review if this is a condition of the accreditation term granted. (**Note:** If a school received a term of one, two, or three years, progress reports and one- or two-day revisits are conducted; the Commission then grants additional years of accreditation or denial.)
6. In preparation for the next self-study (usually 1-½ years prior to full visit), ensure that all stakeholders are knowledgeable of student achievement data and other current data, including progress on all aspects of the action plan. Utilize the following information with stakeholders:
  - a. current, updated student/community profile, emphasizing student achievement, and other pertinent evidence noted during the annual progress reports on the action plan
  - b. the operating schoolwide action plan
  - c. all progress via reports (usually an ongoing summary of action plan progress on computer)
7. Using the WASC criteria involve stakeholders through focus and home groups in the examination of the program using the information from the past years about student achievement and program changes (see #6). Gather and analyze any additional data/information needed.
8. Summarize key findings organized by the categories of criteria.
9. Revise the schoolwide action plan to show what will be accomplished during the forthcoming five to six years.
10. Finalize the self-study report that will include:
  - a. the current profile
  - b. overall progress report
  - c. schoolwide student learner outcomes (expected schoolwide learning results)
  - d. findings and supporting evidence
  - e. schoolwide action plan



**Expected Schoolwide  
Learning Results  
(Schoolwide Learner Outcomes)**



## Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes)

### Definition

What each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program.

An expected schoolwide learning result (schoolwide learner outcome) of significance is one that as a result of *meaningful* and *authentic* learning experiences over time, learners will be able to exhibit a *culmination* of their *learning* in a *real world context* that has significant *purpose* and *meaning* for them and others over time (adapted from Fontana USD).

### Descriptors

- global
- include all students
- must be able to assess
- cornerstone of school improvement
- cornerstone of *Focus on Learning*

### Rationale

Working From Learning Results:

- Equips ALL students with the knowledge, competencies, and orientations needed for success in a thinking, meaning-centered curriculum.
- Enables teachers to implement programs and conditions that maximize learning success for ALL students in a standards-based curriculum.
- Provides schools with a means to restructure pedagogy in ways that facilitate student success in a thinking, standards-based curriculum (adapted from Fontana USD).

## **Establishing Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes): A Sample Procedure**

- Invite stakeholders — staff, students, parents, business people, central office, school board, etc. Participants should sit at tables to encourage discussion.
- Overview of the entire process including “why.” Review the literature. (Participants are going to build a collective meaning of “learning results” and their purpose).
- Table groups discuss, “What are some purposes of the schoolwide learner outcomes?” (5 minutes) Then share briefly with the other groups.
- Table groups discuss “What should every student who leaves our school be able to do, know, understand or value to be successful in the real world?” (The wording here is critical).
  - Individuals write a maximum of 8 schoolwide learner outcomes (exit outcomes, outcomes of significance). (10 minutes)
  - Table groups create a consensus, composite list of 10 schoolwide learner outcomes (15 minutes). The individual results may be merged, dropped or kept intact to create the table’s list.
  - Tables pair up and create consensus, composite list of 12 schoolwide learner outcomes.
  - Post the composite lists of all table pairs and make one consensus composite list of 14 schoolwide learner outcomes maximum.
- Each group identifies which learning results are currently assessed formally and which are not.

Subsequent discussions should begin to address how those expected schoolwide learning results could be assessed in all classes, courses and subject areas.

## **Schoolwide Learner Outcomes: Samples**

### **Sample #1**

#### **Golden Oak Students Will Be Prepared To Be:**

Effective communicators who:

- Utilize spoken and written communication.
- Incorporate technology as a communication device.
- Reflect self-expression and artistic appeal.
- Demonstrate literacy.

Literate individuals who:

- Integrate learning and apply it in real life situations.
- Follow directions.

Critical thinkers and problem solvers who:

- Analyze and apply new information.
- Use technology effectively.

Productive individuals who:

- Set personal and collective goals and work with others towards their achievements.
- Apply professional and technical skills.
- Demonstrate responsibility for self and to others.
- Work collaboratively.
- Are self-directed.

Involved citizens who:

- Demonstrate a sense of community.
- Show respect for the rights of others.
- Participate as productive members of society.

## Sample #2

### Learner Results for Student Success

Effective communicators who:

- Convey significant messages to others both verbally and in writing.
- Receive and interpret the messages of others in an effective manner.

Complex thinkers who:

- Apply complex problem-solving processes and critical thinking to real life scenarios.
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate significant concepts within various contexts.
- Create images to represent significant concepts.

Quality producers who:

- Create intellectual, artistic, practical and physical products.
- Reflect original, high standards and the use of advanced technology.
- Set, pursue, and accomplish realistic and challenging goals for themselves and their peers.

Collaborative workers who:

- Use effective leadership skills to foster, develop, and maintain relations within diverse settings.
- Establish and accomplish effective goals with others.

Self-directed learners who:

- Assess their needs and apply appropriate strategies to learn the identified concepts and skills.
- Use effective goal setting strategies to create a positive vision for themselves and their future in order to set priorities and achievable goals.

Community contributors who:

- Contribute their time, energies and talents to improve the quality of life in our schools, communities, nation and world.
- Demonstrate positive and productive citizenship.

### Sample #3

#### **The School's Purpose Statement:**

A strong core curriculum in the traditional disciplines forms the foundation which challenges and supports students to work hard on assignments to meet high standards. It engages students in the learning process so that they are active participants who can seek accuracy, apply their knowledge across areas of learning, and persist when answers are not apparent. In order for students to become independent learners, the following interdisciplinary expectations for lifelong learning have been developed:

1. Articulate ideas clearly, creatively, and effectively.
2. Develop meaningful questions.
3. Design and implement appropriate strategies to solve various problems.
4. Use the evaluation process by establishing and applying criteria to support judgment.
5. Work effectively as a member of a self-directed team.
6. Exhibit social responsibility.
7. Design, establish and pursue goals, both personal and professional.

### Sample #4

#### **Every student will demonstrate:**

- ✓ Higher level thinking skills
- ✓ Active problem solving
- ✓ Effective communication
- ✓ Appropriate social skills
- ✓ Cooperative learning
- ✓ The ability to access resources
- ✓ The curiosity/desire to learn more



# **Gathering Evidence: The Power of Reality**



## Gathering Evidence

Evidence gathering has the overall purpose of verifying the actual program for students and determining if students are successful learners. The basic ways to collect information are observations, interviews, and examination of pertinent information/data, including student work.

### Observations

Observation is a critical step in the multi-method of approach of collecting information. Much insight is gained about questions that need to be asked during interviews through observing what is happening with students and adults. This is an active process that includes talking to students; looking at their work and records of their work, as available; and talking to the adults working with the students — teachers, instructional aides, and specialist teachers —in addition to observing. What to observe in instructional settings (classrooms, labs, resource centers, libraries, etc.) is determined by what information is needed. However, there are some initial observations that focus on the important instructional issues common to all curricular areas. These are:

- What the students are doing. Receiving information? Applying skills? Practicing newly acquired skills? Synthesizing and evaluating information? Waiting? Causing a disturbance?
- Are the students task oriented? Are they engaged in their work?
- Range of activities taking place from acquisition of factual knowledge to the use of higher level thinking skills.
- What sort of assignments do the students receive? How much time are the students actually spending on the assigned activity? Do they know what to do?
- How students are applying the skills of reading, writing, speaking, computing and thinking.
- How the students are challenged to think and to communicate their thoughts orally and in writing.
- How students with special needs are participating in the classroom activities.
- How the instructional settings are varied according to the needs of the student and/or what is to be learned.

As with observation in instructional settings, observation in other places (library, school offices, campus grounds, etc.) establishes a schoolwide sense of the culture of the school. Shadowing students or conducting student case studies can be an effective means of gathering observable data about the entire school program. Some of the additional aspects of school life to observe are:

- The interactions among staff and other stakeholders
- How students are supported and how they support others
- The extent to which the school values learning
- The interactions between staff and students
- Evidence of school pride
- How parents and community members contribute to the program
- What the school rules are and how they are enforced
- Ways students and staff are recognized and rewarded and recognize and reward others
- The interaction among the various age levels and groups of students

## Interviews

Interviews are used as part of the accreditation process to find out information that is not directly observable, such as what has happened and what is planned. They are used to find out people's beliefs, ideas, and intentions and to validate and expand prior information gained through observation and the review of documents such as the school's curricular materials, the school plan, schoolwide policies, and so forth.

The following "Keep in Mind" summarizes some important points about interviews.

### KEEP IN MIND

- There is no one "right way" to interview; there is no one correct format.
- There is no one "right way" to ask a question.
- LISTEN to responses; be an active listener.
- Explain purposes of questions.
- Keep initial questions simple and non-threatening.
- Use open-ended questions. Yes/no response questions set a feeling of interrogation and provide little information.
- Ask questions that will verify what you think you know and will add missing pieces of information.
- Ask questions that do not imply the answer, and that do not reflect the committee members' biases.
- Use clear and concise language that is appropriate to the interviewee.
- Note-taking should record what is said — not committee members' reactions.
- Allow adequate time for responses.
- Give appropriate feedback to responses.
- Do not assume that people understand what you are asking about – make sure they do.
- Do not push for answers at the expense of the interviewee.
- Be mindful of nonverbal feedback, i.e., facial expressions, turning away, and so on.
- Be alert to "clues" of interviewees and follow-up what is not being said.

**Suggested questions to validate and expand prior information gained through observation and document review.**

- How do the teachers, the administration, and the school community work together to have a shared vision of desirable educational outcomes for all students?
- How do the school's educational practices and other activities facilitate equal access and successful educational and social outcomes for students who are learning English, economically disadvantaged, underachieving, gifted and talented, average ability and students receiving special education services?
- How are students actively engaged in learning the subject area?
- What evidence is there that the students are able to do the following?
  - think, reason, solve problems
  - construct meaning, make connections
  - be creative, be productive
  - communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking, listening and drawing
- How often and in what ways do students apply their knowledge and conceptual understanding?
- How do teachers know whether their students have acquired a particular body of knowledge and can perform at a particular level?
- How is assessment integral to instruction (e.g., helping students to analyze, evaluate and communicate)?
- How do teachers use assessment to reflect on student academic achievement, effective teaching practices, program strengths and weaknesses and progress on curriculum and instructional implementation?
- How do staff members use a variety of student performance-based assessment techniques to adjust strategies and programs to best serve students (e.g., more challenging learning activities)?
- How do staff members allow for diversity in assessment (e.g., students that have a developed primary language other than English)?
- How are opportunities provided for parents, teachers, guidance staff and students to confer over students' progress, choices and the possible consequences of their decisions?
- How are assessment results used by colleges and employers as indicators of successful preparation for advanced study or work?

## Sample Student Interview Questions

- What kinds of projects do you do?
- How often do you work on a project alone?
- What kinds of problems do you solve?
- How often do you solve difficult but interesting problems for which there are often many possible answers?
- How often do you do research in the library and elsewhere with other students?
- Are the resources, such as books and other materials at your school, adequate for your research projects and other activities?
- How often do you talk about what you have just read with a group of students in your class?
- What kinds of oral reports do you put in your portfolio? Why?
- What kinds of homework do you have?
- What ways can you suggest to better show how and what you know?

## Examination of Student Work

The examination of student work is integral to ongoing determination of successful student learning. Instructional staff members will be involved in this process individually and through discussions within and among disciplines; for example, those who teach the same courses or are at the same grade level may engage in dialogue. There are many ways to gather and analyze student work. Some specific examples of strategies that can be used by instructional staff members include:

- Conduct initial observations of students and engage in subsequent formal or informal interviews with individuals or groups of students. *Use a guide that includes important schoolwide and program-related factors to be observed that has been developed by instructional staff members within the various school programs. In addition, involve staff in establishing ground rules for these observations. Similarly create a form containing a few quality questions that reflect important issues to address through student interviews.*
- Examine student work to determine the nature, frequency and quality of work that the students are doing. *This includes observation of students working.*

Suggestions for collecting work:

- “high quality,” “medium quality,” and “low quality” samples from each course
- representative students selected based upon the student /community profile information
- student work collection days for a program
- anonymous work from anonymous teachers
- schoolwide student work collection based on two or three students randomly selected from the teacher role sheet during a designated day and time
- Examine student work representative of the school population two to three times during the year to monitor growth over time.
- Develop a cover sheet to summarize key information resulting from the analysis of the representative student work.

Initially, the quality of student work may be examined with respect to course or discipline/program goals and objectives. However, ultimately, the student work analysis should also provide information about the degree to which the students are accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results.

The following pages contain additional information about the examination of student work that will be helpful in school site training.

# Appendix



## Appendix: Setting the Stage

### School Accreditation: An Ongoing Improvement Process

Accreditation fosters excellence and ongoing improvement in public and private schools. In a time of restructuring and the need for basic changes in the American school, the accreditation process is a dynamic, viable, catalytic process that provides an overarching structure for meaningful change. The process assures a school community that the school's philosophy and expected learning results are appropriate and being accomplished through a viable educational program.

Accreditation empowers the school in its endeavor to provide a quality educational experience for all students. The accreditation process is integral and synonymous to school (and district) assessment, planning, implementation, and reassessment based upon a vision of successful student learning.

The WASC accreditation program is based upon several beliefs:

- Fundamental to accreditation is the quality of the educational program experienced by the students.
- A school assesses the appropriateness and the accomplishments of the student program with respect to its established philosophy and objectives.
- A school must give evidence of adequately meeting the WASC high quality criteria that are general guidelines of an effective educational program and services. A school may also give evidence of meeting more specific standards consistent with its own philosophy.
- The most effective and meaningful evaluation of a total school program can be conducted by the staff and students of an individual school.

Because accreditation's central tenet is that a school operates with a clear understanding of its purposes and mission, the process enables a school to reflect upon and respond to essential questions:

What do we want our students to know and be able to do? What are the learning experiences needed to produce these outcomes? As a result of this process, schools develop and refine long-range and short-range goals and their accompanying action steps. These goals are then implemented and assessed in a perpetual cycle of instructional improvements for students.

**How Do We Know  
Students Are Learning?**



Essential elements of school improvement are incorporated into the accreditation process. These elements include:

- The involvement of total staff and school community in self-directed problem-solving;
- The opportunity for meaningful dialogue of ideas, collaboration and shared decision-making;
- The use of high quality criteria/standards/practices for an effective educational program;
- The advantage of an additional dimension/perspective from the visiting committee as the school redefines and establishes its goals and accompanying action steps;
- The supportive encouragement of the ongoing assessment and follow-up through accreditation progress reports and reviews.

Thus, accreditation provides the means for a school to attain curricular improvement, strategic planning, staff development and restructuring.

## WASC Organization

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States that is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, works closely with the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools, and is known worldwide. This regional association provides assistance to schools located in California, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, and East Asia. WASC consists of three commissions that accredit different levels of education: (1) four-year universities, e.g., Stanford University; (2) two-year community/junior colleges; and (3) pre-K-12 schools.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC, extends its services to over 4000 public, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K-12 and adult schools, works with 15 different associations in joint accreditation processes, and collaborates with other organizations, such as the California and Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO), Association of Christian Schools International, Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Western Catholic Educational Association. The Accrediting Commission for Schools extends its services to public, independent, church-related, and proprietary schools of the following levels and types: elementary schools; junior high/middle/intermediate schools, comprehensive/college preparatory high schools, continuation high schools, alternative high schools, occupational/vocational high schools, regional occupational programs/centers, adult schools, and vocational skill centers. Many of the schools accredited also include postsecondary courses, e.g., courses which require a high school diploma or G.E.D.

This association is composed of three commissions:

1. Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities
2. Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
3. Accrediting Commission for Schools

The Accrediting Commission for Schools is composed of thirty-one representatives from educational organizations appointed as follows:

### California

- Association of California School Administrators
- Association of Christian Schools International
- California Association of Independent Schools
- California Association of Private School Organizations
- California Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.
- California Department of Education
- California Teachers Association
- California Federation of Teachers
- California School Boards Association
- Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Postsecondary Education
- Western Catholic Educational Association

**Hawaii**

- Hawaii State Department of Education
- Hawaii Government Employees' Association
- Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

**East Asia**

- East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools

**Public Members**

- Five public members

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## Candidacy or Interim Accreditation Process

Candidate for accreditation is a status of affiliation, which indicates that an institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward, but does not assume, accreditation. The candidate for accreditation classification is designed for institutions, which are not yet ready for full evaluation based on the WASC criteria for accreditation. The institution must demonstrate evidence of sound planning and show evidence of the resources to implement its plan. The school must also be willing to meet WASC criteria for accreditation in a reasonable time.

Both public and private schools must meet the legal requirements of the jurisdiction in which they are located in order for their application for WASC affiliation to be considered. California private schools must list with the California Department of Education submitting an affidavit indicating compliance with Education Code Section 33190. Likewise, Hawaii private schools must be licensed by the Hawaii Council of Private Schools, or certified by the Western Catholic Educational Association and accredited in association with WASC, under the authority of Act 188, Session Laws of Hawaii, 1995. Schools in other jurisdictions may have other specific requirements with which they must comply.

On receipt of the application for accreditation by WASC, the Executive Director will arrange with the institution for a two-member team to conduct a one-day visit to the school. At this time the team will evaluate if the school is eligible for accreditation. Following the visit, the committee will prepare a report to be presented to the Accrediting Commission for Schools at its next meeting, at which time the Commission will act upon the application. The school will then be notified of the action of the Commission.

If the decision is favorable, the school will be granted candidacy status not to exceed three years. Normally, the school will be expected to undergo their full self-study (full accreditation process) in their third year of candidacy. Candidacy status shall expire at the end of three years, but may be extended one additional year by Commission action, following a revisit.

Schools in an established district or diocese where at least one school is already accredited, or well-established schools with a record of high performance credibility, may be granted a three-year initial term of accreditation by the Executive Director, after a satisfactory one-day initial visit to the school conducted by a two-member team. The written report is reviewed by the Commission along with the Executive Director's decision regarding interim accreditation status.

Independent study high schools must go through candidate status, even though they may be part of an established public school district. The Commission has approved ten minimum criteria for candidacy of independent study high schools. (Bylaws, 1991)

## Full Accreditation Process

Each institution is evaluated on the basis of the WASC criteria and the appropriateness of the school's stated purpose, schoolwide learning results and the degree to which it accomplishes these.

The full accreditation process has three stages: the self-study, the visit, the follow-up. A school's philosophy and the WASC criteria serve as the underlying bases for these stages.

### Self-Study

While WASC publishes its own evaluation instruments, an institution which applies for full accreditation may be provided with a choice of documents that have been designed in cooperation with educators from the various schools/organizations to meet their unique needs. In carrying out its accreditation functions, WASC works cooperatively with several educational agencies:

- Association of Christian Schools International
- Association of Waldorf Schools of North America
- Bureau of Jewish Education
- California Association of Independent Schools
- California Department of Education
- Council of International Schools
- East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools
- Golden State Christian School Accrediting Association
- Hawaii Department of Education
- Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
- Lutheran Schools, Missouri Synod
- National Lutheran School Association
- Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Western Catholic Educational Association

The entire staff and representatives of the student body and community are involved in the preparation of the self-study, which is accomplished over a period of several months. WASC provides special self-study coordinator workshops to assist schools in conducting the self-study. During this phase, all staff members candidly assess the school's strengths and areas needing improvement with respect to the criteria. Basically, the steps of the self-study are:

1. Understand the school improvement purpose of the self-study
2. Analyze/understand the criteria
3. Develop, clarify and assess accomplishment of schoolwide learning expectations for students

4. Compare the school program to the criteria
  - a. Collect and analyze verifying information
  - b. Analyze and deliberate the results of the comparison
  - c. Agree on the status of the program
  - d. Agree on strengths and areas for improvement
5. Develop a schoolwide action plan to increase the effectiveness of the program for students
  - a. Decide on priorities based on self-study findings
  - b. Discuss possible solution steps
  - c. Agree on the action to be taken, by whom and when
  - d. Agree on ways to monitor and assess progress

Working through numerous committees, staff members summarize their finding of this in-depth assessment which becomes part of a school self-study report. At least four to six weeks prior to the visit, this completed self-study is shared with members of a Visiting Committee composed of fellow educators.

### Full Self-Study Visit

The visiting committee is usually composed of three to eight people, one of whom is the chairperson. A typical visiting committee is composed of a school principal, a district office administrator, a classroom teacher, a school administrator other than a principal, a representative of a college or university, plus additional members who may be representatives of a state department of education, a county office, or board members. A student may be added to the committee at the request of the school principal. Members of the visiting committee will have attended special accreditation workshops conducted by WASC.

Subsequent to analyzing the self-study report, the visiting committee spends three and one-half days at the school to provide an outside perspective on the quality of the curricular and instructional program provided for students. The visiting team members review student performance data, confer separately with each school committee, observe the school in operation, visit classes, and dialogue with individual administrators, teachers, students and others. Then the visiting committee prepares a report for the school outlining its findings.

After the visiting committee report is discussed with the school steering committee and shared with the entire staff, it is formally submitted to the school and the WASC Commission. The visiting committee also recommends a term of accreditation based upon the school's purpose, the WASC criteria, the self-study, and its findings during the visit.

## Commission Action and School Follow-up

The Accrediting Commission for Schools meets at regularly scheduled times to consider accreditation for the schools. Prior to each meeting, the Commission members review the visiting committee reports and the recommended terms for the schools. At these sessions, the school's self-studies are available for reference. The resulting decision of the Commission on a term of accreditation for each school is the composite judgment of the Commission members after examining the data concerning the school.

The term of accreditation is based in part upon the appropriateness of the school's stated purpose, goals and objectives for an institution of its type and the degree to which these are being met.

The other determinant for accreditation is the degree to which the school meets the WASC criteria that are established as general guidelines to determine the effectiveness of a school's educational program and services.

The Commission also takes into consideration the following: the degree to which the school addressed recommendations of the last visiting committee; the school's use of appropriate student outcome measures to demonstrate evidence of student learning and success; the degree of involvement of all members of the school community in development of the self-study; and the capacity of the school to implement a schoolwide action plan resulting in ongoing improvement. The cycle of self-study, visit and follow-up is normally repeated every six years, a full term. However, schools may receive lesser terms or be required to take and report on remedial actions as a condition of continual accreditation. To support and encourage continual school improvement, the Commission will communicate with school during the cycle through written reports and short visits.

Only Commission decisions regarding terms of accreditation of three years or less may be appealed. Any such appeal must be made by the chief administrator(s) of the district and school by letter specifying the basis for the appeal within sixty days after notification of the Commission action.

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## Why is Accreditation Important?

- The accreditation process validates the integrity of a school's program and student transcripts.
- Accreditation fosters excellence and ongoing improvement in public and private schools.
- The accreditation process assures a school community that the school's purposes are appropriate and being accomplished through a viable educational program.
- Accreditation is integral to school/district improvement, strategic planning, restructuring, and staff development.
- Accreditation is a way to manage change through regular assessment, planning, implementation and reassessment.
- Accreditation helps a school/district to establish its priority areas for improvement.
- Through the self-study, the school site visit and the ongoing follow-up, the school staff determines areas of strength and areas for improvement based upon its vision of schoolwide learner outcomes.
- Accreditation enables a school to establish and implement a three to five year improvement plan as a result of the perpetual accreditation cycle that includes:
  - school self-assessment of the current educational program for students.
  - insight and perspective from the visiting committee.
  - regular school staff assessment of progress through the intervening years between full self-studies.





## **Parameters of Self-Study**

Through the completion of the accreditation process the school will have accomplished:

1. the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study
2. the clarification of the school's purpose and the schoolwide learner outcomes
3. the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on the student learning with respect to the criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes
4. the development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs
5. the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan