

Visiting Committee Chairperson Checklist

Previsit Preparation

- ___1. Participate in training.
- ___2. Study the school description, the Focus on Learning: Joint WASC/Hawaii DOE Process Guide, and the reference cards.
- ___3. Review the parameters to be accomplished through the self-study:
 - Inclusiveness
 - Purposefulness
 - Student-focused Efforts
 - Action-oriented
 - Accountability
 - Strong Leadership and Support Systems
- ___4. Review the WASC/DOE criteria, the criteria guide questions, suggested evidence to examine, rubrics, appropriate curricular/educational references.
- ___5. Begin regular communication with the principal and self-study (SS) coordinator to answer questions or give assistance. Discuss the following issues:
 - a. The calendar/timeline for the self-study process
 - b. Orientation of staff/training of committee chairpersons
 - 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, it should explain how the parameters have been met.

 - Is there active involvement of all certificated staff members, including administration, and strong representation of other school community groups?
 - How is the Leadership Team taking an active role in facilitating the entire self-study process?
 - d. Development of student/community profile
 - How has the Leadership Team ensured that all pertinent data has been gathered and analyzed regarding characteristics and achievement of ALL students?
 - Has this data been integral to the work of all shareholders throughout the self-study process?
 - How is the school using the student/community profile information in the process of developing/refining its General Learner Outcomes, i.e., schoolwide learner outcomes? How is the school beginning to define quality accomplishments of the schoolwide learner outcomes for all students through all its programs?

- Are they 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 schoolwide learner outcomes.
 - Is the school examining student success in meeting the schoolwide learner outcomes as an integral part of its comparison to the criteria?
- e. Progress since previous full self-study
- Does the progress report show how each section of the School Strategic Plan and the Academic and Financial Plans impacted student accomplishment of one or more of the General Learner Outcomes?
 - Did the school show how all critical areas of follow-up were integrated into the School Strategic Plan and the Academic and Financial Plans?
- f. Analysis of curricular program in relation to student achievement data, General Learner Outcomes, Hawaii Content and Performance Standards, and WASC/DOE criteria, synthesis of findings, and identification of strengths and growth areas
- How has evidence been gathered and analyzed with respect to curricular references, the schoolwide learner outcomes, standards, and the criteria?
 - Are all certificated staff members/other representative shareholders using the criteria and 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 school profile being used to ensure that the comparison to the criteria is being conducted with respect to all students?
 - How are the certificated 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?
- g. Review of school report’s table of contents, a sample schoolwide focus group summary, and a schoolwide School Strategic Plan section and forthcoming Academic and Financial Plan
- Does each schoolwide focus group summary provide the critical findings and reference to the evidence that supports the identified growth needs and suggested “next steps”?
 - Are the schoolwide School Strategic Plan sections and forthcoming Academic and Financial Plan supported by the Subject Area/Support Committees and are they realistic, specific and meaningful? Will the School Strategic Plan sections and the forthcoming Academic and Financial Plan effectively guide the work of the school in ensuring quality learning for students? Can the School Strategic Plan sections and forthcoming Academic and Financial Plan be implemented immediately within existing resources? Schoolwide School Strategic Plan and Academic/Financial Plans sections include:
School Strategic Plan:
 - ✓ Measures, baseline information, and annual benchmarks
 - ✓ Prioritized Strategic Actions for three years
 - ✓ Any clarifying comments necessary

Forthcoming annual Academic and Financial Plan section (first year of School Strategic Plan):

- ✓ Area of improvement correlated with one of the DOE Strategic Plan goals, including performance targets from HSA
- ✓ Strategic actions for the area of improvement
- ✓ Brief statement of rationale for this targeted intervention
- ✓ Link to one or more schoolwide learner outcomes (GLOs)
- ✓ Enabling activities
- ✓ Initial and intermediate outcomes (these need to be documented and assessed.)
- ✓ Person(s) responsible and involved
- ✓ Timeline (month and year)
- ✓ Cost
- ✓ Resources

h. School's follow-up process (including complex area office understanding and support of accreditation process)

- Have the administrators, SS coordinator, Leadership Team, and complex area representatives begun discussion of a sound follow-up process that includes:
 - ways of monitoring progress?
 - accountability of all shareholders?
 - individual commitment?
 - benchmarks/celebration of progress?
 - 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 schoolwide learner outcomes, standards and criteria?
 - a linkage to identified “growth needs” and action plan sections?
 - ALL students?
- Will the visiting committee be provided a general list of available evidence?

___6. The schedule for the visit

- 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, rapport for ongoing communication and collaboration?

___7. Visiting Committee work room and exhibit area at the school site

- ___8. Meeting room at school for committee meetings
- ___9. Computer access and compatibility with system chairperson will be using for draft report
- ___10. Clerical support throughout process
- ___11. Housing arrangements (single rooms, educational or government rate, no funding for separate hotel/motel meeting room; if first night's deposit is required, school should contact Commission office)
- ___12. Copies of previous self-study, mid-term report, and/or revisit committee report as well as other pertinent background materials
- ___13. Receive roster of Visiting Committee members by December; begin communication, i.e., letters, calls, fax
 - a. Send initial letter, including school description; WASC will send *Focus on Learning: Joint WASC/Hawaii DOE Process Guide*, reference cards, and other materials directly to Visiting Committee members. (Materials are also located on the website: www.acswasc.org)
 - b. Ask for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
 - c. Remind members that they are **required** to participate in Visiting Committee training
- ___14. 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 and the extent to which students are learning?
 - 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, the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes?
 - Will the School Strategic Plan and annual Academic and Financial Plan section impact quality learning for students and is it realistic?
 - c. Progress on housing and other physical arrangements
 - d. Appropriate clerical support
- ___15. Send second letter to Visiting Committee members:
 - a. Provide writing assignments of areas to be covered
 - b. Ask for the review of the criteria as the **entire self-study report is analyzed**
 - c. Compare the school's self-study to the concepts of the criteria and the schoolwide learner outcomes
 - d. **Prior to visit require** written questions about issues, concerns, clarifications, and evidence that should be pursued during the visit

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- e. **Prior to visit require** written tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of Visiting Committee report. **Note:** The questions and tentative narrative statements should be sent to the Visiting Committee chairperson prior to the visit. The chairperson 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 schedule for visit
- ___16. Maintain regular contact with school to double-check the following:
- a. Progress of report by actual critique of sample report sections and/or School Strategic Plan sections
 - b. Date school mailed report
 - c. Preparation of reference/evidence materials for visit
 - d. Receipt of list of reference/evidence
 - e. Availability and knowledge of clerical support
- ___17. If two or more schools are being evaluated, work with WASC appointed “coordinator” (one of the chairpersons) to schedule meeting(s) with complex area office representatives.
- ___18. Make final contact with Visiting Committee members:
- a. Confirm receipt of self-study
 - b. Offer assistance with understanding of assigned tasks and pre-writing
 - c. Remind members to send questions and tentative writing
 - d. Offer additional assistance to special Visiting Committee members
 - e. Confirm initial meeting time
 - f. Remind members to take cash/credit card for expenses that will be reimbursed after visit
 - g. If overseas travel, remind members if visa/passport required
- ___19. Develop 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 IV). Include all writing from the visiting committee members. Have the tentative report ready for the initial orientation Visiting Committee meeting (usually Monday afternoon).
- ___20. Plan orientation meeting for Visiting Committee members prior to initial meeting at school (usually Monday afternoon). The meeting covers:
- a. Purpose of visit
 - b. Conducting the visit in an atmosphere of collaborative and open communication
 - c. Emphasis upon criteria and school’s schoolwide learner outcomes and standards as the basis for the self-study and the visit
 - d. Discussion of school direction(s) and where school is with respect to development/refinement of schoolwide learner outcomes and standards

- e. **Discussion of Self-Study Report: trends/perceptions based on schoolwide learner outcomes, standards, and WASC/DOE criteria, (questions, concerns and tentative written comments); alignment of schoolwide School Strategic Plan and forthcoming Academic and Financial Plan to findings**
- f. Discussion of ways to gather and review evidence
- g. Review of initial meeting with school and overall schedule
- h. Review of accreditation term determination and summary for the Commission
- i. Reminder to “control” expenses

**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 #13 above under Previsit Preparation.
- ___2. Conduct initial meeting with school’s leadership team that includes a reflective discussion on the general perceptions gleaned from study of the Self-Study Report (planned jointly with principal/self-study coordinator prior to visit).
- ___3. Facilitate the visit:
 - a. Maintain a positive atmosphere
 - b. Keep to the task
 - c. Maintain open communication and collaboration at all times
 - d. Regularly communicate with principal, self-study coordinator, and Leadership Team
 - e. Ensure that all Visiting Committee members are active participants in the school committee meetings
 - f. 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
 - g. Ensure that no area is overlooked
 - h. Assist committee members
 - i. Avoid issues related to school policies or negotiations
 - j. Stress with Visiting Committee to avoid prescription and “how we do it at our school” discussion
 - k. Lead all visiting committee discussions on the findings, relating them to the WASC/DOE criteria in the five categories
 - l. Coordinate the preparation of the Visiting Committee report
- ___4. Facilitate the dialogue about the school’s program and its impact on student learning in relation to the schoolwide learner outcomes, the standards, and the WASC/DOE criteria.
- ___5. Regularly communicate with the school leaders, including the Leadership Team, about Visiting Committee findings and their implications for refinement of the schoolwide action plan.

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- ___6. At the final meeting with the Leadership Team, facilitate a thorough discussion about the School’s Strategic Plan and the forthcoming Academic and Financial Plan based upon the school and visiting committee findings in relation to the schoolwide learner outcomes, the standards, and the WASC/DOE criteria.
- 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
 - c. Point out that after the visit the Leadership Team should integrate the Visiting Committee’s key issues and critical areas for follow-up into the School Strategic Plan and the forthcoming Academic and Financial Plan.
- ___7. Facilitate necessary Visiting Committee Report modifications and come to closure on Visiting Committee Report.
- ___8. Have Visiting Committee members individually review each WASC/DOE criterion within the five categories. Have them individually make decisions regarding the quality of the school’s educational program with respect to the five 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” and the “Confidential Summary” for the Commission.
- Ensure:
- Alignment between the Visiting Committee report and the recommended term
 - Member signatures on the term sheet
 - Brief description of the discussion and term option considered by the Visiting Committee
 - A clearly stated rationale based upon factors impacting term of accreditation
 - Attachment of the “No Child Left Behind” school report and Trend Report
- ___11. Have Visiting Committee members complete their Expense Voucher and the Visiting Committee Chairperson Evaluation Form. Have the members mail the evaluation form to WASC directly. Review and sign members’ Expense Vouchers.
- ___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. Leave a (draft) copy of the report with the principal.
- ___14. Continually stress the importance of immediate follow-up to integrate the Visiting Committee narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up into the School Strategic Plan and Academic and Financial Plan for yearly implementation and assessment.

- ___15. Work with self-study coordinator to make sure that the school sends 10 copies of the final Visiting Committee report (please print double-sided) and one hard copy each to the DOE Accreditation/School Improvement, Complex Area Superintendent, and Visiting Committee members.

After the Visit

- ___1. Send the member expense vouchers and member evaluations to the WASC office immediately.
- ___2. Finalize the WASC forms: the “Recommended Term of Accreditation” and the “Confidential Summary” for the Commission. Ensure school has final copy of the Visiting Committee Report and 10 copies are received by WASC office as soon as possible after 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 Commission meeting.)