

WASC/AWSNA Visiting Committee Member Checklist

Previsit Preparation

- ___ 1. Receive first letter from Visiting Committee chairperson that addresses several items:
 - a. Asking for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
 - b. Reminding members about training sessions
 - c. Asking members to review accreditation materials

- ___ 2. Participate in training.

- ___ 3. Study the entire WASC/AWSNA Evaluation/Accreditation Guide. This guide for the self-study is a pilot document merging WASC and AWSNA criteria and principles.

- ___ 4. Become aware of the WASC parameters of the self-study followed by the school:
 - the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study
 - the clarification of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results
 - the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria
 - the development of a schoolwide action plan and integrated subject area/support program action steps to address identified growth needs
 - the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan

- ___ 5. Review the WASC criteria and the AWSNA principles and suggested evidence and appropriate curricular/ educational references. These are discussed in Sections I-V of this self-study guide.

- ___ 6. Receive additional communication from chairperson:
 - a. Assigning writing assignments
 - b. Requesting the review of the criteria as the **entire self-study report is analyzed**
 - c. Requesting **prior to the visit**, the writing of questions to pursue during the visit and tentative narrative statements and commendations/ recommendations for assigned sections of the school report. **The chair should receive these prior to the initial team meeting in order to compile a tentative Visiting Committee Report.**
 - d. Providing a schedule for visit

Visiting committee member checklist

- ___ 7. After receiving the School Report, complete previsit preparation:
 - a. Review the criteria with respect to the analysis of the School Report; study other pertinent materials.
 - b. Compare the school's self-findings to the concepts of the WASC criteria, the AWSNA principles, and the expected schoolwide learning results. Critique conclusions and action plan, Section VI.
 - c. Write questions regarding issues, concerns, clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit and develop tentative narrative statements and commendations/ recommendations for assigned sections of Visiting Committee report. **Send these to Visiting Committee chair prior to visit.**

- ___ 8. Receive final communication from chairperson:
 - a. Confirming receipt of school self-study
 - b. Offering assistance/clarification of tasks
 - c. Confirming initial meeting time
 - d. Reviewing how expenses are to be handled

- ___ 9. Take following materials to visit:
 - a. *WASC/AWSNA* self-study manual and Visiting Committee Handbook
 - b. Reference cards
 - c. Self-Study Report
 - d. All notes
 - e. Credit card or cash to cover reimbursable expenses

- ___ 10. Arrive on time for initial meeting and have no other commitments during the visit.

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

- ___ 1. Demonstrate a genuine interest in the school's welfare and a desire to be helpful. Establish rapport with staff.

- ___ 2. Utilize the concepts of the WASC criteria and AWSNA principles as a comparison base throughout entire visit.

- ___ 3. Look at the quality of program experienced by students and evidence of successful student learning - the degree to which the expected schoolwide learning results are being accomplished.

- ___ 4. Look for evidence of an ongoing process for school improvement.

Visiting committee member checklist

- __ 5. Let the program unfold, don't prejudge. Validate, verify, and document. Be aware of personal biases that can influence observation.
- __ 6. Structure the gathering of evidence (class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work and other information, dialogue with Home Groups) so needed information is gained.
- __ 7. Assure teachers that classroom visits are not evaluative but are planned to observe the general instructional atmosphere and climate of the school.
- __ 8. Frame open-ended questions to all school committee members and individuals to elicit information without reflecting a value judgment.
- __ 9. Allow adequate time for responses and give appropriate feedback to responses to questions.
- __10. Concentrate on being a good listener. Be aware of nonverbal feedback.
- __11. Meet and lead discussion with school self-study committees that are assigned areas of writing responsibility. Allow adequate time for the other Visiting Committee members to explore their concerns and for school staff members to highlight issues important to them. Visiting Committee members help all concerned to recognize the needs of the school and develop a desire to improve the instructional program.

Note: Time is limited, so don't overemphasize particular concerns. The goal is to clarify information already in the School Report and secure information not yet provided.
- __12. Don't allow pressure groups or individuals to distract you from the main task and schedule.
- __13. Make every effort to avoid involvement in issues that are negotiable.
- __14. Work cooperatively with all other Visiting Committee members as findings are discussed and decisions made.
- __15. Write quality responses according to the suggested guidelines. Make sure they reflect the important concepts of the criteria in order to serve as guidelines for an effective educational curricular program.

Visiting Committee Member Checklist

- _16. Provide regular feedback to the Leadership Team (Steering Committee) and other staff members regarding findings as a result of the visit, not the self-study alone.
- _17. Meet with the Leadership Team (Steering Committee) to present and **thoroughly discuss the synthesis of the concepts of the criteria, the school report, and the findings** during the visit, as reflected in the draft Visiting Committee Report.
- _18. Meet with other Visiting Committee members to investigate any issues or questions raised during the Leadership Team (Steering Committee) meeting.
- _19. Make necessary Visiting Committee Report modifications and come to closure on it.
- _20. Individually review each WASC criterion, the AWSNA principles and overall findings. Individually make decisions regarding the quality of the school's educational program with respect to the four categories of criteria, the AWSNA principles and the other factors impacting the term.
- _21. Participate in the Visiting Committee discussion of the Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation with respect to the WASC criteria categories, the AWSNA principles, and all findings.
- _22. Assist the chair in preparing the confidential Visiting Committee Summary for the Commission ensuring that the **correlation is evident** between the recommended term and the Visiting Committee report.
- _23. Complete expense voucher and chair evaluation form (optional). The school will reimburse the members directly for all expenses.
- _24. Participate in the presentation of the findings to the entire staff. Don't imply the recommended term of accreditation.
- _25. Support and encourage the school in its ongoing follow-up, revision and finalization of the draft action within six months from the time of the visit.

***AWSNA Principles
Purpose, Goals, and Philosophy***

A1: The school is an independent institution working out of the pedagogical indications of Rudolf Steiner, based on anthroposophy, the philosophy initiated by Rudolf Steiner.

A2: There is a clearly articulated statement of educational mission, philosophy, and goals that reflects the individual character of the school, based upon sound Waldorf educational tenets. Such statement reflects the characteristics and needs of its students, and is implemented by a specific statement of shared visions manifested in the educational program.

A3: The statement of educational mission, philosophy, and goals is approved by the school; it shall be understood and supported by the school community.

A4: The development and periodic review of the mission and vision of the school are a collective effort involving faculty, administrators, parents, board, and students, if deemed appropriate.

A5: The school teaches in an age-appropriate manner that rejects all forms of indoctrination of its students and lays the foundations for the capacities of creative and independent thinking.

A6: There is full disclosure of the school's mission, policies, programs and practices.

A7: There is a high degree of congruence between the stated mission of the school and the actual program and practices of the school.

A8: The school demonstrates its commitment to inclusiveness in gender and cultural diversity through its governance and leadership, curriculum, support programs, staffing, and activities.

WASC Criteria, Organization for Student Learning

A1. School Purpose

The school has established a clear statement of purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution. The purpose is defined further by adopted student goals that form the basis of the educational program for every student.

WSNA Principles

The Educational Program, Activities and Student Services

B1: The faculty is responsible for the educational program of the school and strives continually to recreate and renew the Waldorf curriculum according to the indications of R. Steiner. An understanding of these indications will be developed through the collegial workings of the full faculty and each individual faculty member.

B2: A central understanding is that the education meets the needs of the developing child according to the insights of Rudolf Steiner, the continuing work of Waldorf educators, as well as contemporary insights which are considered compatible and appropriate.

B3: The school promotes student development in thinking (e.g. cognitive), feeling (e.g. affective), and willing (e.g. psychomotor) in an age appropriate manner by addressing the emerging individuality of the whole human being in both the process and the content of the curriculum.

B4: The educational program needs to include sufficient diversity and recognition of resources to meet the capacities, learning styles, developmental needs, and cultural backgrounds of the students enrolled. The school only enrolls students whose needs the faculty believes it can meet.

B5: The school's educational program includes a balance of language, math, natural science, social science, humanities, fine arts, practical arts, performing arts, physical education and practical work experience as is appropriate for the age, needs, and abilities of students enrolled in the school.

B6: The faculty is responsible for ensuring review, evaluation, and development of the curriculum on a regular basis.

B7: The faculty provides regular oral and written assessment of progress for each student at all age levels and shares these assessments with the family in an open and timely manner. The school is able to document appropriate information regarding student performance in its student records.

WASC Criteria, Organization for Student Learning

A6. Reporting Student Progress

The school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the student goals and report student progress to the rest of the school community.

WASC Criteria, Curriculum and Instruction

B1. What Students Learn

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 student goals through successful completion of any course of study offered.

B2. How Student s Learn

The professional staff: a) uses research based knowledge about teaching and learning; and b) designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and student goals.

B3. How Assessment Is Used

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

B8: The school provides adequate access to program support including guidance services, special needs support, and health services.

B9: The educational program addresses the rhythmic element within each lesson, the day, the week, the month, and the year.

B10: The length of the school day and year will be sufficient for the total school program and will meet all applicable legal requirements.

B11: The school maintains records for students containing information required by law and as necessary for the operation of a quality program.

B12: The school provides or has access to appropriate and sufficient instructional materials and equipment necessary for the requirements of the instructional program and the needs of the students.

B13: The school demonstrates that it provides sufficient access to quality library and/or media center facilities, or suitable alternatives, as indicated by accepted Waldorf practices.

B14: If there is a residential program, it must be conceived and staffed to suitably fulfill that aspect of the school's program, particularly with respect to the portion of the day outside regular classroom hours. Applicable health and safety regulations shall be fully observed.

B15: The relationship between the school and any special programs it offers on a supplementary basis (summer sessions, student exchange, extra-curricular, work experience, before- and after-school programs, special needs education, seminars, institutes, etc.) is fully disclosed. The operation of supplemental programs shall not be in conflict with the school's purpose.

AWSNA Principles

Governance, Administration, Finance, and Law

C1: The school is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization and shall have been granted 501(c)(3) status by the Internal Revenue Service in the United States, or have the equivalent not-for-profit incorporation and tax-exempt status in Canada or Mexico.

C2: The school and its governance structure are organized with sufficient independence from other organizations, so as to ensure its ability to fulfill its mission and to control its own destiny.

C3: The school is developed and organized so as to carry out policies effectively. It is responsible for the educational program, personnel, facilities, and resources, to include the employment of all teachers, staff and support personnel.

C4: The school provides clearly stated decision-making processes for the administration of the school, for strategic planning, for the periodic review of school organization, and for appropriate development of programs and services.

C12: The school periodically reviews and evaluates its processes of governance and administration.

C15: The school complies with the required AWSNA septennial evaluation/accreditation program including a self-study, visitation by an AWSNA, and prescribed follow-up activity and reports. (Schools in a ten-year cycle or a six year cycle with accrediting may request a variance.)

WASC Criteria, Organization for Student Learning

A2. Governance

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

A3. Leadership

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

A7. School Improvement Process

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 support and involvement, (c) effectively guides the work of the school, and (d) provides for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan.

C9: The school has appropriate procedures for management of financial resources including process for annual budgeting-making, accounting, auditing such accounts, investing, and long-range planning.

C10: The school provides adequate fundraising, public relations, and financial management support to achieve the school's mission.

C11: The school will have an external accounting firm complete an annual financial report. This can be either a compilation, a review, or an audit, except in the case of the final fiscal year preceding the on-site evaluation visit at which time at least a review-level report will be done.

C12: The school periodically reviews and evaluates its processes of governance and administration.

C13: The school publishes a tuition and fee schedule appropriate to its operations and clientele as well as a refund policy that is communicated and meets legal and ethical considerations.

C14: The school implements appropriate policies and procedure regarding financial reporting and record keeping as necessary to its effective, ethical, and legal operations and is able to evidence that those records are kept in a safe ad professional manner.

C15: The school complies with the required AWSNA septennial evaluation/accreditation program including a self-study, visitation by an AWSNA, and prescribed follow-up activity and reports. (Schools in a ten-year cycle or a six year cycle with accrediting may request a variance.)

AWSNA Principles

Governance, Administration, Finance, and Law

C5: The school has clearly defined programs for regular evaluation of the performance of administration, teachers, and staff, and understood procedures for non-renewal and termination of employment.

C6: There is no discrimination against any person in admissions, employment, or otherwise because of ethnicity, creed, gender, or national origin in violation of federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

D1: The administration, teachers, and staff are qualified for their positions and responsibilities by education and/or experience. Teachers have a formal preparation, or the equivalent, for Waldorf/Steiner teaching, or are engaged in such preparation.

D2: There are clear, established procedures for recruiting, screening, interviewing, hiring, supporting, evaluating, and dismissing of personnel.

D3: There are fair and appropriate personnel policies, salaries and benefits for all personnel and these policies are written and readily available for all co-workers.

D4: After mutual agreement for compensation, term of employment, and principal duties and responsibilities, each teacher and staff members is informed in writing.

WASC Criteria, Organization for Student Learning

A4. Staff

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.

D5: The school has a clearly, stated program for professional growth.

D6: There are adequate procedures for identifying changing needs and priorities in teacher and staff requirements.

D7: Every teacher and staff member will participate in a fair and regular form of evaluation.

D8: The school has a clearly articulated written policy for expectations of professional behavior.

D9: The school keeps accurate and complete personnel records as required by law and as necessary for its effective operations and they include professional qualifications and credentials.

