

# Accreditation Handbook

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**FOR SCHOOLS IN THE  
PACIFIC ISLANDS**



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**2011–2012 EDITION**

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## **Introduction**

The Accrediting Commission for Schools has been working with schools in the Pacific Islands since the 1970s. Accredited public and private schools are located in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. These schools recognize the importance of accreditation as an ongoing improvement process within today's global community. The Pacific Islands Handbook provides basic information about accreditation pertinent to schools in this region.



## 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 unexpected 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 to and supports the school's and district's process of 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 learning within the school and the impact of the program for students with respect to its purpose.
- 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 that 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 guide 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 action steps are then implemented and the goals are assessed in a perpetual cycle of instructional improvements for students.

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

- The establishment by the school of a vision or purpose for what its students should know and be able to do, and the commitment by the school to work from this vision or purpose to improve learning
- 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, and practices for an effective educational program
- The advantage of an additional dimension or perspective from the Visiting Committee as the school redefines and established 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 enhance learning through changes in curriculum and instruction, strategic planning, staff development, and restructuring.

### **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 and 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 and its 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 expected schoolwide results.
- 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.

## WASC Organization

The Accrediting Commission for Schools of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) offers evaluation and accreditation services to American overseas schools in the Pacific area and East Asia. WASC is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States. It serves schools in California, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and American schools in East Asia. 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 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 skills centers. Many of the schools accredited also include postsecondary courses, e.g., courses which require a high school diploma or G.E.D.

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

- 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 Federation of Teachers
- California School Boards Association
- California Teachers Association
- Charter Schools
- East Asia Regional Council of Schools
- Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
- Hawaii Government Employees' Association
- Hawaii State Department of Education
- Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Postsecondary Education
- Public Members
- Western Catholic Educational Association



## Candidacy or Initial 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 the 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 plans. The school must also be willing and able to meet WASC criteria for accreditation in a reasonable time.

Non-public schools must meet the legal requirements of the jurisdiction in which they are located. For example, California non-public schools must list with the California State Department of Education and submit an affidavit indicating compliance with Education Code Section 33190. Likewise, Hawaii non-public schools must be licensed by the Hawaii Council of Private Schools or certified by the Western Catholic Educational Association and accredited in association with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 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, 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 a term of candidacy not to exceed three years. Normally, the school will be expected to undergo their full self-study (full accreditation process) by the third year of candidacy. Candidacy status shall expire at the end of three years but by Commission action, may be extended up to a maximum of three additional years following a revisit.

Initial accreditation is a status of accreditation in which schools meet the organizational and support criteria for full accreditation and have a history and support system which indicate that a high quality program can be sustained into the foreseeable future. These schools may be granted a three-year initial term of accreditation by the Executive Director. This review is done by a two-member committee on a one-day visit to the school. The written report is reviewed by the Commission along with the Executive Director's decision regarding initial 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 Schools (Bylaws, 1991).



## Full Accreditation Process

The accreditation process has three stages: the self-study, the visit, and the follow-up. A school's philosophy and the WASC high-quality criteria of an effective educational program serve as the underlying bases for these stages.

### Self-Study

WASC publishes its own evaluation instruments. An institution for full WASC accreditation will be provided with a choice of documents that have been designed in cooperation with educators from the various schools and organizations to meet their unique needs. WASC cooperates with several educational associations in joint accreditation self-studies in which schools use mutually acceptable criteria and self-study documents that address the concerns of the involved groups.

Joint processes are conducted with the following organizations:

- 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 Association of Christian Schools
- Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
- Hawaii State Department of Education
- National Lutheran School Accreditation
- Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Western Catholic Educational Association

#### Value-Added Test

##### Schools add value by:

- Increasing what students know
- Increasing what students can do
- Improving how students feel
  - about themselves
  - about others
  - about learning

The assessment/accreditation process should give a reading on the learning value added by the school.

David E. Brown,  
Executive Director

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 gather and examine evidence to candidly assess the school's strengths and areas needing improvement with respect to the criteria.

In the self-study process, collecting information is critical to learning about the actual instruction experienced by students. It is a valuable confirmation of opinions and is essential if the committee's conclusions are to be more than speculation. Methods of collecting information include:

- reviewing samples of student work
- reviewing school documents; e.g., student records, course offerings, statement of goals and objectives, procedures, minutes of meetings of faculty, departments, student government, etc.
- observing the lessons teachers are delivering and the nature of student participation in classroom activities
- interviewing students about their courses of study
- accompanying students during all or part of a typical school day
- examining regularly used instructional materials and teachers' lesson plans
- discussing issues with staff, students, and parents
- reviewing general data about the student population
- reviewing results of the Student and Parent/Community Questionnaires
- reviewing the availability of resources and use of strategies and materials for special needs students
- personal reflection

Working through numerous committees, staff members meet and discuss all the collected verifying information and perceptions. The results of these discussions are the foundation for the written part of the self-study, the starting point for dialogue with the Visiting Committee, and the beginning of the improvement process. Efforts are made to identify root causes of problems, especially those within the school and subject area's control to improve within existing resources; this is key to a meaningful self-study.

The committees summarize their findings of this in-depth assessment based upon the school's vision or purpose, schoolwide expected learning results, and the WASC criteria. They identify major strengths and areas for improvement. The leadership team develops a schoolwide action plan that will drive achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results. The plan contains:

- a statement of the areas of improvement
- specific steps that will be taken
- who will be involved with each step
- a timeline for accomplishment of each step
- ways to assess progress

As the report sections are completed, all committee members critique the self-study report sections with respect to the following critical questions:

- Does the report address all the important ideas from the designated criteria?
- Was appropriate information collected to verify findings?
- Was the comparison to the criteria and the development of the action plan done on the basis of evidence of student learning and success?
- Do the major areas for improvement reflect needs that can be addressed within existing resources?

After reviewing the schoolwide action plan, the various committees may develop more specific action steps to support the schoolwide plan.

At least four weeks prior to the visit, this completed self-study report is shared with members of a Visiting Committee, all staff and school community members, and the Accrediting Commission for Schools.

### **Full Self-Study and Visit**

The Visiting Committee is usually composed of three to eight people, one of whom is 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 a school board. 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.

After 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 and the degree to which the school's expected schoolwide learning results are being met. The visiting team members confer separately with each schoolwide committee and other groups, observe the school in operation, examine student work and other evidence, visit classes, and dialogue with individual administrators, teachers, students and others. Then the Visiting Committee prepares a report for the school which summarizes its findings with respect to the school's self-study, the quality of its program, and its proposed action plan.

After the Visiting Committee report is discussed with the school's leadership team and shared with the entire staff, it is formally submitted to the school and the Commission. The Visiting Committee also recommends a term of accreditation based upon the school's vision or purpose, the WASC criteria, the self-study, and findings during the visit. It is essential that the Visiting Committee report and the recommended term be aligned. The school also submits an updated action plan to the WASC office after the visit that has integrated additional critical areas for follow-up.

## Follow-up

The Accrediting Commission for Schools will meet at regularly scheduled times to consider accreditation for the schools. Prior to each meeting, the Commission members will review the Visiting Committee reports and the recommended terms for the schools. At these sessions the schools' self-studies are available for reference. The Commission will allow as much time as necessary to discuss the findings of a Visiting Committee and the supporting evidence found in the school report. The resulting decision of the Commission on a term of accreditation for each school is the composite judgment of the individual Commission members.

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 and its capacity to implement and accomplish the identified areas for improvement (schoolwide action plan).

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.

## Terms of Accreditation

As in the past the Visiting Committee will recommend a term of accreditation which will be acted upon by the Accrediting Commission. A term of accreditation 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. The current terms are: Six years; six years with a one-day review; a three-, two-, one-year term; or denial. The Commission reserves the right to grant additional conditions of accreditation other than those 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 doing 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 and academic standards.

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

1. The acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined expected schoolwide learning results, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.
2. An *Organization for Student Learning* that supports high achievement for all students.
3. *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* that supports high achievement for all students.

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

Terms of accreditation may be granted for a maximum of six years. A limited term is intended as a positive action to reinforce the efforts of the school to improve. All terms of accreditation which are granted by action of the Commission start on July 1 and expire on June 30.

Specifically, the Visiting Committee's confidential recommendation to the Accrediting Commission for Schools is one of the terms listed below:

- A term of six years with a written progress report to the school's governing board on the major recommendations or critical areas listed in the Visiting Committee report. Upon review and formal acceptance by the board, the report will be filed with the WASC office.
- A term of six years with a complete progress report on major recommendations or critical areas and a one-day, on-site review by a two-member committee to be completed not later than the third year of the six-year term.
- A term of three years with a Progress Report on critical areas of improvement and action plans, and a two-day visit as a requisite to continued accreditation.
- A term of one or two years with a complete progress report and revisit to serve as a "warning" that, unless prompt attention is given to the major recommendations or critical areas, accreditation may be denied.
- Denial of accreditation based on conditions detailed in the Visiting Committee report.

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 school and/or district by letter specifying the basis for the appeal within sixty days after notification of the Commission action.

After the Visiting Committee leaves, the school's leadership team facilitates the development and refinement of *one unified action plan*. This is composed of long- and short-range goals and correlated action steps. These correspond to the Visiting Committee's recommendations that reflect identified priority areas for improvement.

*The school's leadership team coordinates the implementation of the action steps for each goal and involves the total staff in yearly review of the progress towards meeting the established goals. As part of this follow-up, it is expected that schools prepare an annual report for discussion by the school, the district and the Board of Trustees. If the annual reports are recorded via the computer, compilation of the progress in addressing each Visiting Committee recommendation for the third year WASC report and the subsequent self-study will be facilitated.*

Through the steps described above, accreditation is a powerful school site change process. When school/district leadership and staff view the accreditation process as essential to school/district planning and improvement efforts, the benefits of utilizing this invaluable tool can be maximize

### **Criteria for Accreditation (*Focus on Learning*)**

A school shall be evaluated on the basis of the degree to which it is accomplishing the purposes and functions for an institution of its type. In addition, to qualify for accreditation, a school must give evidence of adequately meeting the following criteria which are established as general guidelines to determine the effectiveness of a school's educational program and services.

These criteria are general enough to apply to a wide range of public and private schools. The further specificity needed by the Visiting Committee comes from the statements embodied in the documents utilized for the school's self-study. Schools may find it helpful to utilize more specific standards consistent with their own philosophy in their self-study. These might include the recommendations of professional organizations in the area of self-study, e.g., curriculum organizations, administrator organizations and the standards of organizations with which the school is affiliated, such as ACSI, WCEA, or state education agencies.

Fundamental to accreditation is the quality of the educational program provided. The relative weight of each criterion depends upon its effect on the educational program experienced by students at the school. In addition, a school must give evidence of an ongoing process for improvement.

## 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 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 for the school, (b) delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff and (c) monitors results.

#### *SCHOOL LEADERSHIP*

3. The school leadership (a) makes decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (b) empowers the staff and (c) 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 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 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.

*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 the expected schoolwide learning results, (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.

*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.

*RESOURCE PLANNING*

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

July 14, 1997



## Progress Reports, Reviews, and Revisits

Progress reports, reviews, and revisits are an integral part of the accreditation process, because improvement comes through the implementation of the schoolwide action plan based upon the self-study and the Visiting Committee's recommendations. The following pages contain the instructions for the various types of reports, reviews, and revisits.

### Candidacy Report for Pacific Island Schools

Schools that are in candidacy status with WASC have the responsibility to provide annual Candidacy Reports to the Executive Director of WASC. This report format includes a brief school description, a description of any significant changes at your school since the candidate visit, and a response to the recommendations left by the Visiting Committee indicating the progress made in response to the recommendations.

### Third-Year Progress Report Procedures for Schools Receiving a Full Six-Year Term

Schools that receive a six-year term of accreditation are expected to submit a written progress report at the end of the third year of the accreditation cycle, indicating the attention that has been given to the schoolwide critical areas for follow-up or major recommendations within the schoolwide action plan. This progress report is due to the WASC office by **June 1 of the third year following the school's full self-study visit**. The progress report should first be presented to your Board of Trustees for formal review and acceptance before the school sends it to the WASC Office.

The group at the school that has the responsibility to monitor the schoolwide action plan should prepare the report. This committee will need to request information from various groups at the school. In particular, those persons or groups who are most affected by the schoolwide action plan and schoolwide areas for follow-up should be intensely involved.

#### Report Guidelines

The guidelines for preparing the report follow:

1. A description of any significant developments at the school since the last full visit that have had a major impact on the school or specific curricular programs.
2. A description of the school's procedures for the implementation and the monitoring of the schoolwide action plan on a yearly basis. Include how annual progress reports, as well as this third year report, have been prepared.
3. Progress on Critical Areas
  - a. A description of progress on all schoolwide critical areas for follow-up (or major recommendations) carried out within the schoolwide action plan section. If any schoolwide critical areas or major recommendations have not been addressed or

are slow to progress, please indicate why and explain the school's plan for how to achieve progress in that area during the next 3 years of accreditation.

- b. Comment on any additional areas that were addressed within the action plan.
- c. Indicate what impact the action plan has had on the quality and level of student learning.

The principal should share the report with the entire school staff as part of the ongoing follow-up and provide copies to the district leadership and the Board of Trustees; the Board of Trustees should review and formally accept the Third-Year Progress Report.

Prior to June 1, the school should send one copy of the report to:

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

As a courtesy, you may also wish to send a copy of the report to the chairperson of the last visiting committee. All schools will receive a letter acknowledging receipt of the Progress Report by the Commission staff, and the school will be contacted again in the event questions arise during the review process.

## **Progress Report Procedures for Schools Receiving Six-Year Term with On-Site Review**

### **General Information**

Schools that receive a six-year term with a progress report and on-site visit must prepare a succinct report outlining progress made in accomplishing the schoolwide action plan that incorporated the schoolwide critical areas for follow-up or major recommendations. This should be a compilation of all progress noted since the last self-study with supporting evidence, including analyzed student achievement data.

This report is to be prepared prior to the end of the third year of the six-year term. The Commission will assign a two-member team to visit the school for one day. During the visit, the team will verify the written progress report and examine other areas as needed. The team's findings will be sent to the Commission.

### **Preparation of the Progress Report**

The concise progress report should be prepared by the group at the school that has the responsibility to monitor the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan. Specific information from various groups at the school may be helpful. In particular, those persons or groups who are most affected by the schoolwide action plan and schoolwide areas for follow-up should be intensely involved.

If there are differing opinions regarding the nature and extent of progress, this should be indicated and explained. Should some parts of the action plan be inappropriate due to changing conditions, this should be noted and explained in the report.

All shareholders should have reviewed the report, including School Board review and approval.

## **Format for the Progress Report**

### Introduction

#### ***Basic Student/Community Profile Data***

- A general description of the school
- Schoolwide student goals
- Student demographics
- Faculty/staff demographics
- An analytical summary of disaggregated and interpreted student achievement data since the last full self-study
- Show growth or lack thereof for the entire school and designated subgroups of students.
- Note the status of the school with respect to governing authority expectations, e.g., program improvement school, year three; Academic Performance Index (API); audit and resulting corrective action plan integrated into the single school plan. (*Note: Utilize the current student/community profile that has been updated annually since the last full visit and other annual progress reports.*)

#### ***Significant Developments***

A description of any significant developments, including program additions, at the school since the last full visit that have had a major impact on the school or specific curricular programs.

#### ***Ongoing Improvement***

- A description of the school's procedures for the implementation and the monitoring of the single schoolwide action plan
- Comment as needed on the integration of plans into one single schoolwide action plan.
- Include how annual progress reports, as well as this third year report, have been prepared and whether they were presented to the governing board.
- Provide copies of the schoolwide action plan for year one, year two, and the current third year to the visiting committee members. The assumption is that the plan has been modified and updated annually based on progress made or lack thereof.

## **II. Report on Schoolwide Action Plan**

- Comment on the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section; cite evidence including how each area has impacted student achievement, i.e., accomplishment of one or more of the schoolwide learning results and academic standards.

- In each schoolwide action plan section, reference which critical areas of follow-up have been addressed. (Note: The school's single plan should have incorporated all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations that were stated in the last full visiting committee report. If critical areas for follow-up were not included in the school's action plan, indicate what actions have been taken to address those issues.)
- Utilize the annual reports from the last two years when completing this mid-term report.
- Comment on any major refinements to the current action plan based on the analysis of progress.

### **Distribution of Progress Report**

1. The school shares the final report with the faculty and staff prior to the committee visit to the school.
2. The school presents the report to the governing board and district leadership prior to the visit.
3. At least three-four weeks prior to the on-site visit, the school sends one copy of the report to the members of the on-site review committee and additional materials, such as the current action plan and the prior ones for year one and year two since the full visit. *It is assumed that annually the school may have modified or refined the action plan based on progress noted.*
4. The school sends one electronic or hard copy of the report to:

Executive Director  
Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200  
Burlingame, California 94010

## Three-Year Term Reports and Revisit

If a school receives a three-year term of accreditation as a result of their full self-study visit, a Three-Year Term Progress Report is prepared and a visit scheduled during the final year of the limited term. The school's Three-Year Term Progress Report is a complete follow-up report on **all** the recommendations or critical areas of follow-up of the previous full self-study's Visiting Committee. Details are outlined below.

### 1. School Progress Report Format

- a. Include the updated basic student/community profile from the prior full self-study: general description of the school, schoolwide student goals, student demographics, faculty/staff demographics, analytical summary of disaggregated and interpreted student achievement data.
- b. Describe any significant developments, including program additions, since the last full self-study.
- c. Comment on the school's procedures for the implementation and the monitoring of the schoolwide action plan, noting the integration of the critical areas for follow-up or recommendations from the Visiting Committee Report. Include how annual progress reports as well as this Three-Year Term Progress Report have been prepared.
- d. Comment on the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section; cite evidence including how each area has impacted student achievement, i.e., accomplishment of one or more of the schoolwide learning results and academic standards.
- e. In each schoolwide action plan section, reference which critical areas of follow-up have been addressed.
- f. Provide copies of the schoolwide action plan for year one, year two, and the current third year to the visiting committee chair and members. The assumption is that the plan has been modified and updated annually based on progress made or lack thereof.

### 2. Additional Previsit Procedures for School

- a. The Progress Report should be completed at least 4–5 weeks before the revisit and mailed to the appropriate personnel; this should provide quality preparation time for the Revisit Committee.

Forward the following items to the **chair** and Visiting Committee member(s) of the revisit team:

- 1) Progress Report (mail at least 5 weeks before the visit)
  - 2) Note: WASC will send copies of the recent full Visiting Committee Report and any additional reports to the Visiting Committee chair.
- b. In addition, share the Progress Report with those listed below:
    - 1) Entire school staff as part of ongoing follow-up
    - 2) Executive Director, Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200  
Burlingame, CA 94010

- c. The principal works closely with the Revisit Committee Chair in planning the schedule for the two-day visit and is responsible for all logistical arrangements, such as lodging, work room, etc. In addition, the principal makes certain that all necessary paperwork is mailed in a timely fashion.

**3. Three-Year Term Visiting Committee Previsit Preparation**

- a. WASC should provide the chair with a copy of the original Visiting Committee Report and any subsequent WASC reports, if applicable.
- b. The chair and head of school or principal discuss what has occurred since the last visit, such as school changes and ongoing follow-up.
- c. The chair utilizes the original report as a reference to begin planning the visit. The identified areas for growth and the school's action plan will guide areas of focus during the visit.
- d. The chair and the principal determine how to use time most productively during the visit and establish a schedule. This may involve meetings with staff, students, parents, district representatives, and other school community members and classroom visits.
- e. Upon receipt and analysis of the Progress Report, the chair finalizes the schedule for the revisit.
- f. The chair communicates all information to the other members of the Revisit Committee.

**4. Three-Year Term Revisit Committee Report**

- a. At the end of the visit, the Revisit Committee will have an exit conference with the school's leadership team to review the visiting team's findings.
- b. Immediately following the revisit, the Revisit Committee will prepare a brief report that comments on progress made and areas that still need to be addressed by the school. This report will be sent to the school with the reminder for the school to photocopy the report and send 10 copies to the WASC Office. The Accrediting Commission will review the report, as well as the Visiting Committee's confidential justification statement.

### Suggested format of the Revisit Committee Report

#### Introduction (1/2 to 1 page)

- ✓ General comments about the school and its setting
- ✓ Significant changes or developments that have affected the school since the full visit

#### Follow-up Process (1/2 to 1 page)

Briefly comment upon the school's process for follow-up, including the capacity of the school to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the areas for improvement as recommended by the previous Visiting Committee.

#### School's Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up (2–4 pages but more may be needed)

- ✓ Comment on the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section, noting which critical areas for follow-up have been addressed through each section. In this succinct summary of the school's progress since the full visit, comment on any observable impact on student learning.
- ✓ Identify and note any areas that need to be given priority for the school's ongoing improvement.
- ✓ Report on the school's success in carrying out its action plan.

#### Commendations Related to Progress (1/2 to 1 page)

- ✓ Note and report on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.

### 5. Post-Visit Duties of Three-Year Term Revisit Committee

- a. The Revisit Committee makes a confidential recommendation to the Commission to deny or extend accreditation. The committee may recommend an extension of three years, one year, or denial of accreditation. The Commission then makes the final term determination and sends official notification to the school.
- b. The Revisit Committee completes the confidential recommendation (ballot) and a one or two page justification statement supporting the confidential recommendation. The chair is responsible for sending the ballot and justification statement, along with a copy of the Visiting Committee Report to the WASC office.

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

Note: The report and justification statement may be sent via email to mail@acs-wasc.org; the signed ballot should be mailed.

- c. The chair also sends a copy of the completed Visiting Committee Report (without the attached confidential ballot or justification statement) to the school. If the school has not received a final copy of the Revisit Committee Report within 2 weeks following the visit, the school should contact the chairperson.

**6. Possible Terms of Accreditation**

- a. A Three-Year Term Revisit Committee may recommend the following terms:
  - ✓ Three additional years
  - ✓ One additional year
  - ✓ Denial of accreditation
- b. At the next regularly scheduled meeting, the Accrediting Commission for Schools will make a decision regarding the accredited status of the school. This action will be based on the Progress Report submitted by the school, the Visiting Committee Report, and the confidential recommendation of the Revisit Committee. Immediately following this meeting, the school will be informed of the Commission action. The chairperson will receive a copy of the official letter sent to the school.

**7. Expenses for the Visit**

See page 33 of this handbook for visit expense information.

## Limited-Term Revisit Procedures for Pacific Island Schools

The purpose of the limited-term revisit is to determine the school's progress in terms of student achievement of expected schoolwide learning results. Also examined during the limited-term revisit will be key outcomes and critical areas for follow-up identified by the last full self-study Visiting Committee.

The WASC Office will appoint two members of the original Visiting Committee (when available, and unless otherwise requested by the school) to serve as the Revisit Committee. The chair will contact the school principal to establish a date for the visit. Revisits usually occur during the spring of the scheduled year. Following the revisit, the Revisit Committee will make a recommendation regarding continued accreditation of the school.

### School Progress Report Guidelines

The School Progress Report should be completed and distributed to the appropriate recipients at least 4–5 weeks prior to the visit. The Revisit Progress Report addresses **all of the key growth areas** identified in the last full self-study Visiting Committee Report. (The Revisit Progress Report for certain joint WASC processes should address both chapter-specific and major recommendations identified in the last Visiting Committee Report.) If any additional revisits have taken place since the last full self-study, all growth areas from those visiting committee reports should be addressed as well. In addition, the school should explain any identified growth areas that are not considered valid or are no longer appropriate because of changing conditions. Differing opinions on the nature and extent of progress should also be indicated and described.

The Progress Report is prepared by a Follow-up Committee that has been coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the schoolwide action plan that resulted from the last full self-study. The goals and action steps of this action plan should correspond to the Visiting Committee recommendations and reflect identified priority areas for improvement, both schoolwide and discipline-specific. In the compilation of this report, the administrators and faculty members composing this Follow-up Committee will need to work closely with all staff and other school community members.

### Progress Report Format

- A. Include the updated basic student/community profile from the prior full self-study: general description of the school, schoolwide student goals, student demographics, faculty/staff demographics, analytical summary of disaggregated and interpreted student achievement data.
- B. Describe any significant developments, including program additions, since the last full self-study.
- C. Comment on the school's procedures for the implementation and the monitoring of the schoolwide action plan, noting the integration of the critical areas for follow-up or recommendations from the Visiting Committee Report. Include how annual progress reports, as well as this progress report, have been prepared.
- D. Comment on the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section; cite evidence including how each area has impacted student achievement, i.e., accomplishment of one or more of the schoolwide learning results and academic standards.
- E. In each schoolwide action plan section, reference which critical areas of follow-up have been addressed.
- F. Provide a copy of the current action plan as well as copies of the schoolwide action plan for all years since the last full self-study. The assumption is that the plan has been modified and updated annually based on progress made or lack thereof.

The Progress Report should be completed at least 4 to 5 weeks before the revisit and distributed to the following people:

- 1. The Revisit Committee (this should provide quality preparation time for the Revisit Committee)
- 2. The Board and District personnel (if applicable)
- 3. The entire school staff as part of the ongoing follow-up
- 4. One copy of the report should be sent to:

Executive Director  
Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200  
Burlingame, CA 94010

## REVISIT COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

### Previsit Preparation

1. The chair contacts the school principal and discusses what has occurred since the last visit, such as school changes and ongoing follow-up.
2. The chair utilizes the original report as a reference to begin planning the visit. The identified areas for growth within the report are used as a guide in determining the areas of focus during the visit.
3. The chair and the principal determine how to use time most productively during the visit and establish a schedule. This may involve meetings with staff, students, parents, district representatives, and other school community members, as well as classroom visits.
4. Upon receipt and analysis of the school's Progress Report, the chair finalizes the schedule for the revisit.
5. The chair communicates all information to the other member of the Revisit Committee.

### Revisit Report

Immediately following the revisit, the Revisit Committee prepares a brief report that comments upon the progress made and the areas that still need to be addressed by the school. The completed report will be sent to the school, with a copy sent to the Accrediting Commission. The Commission will review the report, along with the team's confidential recommendation.

The following format is suggested for the Visiting Committee Revisit Report:

#### Introduction

- ✓ General comments about the school and its setting and the school's analysis of student achievement data.
- ✓ Significant changes or developments that have affected the school since the last visit.

#### Follow-up Process

- ✓ Description of the follow-up process, including a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and preparing the visit.

#### Follow-up Process

- ✓ Comment on the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section, noting how the critical areas for follow-up have been incorporated. Include pertinent comments on the impact on student achievement.
- ✓ Recommendations: Priority and/or Additional Areas for Improvement
  - ✓ Write recommendations stating where additional attention is needed in the action plan regarding previous areas for improvement.
  - ✓ Identify new concerns, if applicable.
- ✓ Commendations Related to Progress: Note and report on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.

## **Confidential Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation (Ballot) and Justification Statement**

Limited term revisits require a **confidential** Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation (Ballot) to be completed and signed by all members of the Revisit Committee. The Revisit Committee completes the ballot regarding extension or denial of accreditation and a Justification Statement that supports their recommendation for the Accrediting Commission. **The chair is responsible for sending the confidential Ballot and Justification Statement to the WASC Office;** it is helpful if at least one copy of the visiting committee report is included with the form.

Recommendation options available to the Revisit Committee will depend on the accreditation term the school was granted as a result of their last visit and where they are in the WASC six-year cycle.

- **Current One-Year Term:** Schools that currently have a one-year limited term can receive a recommendation for a **one-year term**, a **two-year term**, or a **denial of accreditation**, depending on where they are in the six-year cycle. Once a school has received a limited term they are automatically required to have a Three-Year Term Revisit three years after their last full self-study and they also need to have a Full Self-Study Visit at the six-year mark. The recommendations options available will depend on where the school is in relation to this six-year cycle. Term options for schools that received a one-year term as a result of a one-year term would be the same as those for a current Two-Year Term (see below).
- **Current Two-Year Term:** Schools that currently have a two-year limited term as a result of a full self-study visit can receive a recommendation for either a **one-year term** or a **denial of accreditation**. Unless the term of accreditation is denied, a school receiving a recommendation for a one-year term will automatically be scheduled for a Three-Year Term Revisit the year following this revisit.

WASC accreditation is based on a six-year cycle, with a full self-study visit occurring every six years. Schools that receive a One- or Two-Year Limited Term as a result of their full self-study are automatically required to participate in a two-day, Three-Year Term Revisit at the three-year mark in the cycle. A Three-Year Term Revisit is an in-depth revisit with a visiting committee of two to five members, based on enrollment at the school. Revisits do not take place during the fifth year of the accreditation cycle as schools are busy preparing for their next full self-study. Therefore, recommended terms cannot take a school to the five-year point. A successful Three-Year Term Revisit can result in an additional three-year term being granted — taking the school to the end of their six-year cycle without any additional WASC visits.

### **Post-Visit Guidelines**

The chair sends a completed report to the school. It is the responsibility of the school to duplicate the report and send 10 copies to the WASC office for use by the Commission. Chairs sometimes will volunteer to do this themselves; otherwise, it is the responsibility of the chair to remind the school principal of this task.

At the next regularly scheduled meeting, the Accrediting Commission for Schools will make a decision regarding the accredited status of the school. This action will be based on the Progress Report submitted by the school, the report of the Revisit Committee, and the confidential recommendation regarding extension or denial of accreditation. Immediately following this meeting, the school will be informed of Commission action.

For further information, write to:

Executive Director  
Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200  
Burlingame, CA 94010

## Policy and Procedure for Substantive Change

In the event of a substantive change at an accredited school, WASC Bylaws require an on-site review as a basis for continued accreditation. Substantive change includes a change in ownership of a proprietary school, change in grade level configuration of a school, or relocation of a school. Other changes which might be regarded as substantive and therefore require an on-site review for continued accreditation are a change in the basic purpose of the school or a change in the governance, any of which might dramatically alter the quality or nature of the educational program in relation to the student body.

It is the obligation of the chief administrator and the chairman of the board to formally notify the Executive Director of WASC of any changes which might be substantive with an explanation of the change and the anticipated effect on the educational program. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director of WASC, to decide whether the change is substantive and whether an on-site review should be scheduled to determine the continued accredited status of the school.

### **The procedure for review of a school undergoing a change shall be as follows:**

1. In the event of a change that is or may be substantive, the chief administrator and the chairman of the board shall notify the Executive Director of WASC.
2. This notice shall include a description of the nature of the change and its apparent effect on the instructional program of the school.
3. The Executive Director of WASC shall decide whether the change is substantive and whether an on-site visit should be scheduled to determine the continued accredited status of the school. The Executive Director of WASC shall notify the school in writing of the decision.
4. When an on-site review is scheduled:
  - a. The Executive Director of WASC shall designate two persons to visit the school to review the nature of the change and its apparent effect on the educational program.
  - b. The travel and per diem expenses of this committee shall be the responsibility of the school.
  - c. This committee shall prepare a report for the Commission and the school. It will include a recommendation regarding the continued accredited status of the school. The structure of the report is the following:
    - Introduction (Background)
    - Findings (regarding the Substantive Change)
    - Recommendation (regarding continued accreditation incorporating the substantive change)
  - d. The school shall be notified in writing of the action of the Accrediting Commission for Schools.

## WASC Fee Schedule 2011–2012 Pacific Islands Schools

### Annual Membership Fees

<b>Elementary Schools</b> – accredited or candidate .....	\$ 500.00
<b>Intermediate Schools</b> – accredited or candidate .....	\$ 756.00
<b>Secondary Schools</b> – accredited or candidate .....	\$ 756.00

### Visiting Committee Fees

**Overseas schools** shall pay the following administrative fees in addition to the actual expenses of any on-site visit.

Application fee.....	\$ 150.00
Initial Visit fee .....	\$ 600.00
Full Self-Study Visit fee .....	\$ 600.00
Substantive Change Visit fee (per site) .....	\$ 400.00
Revisit fee .....	\$ 600.00
Midterm Visit (6R) fee.....	\$ 600.00
Postponement or Cancellation fee after visiting committee has been assigned .....	\$ 500.00
Validation fee (appeal) .....	\$ 750.00

**Please do not send in payment until you have received an invoice, with the exception of the Application fee which should be submitted with the completed “Request for WASC Affiliation” form.**

Fee schedule effective 7/01/11.