

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Accrediting Commission for Schools

Process Overview





Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

- **One of six private, nonprofit, regional accrediting associations in the United States**
- **Provides assistance to schools located in California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, and East Asia**
- **Recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education**
- **Composed of three commissions**
 - **Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities**
 - **Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges**
 - **Accrediting Commission for Schools**



Accrediting Commission for Schools

- **Extends services to pre-K-12 schools of various types (including adult schools in California and Hawaii):**
 - **Public**
 - **Independent**
 - **Church-related**
 - **Proprietary**
- **Serves over 4,000 schools**
- **Works with 15 associations in joint processes**



Composition of Accrediting Commission for Schools — 31 members

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
- California Department of Education
- California Federation of Teachers
- California Teachers Association
- California School Boards Association
- Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists
- Western Catholic Educational Association

East Asia

- East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools

Hawaii

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

Public Members

- Five public members



Commission Philosophy

The Commission believes:

- **A school's goal is successful student learning**
- **Each school has a clear purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide student goals)**
- **For ongoing school improvement, each school engages in internal and external evaluations to assess progress in achieving its purpose**



Primary Goals of Accreditation

- **Certification to the public that the school is a trustworthy institution of learning**
- **The improvement of the school's programs and operations to support student learning**



Why Accreditation

- **Assures a school community that the school's purposes are appropriate and being accomplished through a viable education program — a trustworthy institution for student learning**
- **Validates integrity of school's program and transcripts**
- **Fosters improvement of school's programs and operations to support student learning**



Why Accreditation (continued)

- **Ongoing means to self-assess and manage change through...**
 - **Assessment**
 - **Planning**
 - **Implementing**
 - **Monitoring**
 - **Reassessment**
- **Gain insight and perspective from fellow educators visiting the school**



Importance of Accreditation

Examples:

- **Approval of courses for entrance into college or next level of schooling**
- **Scholarships — often only granted from accredited schools**
- **College/university acceptance**
- **Transfer of credit**
- **Teacher salary schedule**



Accreditation Expectations

- **Clarification of school purpose and schoolwide student goals**
- **High achievement of all students**
- **Multiple means of data analysis**
- **Program assessment**
- **Alignment of findings and action plan**
- **Integration of program and initiatives**
- **Ongoing improvement/accountability**
- **Total involvement/collaboration**

One Umbrella Plan



- **Strategic Plan**
- **Technology Plan**
- **Staff Development Plan**



WASC Six-Year Cycle

Year Six — Past Cycle: Completion of Self Study/Visit

Year One: Progress Report, Updated Profile and Refinement of Action Plan

Year Two: Progress Report, Updated Profile and Refinement of Action Plan

Year Three: Midterm Progress Report with Updated Profile (may include one day review) Refinement of Action Plan

Year Four: Progress Report, Updated Profile and Refinement of Action Plan

Year Five: Review of all Progress and Program Analysis (as part of next self-study)

Year Six: Completion of Self-Study, including resulting Action Plan and Visit



The Ongoing Process

- **Self-Study**
- **Visit**
- **Follow-Up**



Summary: Self-Study Process

✓ What?

What is the ideal based upon...?

- **Expected schoolwide learning results (student goals)**
- **WASC criteria**
- **Academic standards or curricular objectives**

✓ So what?

What currently exists and how effective is it?

✓ Now what?

What and how will we modify?

What should be in the schoolwide action plan?



Data/Evidence/Analysis

Who are the students? How are the students doing?

- **What does the data tell us?**
- **Not tell us?**
- **What questions does the data raise?**





Observable evidence includes analyzing results of ...

- **What students are doing and producing**
- **Student interviews and observations**
- **Hard data and information**
- **Other interviews, observations, etc.**





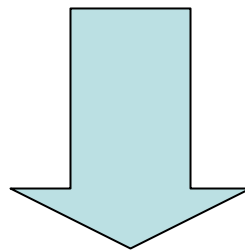
Self-Study Findings

Criteria Findings	Supporting Evidence



Findings

- 1. Areas to celebrate — yet maintain**
- 2. Areas that need development and growth**



Lead to...direct alignment with growth areas and strengths and action plan



One Schoolwide Action Plan

Common Action Plan Components:

- **Goals for improving student achievement**
- **Growth targets, performance gains expected**
- **Relationship to schoolwide student goals (ESLRs)**
- **Means of evaluating progress**
- **Who's responsible and involved**
- **Specific actions to improve educational practice**
- **Timeline**
- **Resources**
- **Annual review, reassessment, refinement**
- **Annual Board approval**

Schoolwide Action Plan



Visualize what will be different for students....

- **One year from now?**
- **Two years from now?**
- **Three years from now?**



The Visit

- **Insight and perspective of Visiting Committee**
 - ✓ **Validation**
 - ✓ **Enhancement**
- **Support of chair**



The Visit

- **Three to eight educators**
- **Usually 3-½ days, East Asia 4-½ days**
- **Visiting Committee report based on:**
 - ✓ **Self-Study**
 - ✓ **Findings during visit**
 - ✓ **WASC criteria (or WASC/___ joint criteria, e.g., WASC/ACSI, WASC/CDE)**



The Visit

- **Report shared with Leadership Team and entire staff**
- **Report and recommended term of accreditation submitted to Commission(s)**
 - **What term best supports the school's improvement needs?**



Term Factors

- **Six years**: progress report, one-day or two-day mid-term review for some schools
- **Three years**: progress reports, three year two-day visit to extend term one year, three years or deny
- **One or two years**: progress reports, one-day visit to extend term up to three years or deny
- **Denial**: reasons detailed in Visiting Committee report



Term Factors (continued)

Term based on a school demonstrating:

- 1. Involvement and collaboration of all**
- 2. Defining of the school's purpose through ESLRs and academic standards**
- 3. Use of a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student performance data**
- 4. Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined ESLRs, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations**



Term Factors (continued)

Term based on a school demonstrating...

- 5. Meeting WASC or WASC/_____ criteria**
- 6. Alignment of a long-range schoolwide action plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students**
- 7. Capacity to implement and monitor the schoolwide action plan**
- 8. Use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement**



The Follow-Up (continued)

- **Implementation of action plan**
- **Annual assessment by Leadership Team and entire staff, including data analysis about student learning in relation to action plan**
- **Completion of reviews and progress reports — used to prepare for next self-study (every six years)**
- **Celebration of success**



Ongoing

- **Data analysis leads to action which in turn leads to more data analysis.**



Accreditation: A 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 Follow-Up

- **School refines action plan after visit, submitting revised plan to WASC Commission:**
 - **January 31 deadline for fall visits**
 - **June 30 deadline for spring visits**
- **Has the school integrated all the recommendations or critical areas for follow-up that were stated in the Visiting Committee report?**





W

We

A

Are

S

Student-

C

Centered