



## WASC INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

### Overview

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), a world-renowned accrediting association and one of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States, works closely with the Office of Overseas Schools under the U.S. Department of State. 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 4,500 public, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K-12 and adult schools, works with 16 associations in joint accreditation processes, and collaborates with other organizations such as the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). One example is the seamless joint process with the Council of International Schools (CIS). There is one initial visit, self-study, full visit and visiting committee report, and ongoing follow-up process but two accreditation awards independently decided by the agencies.

The Accrediting Commission is composed of 31 representatives from educational organizations that it serves; this includes a representative from the East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS) that supports the work of WASC. The Accrediting Commission has been working with international schools in Asia since the late 1960s and collaborates with foreign ministries of education, e.g., China and Thailand. Three of the first schools to be accredited by WASC in East Asia were the International School of Manila, Ruamrudee International School in Bangkok, and Hong Kong International School. The Commission closely collaborates with EARCOS regarding the accreditation plans for EARCOS schools, including the training and support for international schools.

### WASC Philosophy

The philosophy of the Accrediting Commission for Schools centers upon three beliefs: (1) a school's goal is successful student learning; (2) each school has a clear purpose and schoolwide student goals; and (3) a school engages in external and internal evaluations as part of continued school improvement to support student learning.

Accreditation is integral to a school's perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and reassessment based upon student achievement. It fosters excellence in elementary, secondary, adult, and postsecondary education by encouraging school improvement through a process of continuing evaluation and to recognize, by accreditation, schools that meet an acceptable level of quality, in accordance with established criteria. In addition to its official title, WASC means *We Are Student-Centered*.

### 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 the integrity of the school's program and transcripts
- ✓ Facilitates transfer of credits to other English-speaking schools — critical for college/university acceptance worldwide
- ✓ Fosters the ongoing improvement of the school's programs and operations to support student learning
- ✓ Provides valuable insight from fellow educators visiting the school
- ✓ Benefits schools that choose joint accreditation or other collaborative processes, e.g., WASC/CIS and integration of WASC and IBO

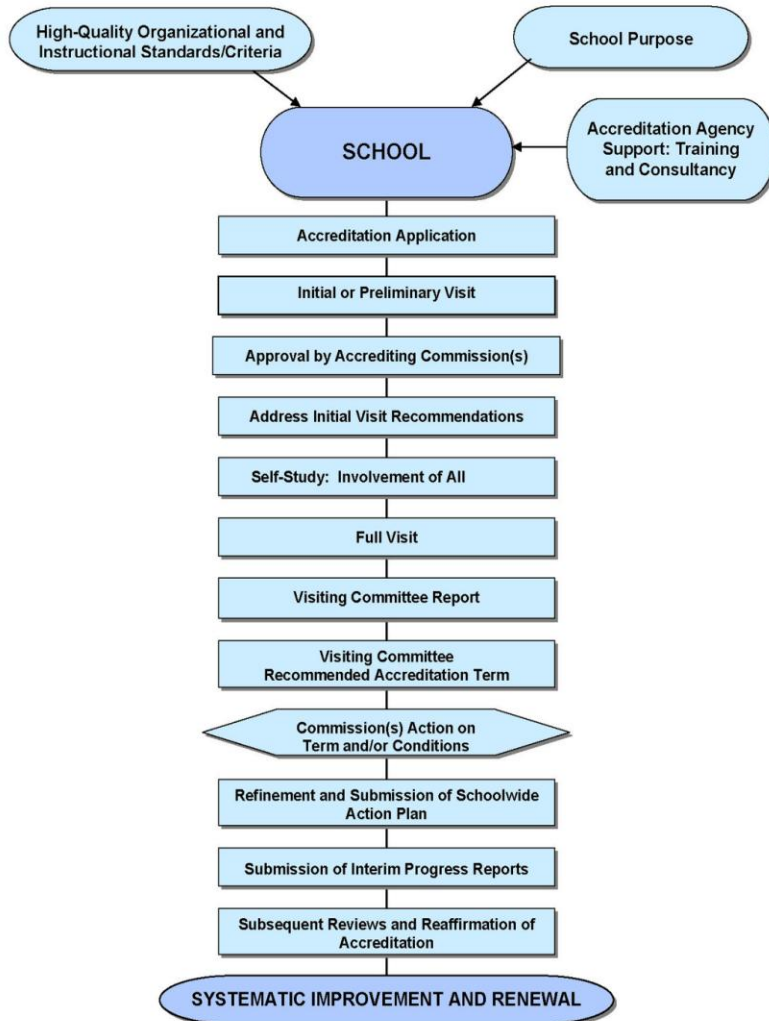


**Accreditation: A Value-Added Test**

Schools add value by...

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

## ACCREDITATION: A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS



## International Accreditation Process

### Initial Visit Process

- ✓ The purpose of the one-or two-day visit by a two-member team is to understand the school's purpose, its program, and operations based upon the WASC criteria and detailed school description.
- ✓ If Commission grants candidacy, the school addresses recommendations from the visiting committee report and completes first full self-study by the end of the third year.

### Self-Study Process/Full Visit

- ✓ Involvement of all stakeholders in self-study process.
- ✓ Clarification of the school's purpose and the schoolwide student goals (expected schoolwide learning results).
- ✓ Assessment of student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the WASC criteria.
- ✓ Development of a schoolwide action plan that addresses identified areas for improvement.
- ✓ Visiting Committee validation and enhancement based on accreditation criteria/standards, self-study and findings from visit.

### Follow-Up Process

- ✓ Annual assessment of action plan progress and refinement of plan as needed.
- ✓ Completion of progress reports and/or reviews, e.g., annual reports.
- ✓ Celebration of success.

## Contact Us

The WASC staff looks forward to working with you.

- ✓ EARCOS Annual Admin and Teachers' Conferences: Full-day WASC Session for schools about self-study and serving as a visiting committee member.
- ✓ EARCOS Annual Admin Conference: WASC chair training, two-hour visiting committee member training, meetings throughout conference with school leaders about accreditation.
- ✓ Meetings and trainings continually throughout East Asia region with individual and groups of schools.
- ✓ Individual phone call, conference calls, and emails (send us and email and we will call you at your convenience).



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