

Focus on
Learning
THE ACCREDITATION MANUAL



2003–2004 WASC EDITION

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Focus on **Learning**

THE ACCREDITATION MANUAL

Western Association of Schools and Colleges
Accrediting Commission for Schools
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200
Burlingame, CA 94010



2003–2004 WASC EDITION

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Preface

If educational organizations are to concentrate all their energies and resources on successful student learning, a holistic, honest examination of the actual program for students is required. Through the use of empowering criteria, new communication patterns, evidence gathering techniques, and insight from fellow educators, the appropriate accreditation process can serve as a vehicle to move school community members into meaningful schoolwide improvement and accountability. The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), utilizes a protocol for accrediting schools entitled *Focus on Learning*.

The *Focus on Learning* process has been widely accepted throughout the WASC region as integral to the “heart” of education-successful student learning. This has been demonstrated through a variety of *Focus on Learning* adaptations as WASC works jointly with numerous educational associations. Public, independent and church-related private K-12 and adult schools value the “basic components” of *Focus on Learning* that can be “institutionalized” as the schools address growth areas that impact student learning. These include: (1) the defining of quality achievement of expected schoolwide learning results for every student by all stakeholders; (2) schoolwide interdisciplinary dialogue based on evidence gathering and analysis about what students are doing and producing; and (3) the development, implementation, and accomplishment of a schoolwide action plan. Therefore, all schools view the *Focus on Learning* process as a living document.

The Big Picture

Focus on Learning: Overview

Background

The accreditation process for WASC resulted from intensive work of an advisory group composed of representatives from the WASC region. They synthesized the issues and concerns from the WASC constituency with current thinking and research-based knowledge about teaching and learning. The basic concepts addressed in this process focus upon student success in meeting schoolwide student goals or expected schoolwide learning results [i.e., what each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit (graduation) from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program]. They are:

1. How are the students doing with respect to the expected schoolwide learning results and curricular standards?
2. Is the school doing everything possible to support high achievement of these results for all its students?

Focus on Learning and School Change

To ensure that the critical elements of school change were integral to the *Focus on Learning* design, the following specific features are included:

- The clarification of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results for all students
- The involvement of the school community in self-directed problem-solving
- The opportunity for the following:
 - analysis of the actual program for students
 - meaningful dialogue
 - collaboration and shared decision-making
- The use of high quality criteria to analyze the program for students
- The development of a schoolwide action plan to support desired learning results
- The opportunity for an outside perspective regarding the proposed changes through the Visiting Committee's dialogue and findings
- The monitoring of progress in meeting or redefining goals and actions through accreditation reviews and reports

Criteria

The criteria are research-based guidelines of systemic school improvement that address accreditation's central tenet: a school operates with a clear understanding of its purpose.

The criteria were developed with the assistance of numerous practicing educational leaders and theorists. The objective was to develop criteria that brought attention to concepts and factors that differentiate between effective and ineffective schools. Since most formal education occurs in an institutional setting, factors that impact institutional effectiveness were considered along with curriculum, instructional strategies and assessment.

Specifically, in *Focus on Learning*, the schools will be assessed against four categories of criteria. These are:

- Organization for Student Learning
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
- Resource Management and Development

Importance of School's Purpose and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

An essential element of systemic school improvement is the collective vision or statement of purpose on the part of the members of the school community: What should students know and be able to do upon exit from the school? What does it mean to be an educated person? What is the most effective preparation of students for the future?

The purpose provides the school's foundation for establishing schoolwide student goals or expected schoolwide learning results. These state the global knowledge, skills, and understanding students should possess upon exit from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program. The attainment of these expected schoolwide learning results drives the instructional program and the support operations of the school and therefore is integral to the school's accreditation process. These learning results complement the more specific curricular standards.

Importance of Evidence

Translating the school's purpose into expected schoolwide learning results for all students is a beginning. The self-study phase of the accreditation process revolves around an in-depth gathering of evidence that will enable a school to take an honest look at what is and isn't working based upon the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results. This verification is key to learning about the actual instruction experienced by students.

Observable evidence includes analyzing the following:

- what students are doing and producing (student work)
- student interviews and observations
- hard data and information, e.g., student indicators for attendance, special needs, schoolwide performance
- other interviews, observations, etc.

Accreditation Cycle

The accreditation process is a perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring, and reassessment (self-study, visit, and follow-up). During the year prior to the visit, a school clarifies or redefines its expected schoolwide learning results and begins the formal self-study process that assesses the actual student program with respect to the criteria. The self-study process culminates in the development of a 3-5 year schoolwide action plan. The completed school report is sent to the visiting committee members for careful study at least four-five weeks prior to their spring visit. Using the results of the visit, the school modifies and implements its action plan in this ongoing cycle of improvement.

Parameters for Analysis

The school's self study is predicated on five key components. Through the completion of the accreditation process, the school will have accomplished:

1. the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.
2. the clarification of the school's purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results.
3. the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results.
4. the development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs.
5. the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan.

Flexibility

As long as the school adheres to the parameters for analysis, there is flexibility in the self-study process. For your assistance a model is provided. If the school modifies the model to accommodate a particular school community, it should explain how the previously listed parameters have been met.

Task 8: Ensure schoolwide consensus on the action plan and the specific action steps to support the plan.

Responsible Committees: Leadership Team
Home Groups*

Task 9: Establish an ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan.

Responsible Committee: Leadership Team

Visit

After careful study of the School Report, a Visiting Committee composed of fellow educators spends three and one-half days at the school. The purpose of the visit is to provide an outside perspective from educators who are thoroughly familiar with the criteria used by the school.

The Visiting Committee gives insight to the school through dialogue with the Schoolwide Focus Groups and the Stakeholder/Program Committees about the self-study findings and by its own gathering of evidence and analysis of student work. In collaboration the Visiting Committee and the Leadership Team/Schoolwide Focus Groups compare findings. The resulting discussion and written results assist the school in refining the schoolwide action plan with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results.

Follow-up

Subsequent to the visit, the school refines and implements the action plan. The Leadership Team will coordinate this implementation, annual review of progress, and the refinement of the "next steps" in meeting the goals. All follow-up is done with respect to evidence that students are accomplishing the established expected schoolwide learning results. The governing authority and district (if applicable) are involved in the ongoing improvement process to ensure that the follow-up process is integral to district planning and goal setting.

Focus on Learning: 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 (1) makes decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results, (2) empowers the staff and (3) 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 and Instruction

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 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

Key Terminology

To ensure common understanding of the terms, which are used in the criteria and the *Focus on Learning* process, the following definitions are provided and will be operational for *Focus on Learning*.

Accreditation:

A voluntary process whereby a school conducts a self-study that serves as the basis for a review by a team of educators not employed by the district. The team members assist the school in appraising their instructional program. The school is evaluated on (1) the degree to which there is clarity of purpose that is reflected through the school's leadership, instructional program, policies, and use of time and resources; and (2) how adequately the WASC criteria are being met. The maximum term of accreditation is six years.

Action Plan:

A school's step by step process that details specific activities using existing resources that can address a school's identified growth needs.

All Students:

A reference to the belief that all students can learn at high levels and should have sufficient support to enable them to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results. Every student enrolled in the school, regardless of sub-population or unique characteristics, is included.

Challenging Relevant Curriculum:

A demanding curriculum based on themes and concepts that encourages the student to achieve at high levels, to use "higher order thinking skills," and to apply and synthesize knowledge.

Coherent Curriculum:

A curriculum that is viewed as a broadly conceived concept and makes sense as a whole with subparts unified, connected and integrated.

Competency:

A performance objective.

Course Competencies/Subject Area Results:

Established goals, objectives and expectations for what students are to know and be able to do upon the completion of a class, course or sequence of courses within a subject area or program. These results are aligned with the expected schoolwide learning results and "enable" students to progress toward accomplishing these results.

Current Educational Research and Thinking:

Research and related discourse and publications on education and learning. Examples include: the work of such authors as Grant Wiggins, Jay McTighe, Theodore Sizer, William Slavin, Phil Schlechty, Ann Lieberman, Lynne Miller, Michael Fullan, Lauren

Resnick and Richard Sagor; work and publications on state, national, and subject area standards; and government, business and industry research.

Diverse Population:

The variety of sub-populations in the school, populations defined by ethnicity, gender, religious affiliations/beliefs, ability levels, socio-economic status, etc.

Expected Schoolwide Learning Result:

What each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit (e.g., graduation) from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program. These learning results are collaboratively developed and represent the focus of the entire school community.

Portfolio:

A collection of representative student work.

Purpose:

A clarification of the beliefs held by members of the school community about what the school can do for students with respect to knowledge, skills, and understandings through the school program.

School Community:

The school community includes (1) local business and industry, educational institutions, agencies, and service organizations; (2) parents, students, school board; and (3) all employees.

Schoolwide Action Plan:

The overall improvement strategies as a result of the self-study process.

Special Needs:

Students who need additional physical and/or mental support services to accomplish the expected schoolwide learning results at their maximum potential.

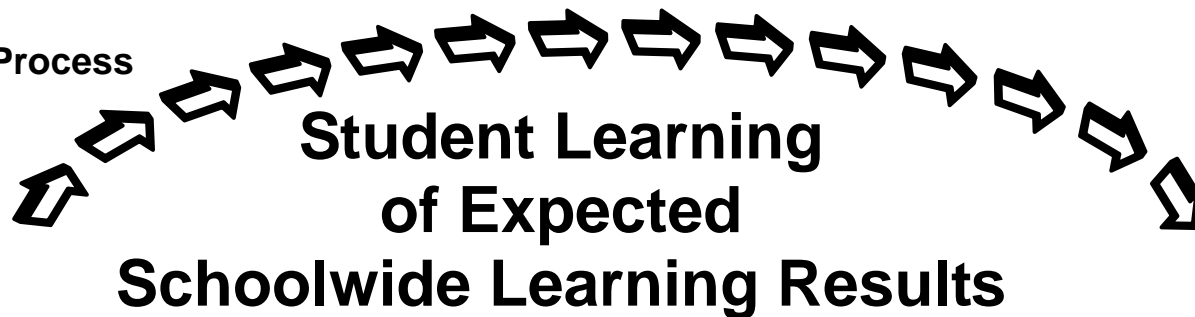
Subject Area:

A specific body of information or knowledge; a discipline.

Self-Study Coordinator (SC):

The facilitator/leader of the school's accreditation process in collaboration with the school leadership.

Focus on Learning Process



Visit



Self-Study

Follow-up



- ▶ Refinement, implementation, and monitoring of schoolwide action plan
- ▶ Analysis of evidence on student achievement of established expected schoolwide learning results
- ▶ Refinement of next steps

- ▶ Insight and perspective of visiting committee regarding student program and learning based on WASC criteria and expected schoolwide learning results

- ▶ Development and analysis of student/community profile
- ▶ Development refinement or clarification of expected schoolwide learning results
- ▶ Review of progress on school improvement
- ▶ Analysis of observable evidence about the quality of school program for every student based on criteria and expected schoolwide learning results
- ▶ Development of a schoolwide action plan and follow-up process

* Observable evidence includes analyzing results of what students are doing and producing; student interviews and observations; hard data and information; other interviews, observations, etc.

The Self-Study: Background Information

Coordinator Guidelines

Getting Started: School Year Prior to Year of Self-Study/Visit, September-June

- ___1. Chief Administrator/Self-Study Coordinator (SC) participate in training
- ___2. Chief Administrator and SC establish (1) a general calendar for the major self-study events and (2) a more detailed timeline of specific committee meetings and tasks to be accomplished

The self-study coordinator works backwards from the date of the visit, allowing at least 4-5 weeks for the Visiting Committee to study the school report.

- ___3. Chief Administrator and SC establish support mechanisms

Working with the SC, the chief administrator ensures there are support mechanisms, such as governing authority and district understanding and assistance, professional time for staff members, financial resources and clerical/technical help.

- ___4. SC orients staff and other school community member groups

This orientation should include:

- a. An explanation of the WASC accreditation process and its benefits to the school community
- b. An overview of the *Focus on Learning* self-study process
- c. The nature and purpose of the visit
- d. Accreditation term determination
- e. The importance of the ongoing improvement process for successful student learning

- ___5. SC and chief administrator appoint chairs for all committees

The committees for the model self-study process include: Schoolwide Focus Groups, Student/Community Profile Committee, Student/Parent Groups, Subject Area/Program Committees, Support Staff Groups. The Leadership Team is composed of the Schoolwide Focus Group chairs, the SC, the chief administrator and other selected members.

___6. SC prepares self-study packets

Suggested information for the self-study packets include: the overview, general and specific timeline, committee structure and membership, summary of products (self-study report format), self-study steps, and all criteria/guide questions/suggested areas to analyze. *Add to the packets after their development or refinement, the student/community profile and the expected schoolwide learning results.*

___7. SC trains Leadership Team and chairs of all committees

Training should emphasize:

- a. A review of the basic purpose of the self-study, visit, and follow-up: a staff development/school improvement process
- b. The parameters of the self-study
- c. The importance of verification: in-depth gathering of evidence
- d. The nine steps of the model self-study or the school's modifications
- e. The extreme importance of all committee members understanding the use of the assigned criteria, suggested areas to analyze and the expected schoolwide learning results in the accreditation process.
- f. The key connection between the conversations and data gathered by the Home Groups and the evidence needed in the response to the criteria guide questions by the Schoolwide Focus Groups
- g. The role of the chairs as:
 - (1) Trainers of committee members in the use of criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze
 - (2) Coordinators for gathering of information/data that needs to be examined and analyzed in comparison to the criteria and expected schoolwide learning results
 - (3) Group facilitators of committee discussions and syntheses based on criteria and expected schoolwide learning results
- h. The essential participation in regular meetings to review progress of the self-study

___8. SC coordinates the formations of the committees

___9. SC coordinates the availability of pertinent information for self-study

This information will be used by the Student/Community Profile Committee, the Schoolwide Focus Groups and the Home Groups. (See Task 1)

Subject area/program staff members will utilize curricular references, which can be obtained from a variety of sources.

A Few Notes

Taking Those First Steps: School Year Prior to Year of Self-Study/Visit, September–January

Task 1

- ✓ **Student and Parent Committees administer surveys or conduct interviews, share results with Student/Community Profile Committee**

The school is not required to conduct student/parent surveys for the self-study process; data may be gathered through other means, e.g., interviews. The school will be expected to explain how the information was gathered.

Creating the Whole: School Year prior to and year of Self-Study/Visit, February–January

Tasks 4-9

- ✓ **Chief administrator and SC serve as a continual resource to Schoolwide Focus Groups and Home Groups. Chief administrator and SC meet regularly with the Leadership Team**

Throughout the Self-Study, the SC helps the committees understand the process, assists in arrangements for collecting information, and helps with any difficulties. Essentially, the SC is a leader, coordinator, facilitator and troubleshooter.

___10. SC **submits the self-study report** after final Leadership Team review.

SC arranges for the printing of an adequate number of copies and distributes them to the following people/organizations:

- a. The Visiting Committee members
- b. One IBM compatible disk or CD (reference and support materials not required) to:

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

- c. Copies for staff members and members of the school community

Timeline: Flow of Activities

Year Prior to Self-Study September-January Activities

	Players	Product
• Participation in training/orientations	Principal/SC/Staff & other School Community Members	None
• Development of Student/Community Profile	Student Profile Committee	Summary Support Data
• Clarification of expected schoolwide learning results	Leadership Team	List & process description
• Review of progress from last full self-study & subsequent reports and revisits/reviews	Staff & other Stakeholders	Summary of progress on action plan, areas of follow-up
• Understanding use of WASC criteria	Schoolwide Focus Groups	None

Year Prior to and Year of Self-Study February-January Activities

	Players	Product
• Student Programs: What should be, what exists	Home Groups	Notes/evidence for self-study use
• Data gathering based on WASC criteria	Home Groups	Notes/evidence for Focus Groups
• Synthesis of all information/evidence. Determination of growth needs	Schoolwide Focus Group	Summary, evidence
• Creation of a schoolwide action plan using Schoolwide Focus Group findings	Leadership Team	Written plan
• Assurance of schoolwide consensus & development of action steps to support the plan	School Committee	Support steps
• Establishment of follow-up process	Leadership Team	Description

March–Ongoing Activities

	Players	Product
• The visit	School/Visiting Committee	V.C. Report
• Implementation & monitoring of schoolwide action plan and its impact on student learning	School	Ongoing reporting of progress

MAKEUP

Home Groups:

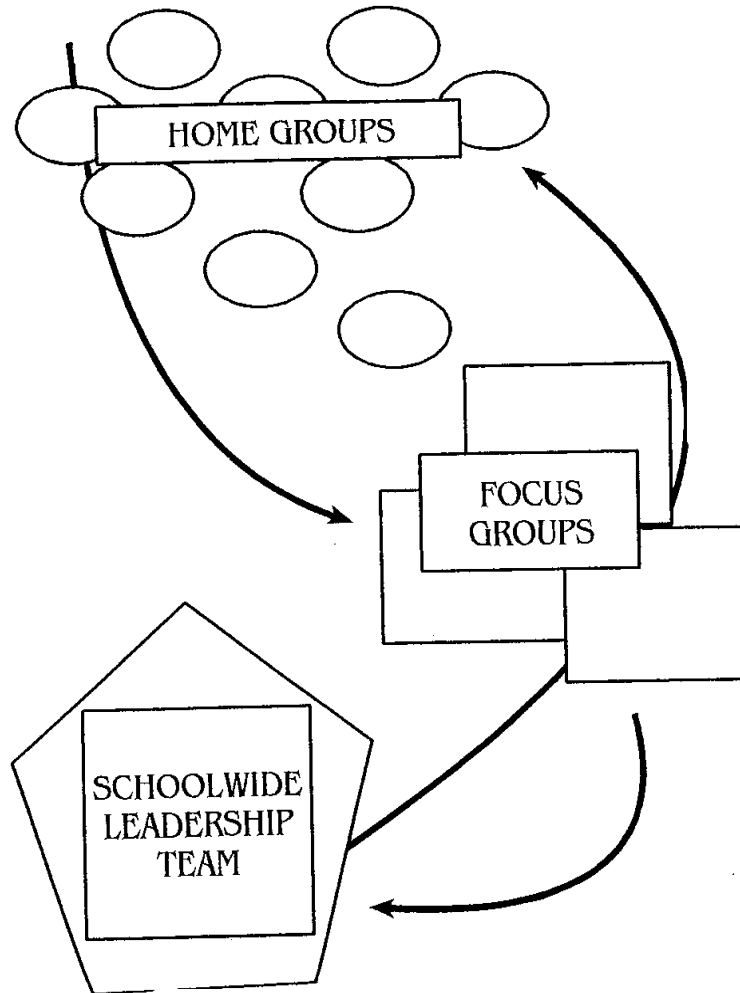
Can be organized by subject, by program, grade levels, or other criterion.

Schoolwide Interdisciplinary Focus Groups:

Constituencies that should serve on focus groups: students, all administrators and instructions and support staff, parents, community/business, district or corporate leadership.

Leadership Team:

Chair of each Focus Group, principal, self-study coordinator, and other members of school community.



TASKS

Home Groups:

Program analysis, evidence collection, and assessment, based on expected schoolwide learning results and criteria. Findings shared with focus groups.

Focus Groups:

Synthesize findings from home groups, based on expected schoolwide learning results and criteria, identify growth areas, validate through home groups.

Leadership Team:

Facilitate the clarification of expected schoolwide learning results and development of a schoolwide action plan, based on focus group findings supported by observable evidence.

School Committees

- ✦ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #1: The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.

A typical committee structure includes three types: home groups, interdisciplinary focus groups, and the leadership team. Each level of responsibility serves a different function. Home groups engage all staff within their local communities of interest or responsibility. Focus groups create teams incorporating representatives from all the home groups who examine criteria and expected schoolwide learning results from an interdisciplinary perspective; and the Leadership Team coordinates the entire process and synthesizes focus group findings into a workable schoolwide action plan.

Leadership Team

Leadership Team Tasks:

- Facilitate entire self-study process
- Facilitate completion of Progress Report on action plan since last full self-study (Chapter III)
- Guide school through development and refinement of expected schoolwide learning results (Chapter II)
- Create a schoolwide action plan for identified growth areas using findings of Schoolwide Focus Groups (Chapter V)
- Obtain feedback from Focus Groups and Home Groups and gain consensus regarding the schoolwide action plan (Chapter V)
- Coordinate the follow-up process to monitor the implementation and the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan (Chapter V)

Student/Community Profile Committee

The Student/Community Profile Committee is typically made up of one or more administrators, certified staff members, students, community members or parents where applicable, and sometimes a central office representative. They undertake to create the first concrete product of the self-study process: the profile of the school and its community, which provides context to the rest of the self-study. Members of this committee will also serve on the other school committees as the self-study proceeds.

Student/Community Profile Committee Tasks:

- Select, gather, and analyze all pertinent data that is relevant to the success of students in the school.
- Draft the student/community profile, including student achievement data, important socio-economic and demographic data and perception data. Analyze the data.
- Validate through communication with all staff and prepare a summary that includes appropriate charts, graphs and tables.

Home Groups

Home groups can be organized by subject, by site, by program or employee job type, or according to other criteria. However they are constructed, home groups provide much of the core evidence collection and evaluation work upon which the self-study process is based.

Subject Area or Program Group Tasks:

- Study and understand student/community profiles
- Participate in the development of expected schoolwide learning results
- Understand concepts of WASC criteria related to student learning
- Gather and analyze the evidence to demonstrate student performance within group's program or curricular area in relation to expected schoolwide learning results, curricular program standards, and WASC criteria
- Provide results of this analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on the schoolwide action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth areas

Support Staff Group Tasks:

- Study and understand student/community profiles
- Participate in the development of expected schoolwide learning results
- Understand concepts of WASC criteria related to student learning
- Gather and analyze evidence to demonstrate how support services (1) contribute to student performance in relation to expected schoolwide learning results, (2) meet program or service standards for various support areas, and (3) meet the WASC criteria
- Provide results of analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on schoolwide action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth areas

Parent/Community Group Tasks:

- Contribute to development of the community profile
- Study and understand student/community profiles
- Participate in the development of expected schoolwide learning results
- Understand concepts of WASC criteria related to student learning
- Gather and analyze evidence which illustrates from a community perspective how well school programs and services contribute to student performance in relation to expected schoolwide learning results, current and emerging community needs, and the WASC criteria
- Provide results of analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on schoolwide action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth needs

Student Group Tasks:

- Contribute to development of the student profile
- Study and understand student/community profiles

- Participate in the development of expected schoolwide learning results
- Understand concepts of WASC criteria related to student learning
- Gather and analyze evidence which illustrates from a student perspective how well school programs and services contribute to student performance in relation to expected schoolwide learning results, current and emerging student needs, and the WASC criteria
- Provide results of analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on schoolwide action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth areas

Focus Groups

A Focus Group is composed of certified staff members representing all the home groups, and other stakeholders; the suggested size of a group is 12-15. Focus groups are schoolwide and interdisciplinary. There will usually be one focus group for each of the four criteria categories (Organization for Student Learning, Curriculum and Instruction, Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, and Resource Management and Development). Focus groups synthesize the findings from the home groups in terms of the WASC criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results.

Every certified staff member is expected to serve on both a home group and a focus group; the ideal is for all other support staff and representatives of other stakeholders to do likewise. However, in some situations, the membership of focus groups may not all be inclusive. Large schools may have more than one focus group for each category, while smaller schools may find that using a “Committee of the Whole” to work with all four categories will be more effective.

Focus Group Tasks:

- Obtain ongoing feedback from Home Groups throughout process of Focus Group synthesis.
- With respect to each WASC criterion, examine and analyze the data from the Home Groups about student learning in relation to the expected schoolwide learning results and current program standards. This analysis should be organized by WASC criteria and cut across curricular, role, and program boundaries.
- Identify the school’s growth needs.
- If more than one Focus Group is examining the same criterion, integrate their findings, supporting evidence, and growth areas into the final self-study report.
- Obtain feedback from Home Groups on the growth areas with respect to the expected schoolwide learning results.
- Synthesize findings and supporting evidence, and identify growth areas for each of the WASC criteria (3-7 pages, Chapter IV).
- Have available for the Visiting Team evidence for review that has been examined by the school’s Home and Focus Groups.

Summary of Products: Focus on Learning Report Format

Title Page/Table of Contents

Preface

Explain the school self-study process used to accomplish the parameters of the self-study, i.e., any modifications from the model self-study process.

Chapter I: Student/Community Profile and Supporting Data

- A. Provide a Student/Community Profile Summary (3-7 pages)
- B. Provide supporting, interpreted data (charts, tables, graphs)
Appendix: Include additional pertinent information such as the master schedule, summary of performance data, etc. Other information can be on exhibit during the visit.

Chapter II: Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

- A. State the expected schoolwide learning results.
- B. Discuss the process used to determine the expected schoolwide learning results.

Chapter III: Progress Report

Write a summary of progress on the schoolwide action plan that incorporated the critical areas of follow-up left by the Visiting Committee from the previous full self-study.

Chapter IV: Self-Study Findings

For the four categories, prepare a 3–7 page summary of the findings for each criterion in the four categories. Include the following: (1) the findings based on the concepts of each criterion in the category; (2) the evidence that supports these findings, and (3) the identification of strengths and growth needs (prioritized).

- A. Organization for Student Learning
 - 1. School Purpose
 - 2. Governance
 - 3. School Leadership
 - 4. Staff
 - 5. School Environment
 - 6. Reporting Student Progress
 - 7. School Improvement ProcessStrengths
Growth Areas
- B. Curriculum and Instruction
 - 1. What Students Learn
 - 2. How Students Learn
 - 3. How Assessment is UsedStrengths
Growth Areas

- C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
 - 1. Student Connectedness
 - 2. Parent/Community InvolvementStrengths
Growth Areas

- D. Resource Management and Development
 - 1. Resources
 - 2. Resource PlanningStrengths
Growth Areas

Chapter V: Schoolwide Action Plan

- A. Describe the schoolwide action plan.

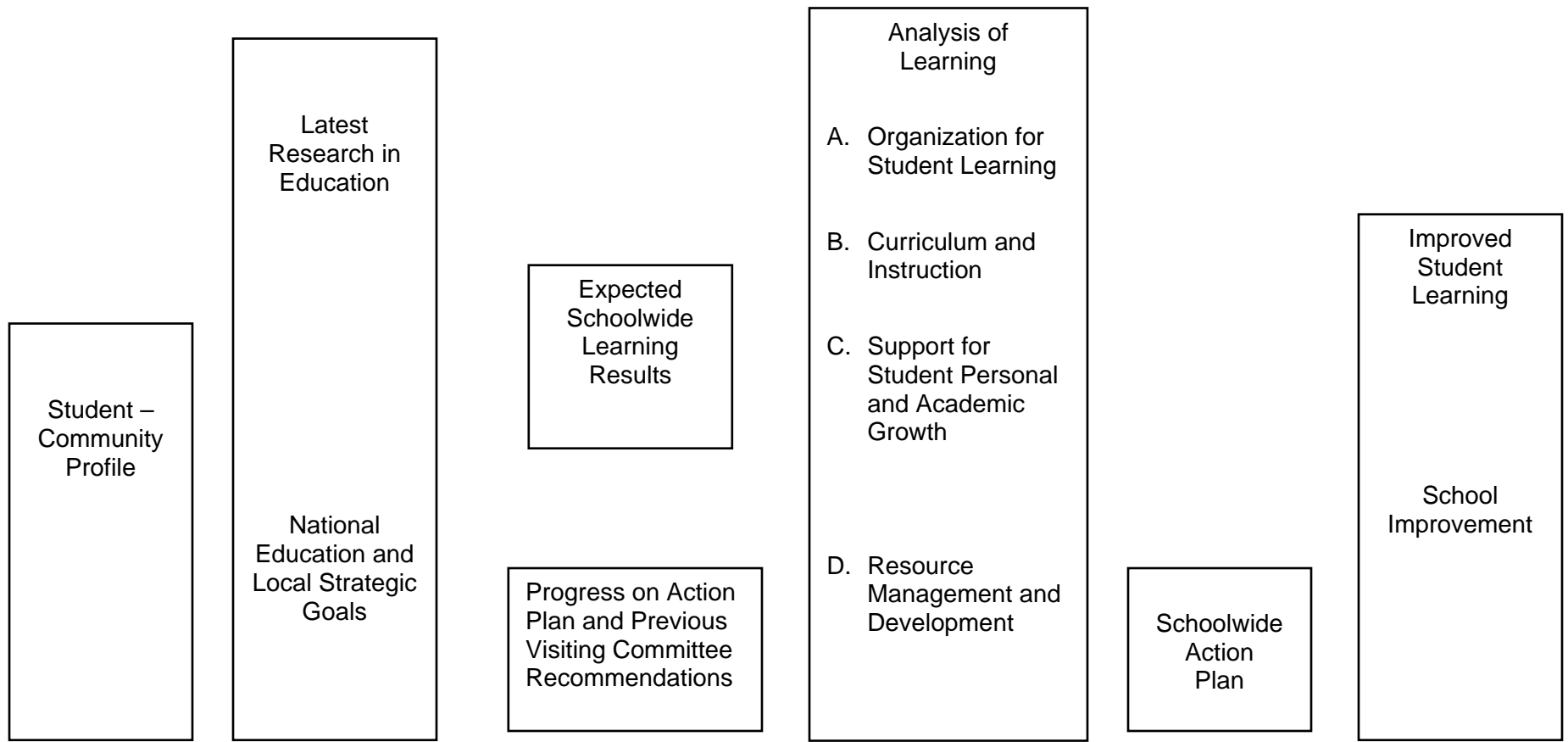
For each action plan section include:

- statement of area for improvement (goal)
 - rationale for area based on self-study findings
 - one or more expected schoolwide learning results addressed
 - ways of assessing progress, including student achievement of the learning results (and curricular standards)
 - specific steps, including professional development
 - timeline (month, year)
 - person(s) responsible (designate by asterisk) and involved resources
 - means to monitor and report progress to all members
- B. State specific strategies to be used by all the staff within each subject area/support program in order to accomplish the sections of the schoolwide action plan.
 - C. Describe the school's follow-up process.

Appendix:

Results of questionnaires/interviews/support material.

The Self-Study



Parameters for the Improvement Process

← 1 →
Involvement
Collaboration
of School
Community

← 2 →
Clarification of School's
Purpose and Expected Schoolwide
Learning Results

← 3 →
Assessment of Program and
Impact with Respect to
Criteria

← 4 →
Schoolwide Action
Plan and Integrated
Subject
Area/Program and
Support Plans

← 5 →
Development and
Implementation of
Accountability System
for the Schoolwide
Action Plans

WASC Focus on Learning Self-Study Self-Check Questions

1. The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study

School Committees

- Is the leadership team representative of the school community?
- Is the suggested FOL committee structure being adapted to build upon and strengthen the school's current organization for schoolwide communication?
- Are all certified staff serving on two groups – a Home Group and a Focus Group?
- Has the school reflected upon the type of committee organization that will be most effective in the implementation of the schoolwide action plan? For example, should the school maintain the focus groups after the visit to oversee action plan sections?

Student/Community Profile (FOL, Task 1)

- Has the school community gathered and analyzed all pertinent data in order to clarify the characteristics and achievement of ALL the students?
- Has the leadership team or profile committee produced a “user-friendly” profile for all stakeholders?
- Have the certified staff members and other stakeholders discussed the profile?
- Will the stakeholders use the profile to guide the inquiry into the school programs?
- Will the questions raised from the profile analysis be integral to the work of the home and schoolwide focus groups?
- Will the profile be regularly updated and used by the stakeholders as the school focuses on student achievement?

Progress Report (FOL, Task 3)

- Did the school address each section of the action plan?
- Did the school show how all critical areas of follow-up from the last full self-study were integrated into the action plan?
- Does the report show how each section impacted student accomplishment of one or more of the expected schoolwide learning results?

2. The clarification of the school's expected schoolwide learning results.

Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (FOL, Task 2)

- Has the school obtained input from all members of the school community?
- Is there commitment to accomplishing the school's purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results from all certified staff, all students and other stakeholder groups?

- To what extent has the school developed measurable indicators of the expected schoolwide learning results and defined their quality accomplishment?
 - Is the school beginning to discuss quality accomplishment of the expected schoolwide learning results, as well as the curricular content and performance standards?
- 3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results.**

Assessment of Program for Students (FOL, Tasks 4-6)

- Are all subject areas comparing themselves to appropriate curricular references and current educational thinking?
 - Are the expected schoolwide learning results and high quality curricular standards driving the school program?
 - Are learning opportunities being provided in order for all students to meet the expected schoolwide learning results through the implementation of the curricular standards and other aspects of the school program?
 - Through the analysis of representative student work and observation of students' working, is there evidence of quality accomplishment of the expected schoolwide learning results for all students?
 - Have the groups discussed student achievement in relation to the WASC criteria and the school's operation?
 - Was the analysis of the school program done in relation to the concepts of the criteria, the accomplishment of the expected schoolwide learning results, and curricular standards?
 - Was the accuracy of the findings discussed?
 - Did discussion occur about how the findings relate to supporting the learning needs of all students?
- 4. The development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs.**
- 5. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan.**

Development of Schoolwide Action Plan and Follow-up Process (FOL, Tasks 7-9)

- Are the action plan sections addressing the major identified areas for improvement and the visiting committee's critical areas for follow-up?
- Will the action plan sections enhance the learning of all students as identified in the student/community profile?
- Are the expected schoolwide learning results being addressed through the action plan?

- Has the school integrated other initiatives to create one “umbrella” schoolwide action plan?
- Is the action plan feasible and realistic? Are resources considered for each action plan section?
- Do the ways of assessing progress include the analysis of student learning?
- Is there sufficient schoolwide commitment to the action plan?
- Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the action plan?

Task 1: Develop student and community profiles

- ✪ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #1: The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.

The student/community profile is a summary of community demographics which will answer the questions, “Who are the people of this community? What are their needs in relation to education and employment? What resources are available to them, through our school and from other sources?” Through this profile the school clarifies its identity and purpose, identifies its client base, and documents the client’s needs and resources. This information is the basis for the analytical work, which will follow, determining not only whether the programs offered are of high quality, but also whether they match current and emerging needs of the community they serve.

Players

Student/Community Profile Committee

Procedures

1. Select all pertinent data that is relevant to the success of students in your school. (Suggested categories of information are listed in this task).
2. Gather and analyze the data.
3. Draft succinct narrative descriptions that profile the students and community served by the school. This narrative should include important socio-economic and demographic data about the students and community, a specific summary of current student performance and any identified trends that have impacted the school.
4. Disseminate the draft to all staff, make modifications.
5. Prepare final summary profile (3-7 pages).
 - Include in Self-Study Report along with supporting charts, graphs and data.
 - Disseminate to all staff.

Product

Self-Study Report, Chapter I:

Student/Community Profile and Supporting Data

- A. Provide Student/Community Profile summary of conclusions from data analysis (3-7 pages)
- B. Supporting, interpreted data (charts, tables, graphs)

Appendix: Include additional pertinent information such as community needs, available resources other than school programs and services, etc. Other information can be on exhibit during the visit.

Players

Student and Community Committees

Procedures

1. As part of the pre-assessment, develop and administer student/community surveys or conduct random interviews.
2. Synthesize the results and integrate this information into the Student/Community Profile.

Product

Self-Study Report, Appendix

- Results integrated into the Student/Community Profile Summary
- Results of student questionnaire/interviews
- Results of parent/community questionnaire/interviews

Categories of Information for Profile Development

○ **Develop the Community Portion of the Products**

Types of information to include in the profile are trends related to...

- General population
- Housing
- Infrastructure, i.e., classrooms
- External political/economic influences
- Health services
- Population breakdown – ethnic, social, economic
- Economics
- Employment trends, job availability
- Three to five year projection information
- Educational and job training opportunities
- Major issues unique to area
- Summary of instructional and support programs provided by school
- Follow-up data

○ **Develop the Student Portion of the Profile**

Types of information to include in the profile:

1. Student indicators
 - Enrollment and program selection patterns schoolwide and by class or program
 - Mobility of students
 - Ethnicity
 - English proficiency
 - Gender/age mix
 - Special populations
 - Health/safety issues

2. Attendance patterns
3. Data on student performance by sub-populations (three years of data, if possible). Include comparative data, e.g., nationally.
4. Student follow-up data (i.e., trends of student data upon leaving or graduating.)
5. Staff
 - Composition/ethnicity/attrition of all staff
 - Qualifications/certification/credentialing for assignments
 - Professional development
6. Student participation in academic and co-curricular activities
7. District policies/school financial support (include expenditures per pupil and type of services funded.)
8. Internal and external factors
 - School district growth needs
 - State/federal program mandates
 - School/business relationships
 - Parent/community/foundation organizations/programs
 - National/international community projections/trends

Task 2: Clarify the school's purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #2: The clarification of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results

Players

Leadership Team

Procedures

1. Review student/community profile data and learning results established at the state and national level.
2. Involve all stakeholders in discussion related to the school's purpose for what students ought to know, be able to do upon exit (graduation) from the school or by the time the student completes the planned program.
 - What are the challenges that students will be facing in the future?
 - What competencies should students possess when they pursue postsecondary education/training and the world of work?
3. Develop, clarify or refine expected schoolwide learning results.
4. Disseminate these and gain consensus from stakeholders.
5. Have each committee use these expected schoolwide learning results throughout the self-study.
6. Include the expected schoolwide learning results in the Self-Study Report along with a description of how they were determined.

Product

Self-Study Report

Chapter II: Expected Schoolwide Learning Results, including:

- A. State the expected schoolwide learning results.
- B. Discuss the process to determine the learning results.

Task 3: Summarize progress since previous full self-study

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #1: The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study

Players

Leadership Team

Procedures

1. In this progress report or in the student/community profile, describe any significant developments that have had a major impact on the school or specific curricular programs since the last full visit.

Note: Schools that have had initial visits respond to the recommendations left at that time.

2. Describe the school's procedures for the implementation and the monitoring of the schoolwide action plan. Include how annual progress reports, including the third year report, have been prepared.
3. Comment on the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section; cite evidence, including how each area has met identified growth targets and contributed to the accomplishment of one or more expected schoolwide learning result for all students. Show how the school's plan accomplished the critical areas of follow-up from the last full self-study visit.

Product

Self-Study Report, Chapter III: Progress Report

Summary of progress on the entire action plan that incorporated all critical areas of follow-up from the last full study.

Intertwining Tasks of the Schoolwide Focus Groups and Home Groups

Task 4

Schoolwide Focus Group (4 categories) analysis and discussions *around schoolwide criteria using suggested evidence*

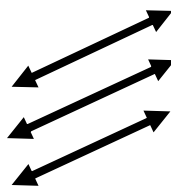


Task 5

Home/Support Groups analysis and discussions *around subject area/support curricular/program references and the WASC criteria*

Task 6

Schoolwide Focus Group analysis and synthesis *around the criteria and preparation of 3–7 page summary for each criterion within the four categories*



Task 4: Review the criteria and identify what evidence is needed to compare the school program with the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #3: The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results

Players

Schoolwide Focus Groups

Procedures

1. Review the student/community profile and expected schoolwide learning results. (See tasks 1 and 2.)
2. Review the concepts of the WASC criteria as the basis for evaluating the school's program. Use the guide questions. (See Tools section.) The guide questions are the criteria concepts in the form of questions.
3. Identify what data or information, especially the student work, should be examined to facilitate this comparison. Use the suggested areas to analyze. (See Tools section.) Begin to discuss how the data or information should be obtained.
4. Leadership Team (includes leaders of Schoolwide Focus Groups): Work collaboratively to schedule and plan the Home Group and additional Schoolwide Focus Group meetings to accomplish task 5 and task 6.

➔ **Note:** To facilitate data gathering, concentrate on one category of criteria at a time; for example, start with curriculum and instruction, then move to student support, organization, and resources.

Product

Notes for Focus Group members to use in Home Groups. No product for the Self-Study Report.

Task 5: Gather and analyze evidence about the quality of the school program with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #3: The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results

Players

Home Groups

Procedures

1. Examine the school program with respect to the WASC criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results. *Use the criteria guide questions and the suggested areas to analyze* (See information beginning page 97.)
 - a. Begin with all stakeholders focusing on the curriculum and instruction criteria category. Then focus on the other categories: student support, organization and resources.
 - b. Next, for every area of the school program, determine what all students are doing and producing currently. Gather observable evidence through a variety of methods.
 - observing what all students are doing and producing
 - examining samples of work for all students
 - interviewing students about their studies and school life
 - examining student performance-based assessment data
 - reporting by teachers
 - examining the student/community profile data
 - examining student/parent survey/interview results
 - interviewing other members of the staff/school community about program
 - c. Discuss, analyze and synthesize this gathered evidence (see b) with respect to criteria and expected schoolwide learning results.
 - d. Compile this data, including student work, from each subject area/program.
2. Be prepared to use this information in the appropriate Schoolwide Focus Groups where all stakeholders compare the instructional program with the WASC criteria.
3. Have on exhibit for the Visiting Committee members representative student work that was examined and other analyzed information (results of observations, interviews, etc.).

Products

- Home Group notes/evidence for use in Schoolwide Focus Group discussions of WASC criteria and expected schoolwide learning results.
- Analyzed representative samples of student work for review by the Schoolwide Focus Groups and the Visiting Committee.

Task 6: Analyze and synthesize all information and data, including findings of all home groups, to determine strengths and growth needs within criteria categories

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #3: The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results.

Players

Schoolwide Focus Groups

(If there is more than one Focus Group for a category, all similar groups should meet and synthesize findings).

Procedures

1. Share the information and data gathered and analyzed by Home Groups.
2. Determine what additional information and data is needed in the analysis of the schoolwide program. This will necessitate well-organized meetings of Home Groups and Schoolwide Focus Groups over an extended period of time (see timeline).
3. Synthesize the information and data from all the Home Groups in preparation for a 3–7 page summary of findings for each criterion that includes supporting evidence and identified growth needs.

Product

- a. Self-Study Report

Chapter IV: Self-Study Finding

Prepare a 3-7 page synthesis of the evidence examined and analyzed in support of **each criterion** in the four categories for a total of 42-98 pages. Include in the following: (1) the findings based on the concepts of each criterion in the category; (2) the evidence that supports these findings, (3) the identification of strengths and growth needs (prioritized).

- A. Organization for Student Learning
 - B. Curriculum and Instruction
 - C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
 - D. Resource Management and Development
- b. Analyzed representative samples of student work from each subject area/program for review by Visiting Committee.

Task 7: Create a comprehensive schoolwide action plan that will drive achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #4: The development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs.

Players

Leadership Team

Procedures

1. Review and discuss the summary analyses from all Schoolwide Focus Groups. (See Chapter IV of the Self-Study Report.)
2. Based upon these summaries, create a schoolwide action plan addressing the 4–5 major areas for change. All expected schoolwide learning results do not need to be addressed by the action plan.

Include in each section of the plan:

- statement of area for improvement (goal)
- rationale for area based on self-study findings
- one or more expected schoolwide learning results addressed
- ways of assessing progress, including student achievement of the learning results (and curricular standards)
- specific steps, including professional development
- timeline (month, year)
- responsible (designate by asterisk) and involved person(s)
- resources
- means to monitor and report progress to all members

Product

Self-Study Report
Chapter V: Schoolwide Action Plan

- A. For each schoolwide action plan section, include the elements listed above.

Task 8: Ensure schoolwide consensus on the action plan and the specific action steps to support the plan

- ✪ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #4: The development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs

Players

Home Groups

Procedures

1. Review the schoolwide action plan.
2. Discuss specific strategies that support the **sections** of the schoolwide action plan.
3. Identify additional strategies, if any, and reference the appropriate section of the schoolwide action plan. *(only if different from the schoolwide steps)*
4. Present the findings to the Leadership Team for inclusion in the Self-Study Report.

Product

Self-Study Report
Chapter V: Schoolwide Action Plan

- B. State specific strategies to be used by Home Group within each subject area/support staff, community/parent, student support program to accomplish sections of the schoolwide action plan. *(only if different from the schoolwide steps)*

Task 9: Establish an ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan

- ★ Addresses Self-Study Parameter #5: The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan.

Players

Leadership Team

Procedures

1. Develop strategies that provide for ongoing involvement of all stakeholders.
2. Discuss/develop strategies to ensure that the schoolwide action plan is being implemented and monitored.
3. Develop ways to keep the entire school community informed about the progress being made.

Product

Self-Study Report
Chapter V: Schoolwide Action Plan

- C. Describe the school's follow-up process.

**The Visit:
Sharing with Colleagues**

Coordinator Guidelines

1. Visiting Committee Chairperson and Self-Study Coordinator (SC) communicate prior to visit.

Prior to the visit, the Visiting Committee chairperson will be in communication with the SC and chief administrator to answer questions or give assistance. The chief administrator and the chairperson should establish an initial fall date for the chairperson to visit a California school; the chair will communicate by letter, fax, or phone for schools in Hawaii, other Pacific Islands, and East Asia. Through this contact, the chair will become familiar with the school, determine the self-study progress, offer guidance in conducting the self-study, and begin to develop a detailed schedule for the visit. Chairs in California may spend more than one full day at the school in preparation for the visit.

Questions the chairperson will discuss during the preliminary visit and through continual contact with the school include:

- a. How are the parameters of the self-study addressed in the self-study process? In what ways have the school leaders modified the model self-study process to accommodate the school community?
- b. How is the school developing or clarifying expected schoolwide learning results for the school?
- c. What is the plan for involving all staff members and representatives of the other stakeholders in reviewing the instructional program with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results?
- d. How are the staff members and other stakeholders taking an in-depth look at the program for *all* students: access to and participation in the core curriculum, support, and attainment of the expected schoolwide learning results? What methods are they using? (e.g., observing and examining what students are doing, interviewing students and others, examining pertinent student and other data)
- e. Is the schoolwide action plan based on findings of the Schoolwide Focus Groups and is it realistic, specific and meaningful with respect to the expected schoolwide learning results? How has the school provided a “feedback loop” to all stakeholders regarding the action plan? Can the action steps be implemented immediately within existing resources?
- f. How will the schedule for the visit permit adequate dialogue with the Leadership Team and Schoolwide Focus Groups regarding self-study findings, thereby building the trust and rapport necessary for communication and collaboration?
- g. How will the Leadership Team ensure that there is a workable follow-up process to implement and monitor the action plan?

2. SC makes housing and other physical arrangements for the Visiting Committee.

The SC arranges housing, transportation, and adequate work space for the Visiting Committee. For visits to schools in Hawaii, the chief administrator and SC work with the designated travel agent. In the work space there is an area for exhibit materials that support the self-study. Word processing and copy services are available to the Visiting Committee.

3. After the Self-Study Report is completed, the SC and Visiting Committee Chairperson finalize the schedule for the visit.
4. During the month prior to the visit, the SC and the Leadership Team continue discussion of the implementation of the schoolwide action plan.

Staff members and other stakeholders review the Schoolwide Action Plan, their respective subject area/support strategies, and the reports by the Schoolwide Focus Groups; they provide feedback to their committee chairpersons. Using this information, the Leadership Team continues to refine the schoolwide action plan. The Leadership Team will share these ideas with the Visiting Committee.

5. SC completes preparation for the Visiting Committee visit.

SC verifies all preliminary Visiting Committee arrangements: housing, transportation, typing, word processing/copy services, school map, classroom schedule, parking facilities, name tags, etc. SC ensures the workroom and exhibits, including portfolios, are available.

6. During the three and one half day visit, the stakeholders discuss specific issues of the self-study with the Visiting Committee.

In this process, the Visiting Committee will have extensive dialogue with the Schoolwide Focus Groups and the Leadership Team. Important to these sessions and the subject area/support group meetings will be the Visiting Committee's examination and understanding of the information and evidence that supported the schoolwide findings. Throughout the visit the Visiting Committee chairperson will regularly communicate with the chief administrator, the self-study coordinator and the Leadership Team regarding the visiting team's findings.

7. The Visiting Committee prepares a report and presents findings.
8. The SC sends 10 (ten) copies of the Visiting Committee Report to WASC and distributes copies to all stakeholder groups.
9. After the visit, the SC facilitates the integration of the narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up left by the visiting committee in the report into the schoolwide action plan. The school sends one copy of the modified plan to the WASC office and distributes copies to all stakeholder groups.

Accreditation Term Determination*

The visiting committee will recommend a term of accreditation which will be acted upon by the Accrediting Commission. A term of recommendation 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. Current terms are six years; six years with a one day review; three years, two years, one year; or denial. The Commission reserves the right to grant additional conditions of accreditation other than those listed 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 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.
3. The use of a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student performance data.
4. The acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined expected schoolwide learning results, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.
5. *An Organization for Student Learning* that supports high achievement for all students.
6. *Curriculum and Instruction* that supports high achievement for all students.
7. *Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth* that supports high achievement for all students.
8. *Resource Management and Development* that supports high achievement for all students.
9. The alignment of a long-range schoolwide action plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.
10. The capacity to monitor and implement the schoolwide action plan.
11. The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.

*Revised 8/00

Visiting Committee Report Format

Chapter I: Student/Community Profile (suggested length: 1-2 pages)

- Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the school. Include the following:
 - Brief description of the students and community served by the school
 - School analysis of student achievement data
 - Other pertinent data

Note: The entire profile does not need to be included.

- Comment on significant findings revealed by the profile and/or pertinent items that were not included in the profile.

Chapter II: Progress Report (suggested length: 2 pages)

- Briefly comment on the school's major changes and follow-up process since the last self-study.
- Discuss how the school through its action plan has accomplished each of the critical areas for follow-up, including the impact on student learning.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process (suggested length: 1 ½ pages)

- Comment on the school's self-study process with respect to the parameters and accuracy.
 - Did the school accomplish the five parameters of the self-study? (*See Focus on Learning, page 3 or Reference Card #1*)
 - Does the self-study accurately reflect the school's program for students?
 - Does the observable evidence reflect a sampling of what ALL students are doing and producing with respect to the WASC criteria and the school's expected schoolwide learning results?
 - Does the observable evidence support the school's identified areas for growth?

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

Part A: For each criterion in the following categories:

- Organization for Student Learning*
- Curriculum and Instruction*
- Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth*
- Resource Management and Development*

- Summarize an analysis of what currently exists and its impact on student learning (suggested length: 10-20 pages)
 - highlight areas of strength (if any)
 - highlight the key issues (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students
 - list important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues
- Note:** When writing the analytical summary for each criterion, use the indicators as a guide to ensure that all important aspects of each criterion are addressed (see the *WASC Accreditation Term Determination Worksheet*).

Part B: Synthesize the strengths and key issues from all categories into *schoolwide strengths and schoolwide critical areas for follow-up*. Include the information given below (suggested length: 2 pages).

- general comments about the emerging *schoolwide strengths and critical areas for follow-up*
- *schoolwide areas of strength* (list numerically) *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*
- *schoolwide critical areas for follow-up* that will do the following: (list numerically) *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*
 - *support* those areas already identified by the school in the action plan sections
 - *strengthen* those identified areas in the action plan sections
 - address *additional* areas identified by the visiting committee. *This includes areas related to student achievement and other profile data, the school program and operation, and the action plan.*

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement (suggested length: 2 pages)

- Include a brief summary of the schoolwide action plan.
- Comment on the following school improvement issues:
 - adequacy of the schoolwide action plan in addressing the *critical areas for follow-up*
Consider these questions:
 - Do the action plan sections address the *critical areas for follow-up*?
 - Will the action plan steps enhance student learning?
 - Is the action plan a “user-friendly” schoolwide action plan that has integrated all major school initiatives?
 - Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?
 - Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and system wide?
 - existing factors that will support school improvement
 - impediments to school improvement that the school will need to overcome in order to accomplish any of the action plan sections
 - soundness of the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan



CONFIDENTIAL
Accrediting Commission for Schools

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 OPERATIONS

Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation

Name of School Visited:
 Address of School:
 Name of District:
 Form Used in Self-Study:
 Visit:
 Date of Visit:
 Accredited Grade Span:
 Enrollment:

The Visiting Committee's CONFIDENTIAL recommendation to the Accrediting Commission:

	A Term of Accreditation for Six Years: A term of six years with a written Progress Report to the School's governing board on the critical areas or major recommendations 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 Accreditation for Six Years with a Review: A term of six years with a complete Progress Report on critical areas or major recommendations 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 Accreditation for Three Years: 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 Accreditation for One or Two Years: A term of one or two years (circle one or two) with a complete Progress Report and revisit to serve as a warning that unless prompt attention is given to the critical areas or major recommendations, accreditation may be denied.
	Denial of Accreditation: Denial of accreditation based on conditions detailed in the Visiting Committee Report.

Note: The Commission reserves the right to grant terms of accreditation other than those above, including a recommendation for a full self-study at any time. Such action will follow a Commission review of the Visiting Committee Report. In the event of a formal appeal, this document will be provided to the chief administrator.

VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Type or print name

Signature

Committee Chairperson

Date

DOCUMENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT FOR WASC FOL

[This form is NOT to be used for California public schools; it is for WASC FOL only]

For proper processing, please complete the following information:

Chair Name	Name and City of School Visited
Chair's Work Phone	Chair's Home Phone
Alt. number during end of June (if applicable)	
E-mail address (if applicable)	

Complete the Narrative Rationale for each factor. Check the box to the left of the rating that best fits the results of the self-study and the visit that was selected through Visiting Committee dialogue and consensus. [To check a box, double click on the box and select the "Checked" box value.]

- **Highly Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a high degree of impact on student learning, the school's program and the school's operation.
- **Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a satisfactory level of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Somewhat Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a limited impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Ineffective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had little or no impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.

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.**

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

2. The defining of the school's purpose through expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

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

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

4. The acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined expected schoolwide learning results, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

5. *An Organization for Student Learning* that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

6. *Curriculum and Instruction* that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

7. *Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth* that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

8. *Resource Management and Development* that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

9. The alignment of a long-range schoolwide action plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

10. The capacity to implement and monitor the schoolwide action plan.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

11. The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Provide a brief narrative, which summarizes the Visiting Committee's rationale for the recommended term: *(If there is an unresolved minority opinion please indicate and explain.)*

- **Term options seriously considered**
- **Reasons for the term recommended**

In the comments reflect upon the following:

- The Visiting Committee's discussions and process (summarize as needed in the narrative)
- The degree to which students are learning
- The strengths and growth needs of the school in all areas of the program and operation
- The capacity of the school to implement and monitor the action plan

Sample Schedule for Visit

This sample schedule will have to be adjusted by the school and VC Chair to fit the local situation. In this process, it is very important to allow enough time for extensive dialogue with the Schoolwide Focus Groups and the Leadership Team; this discussion will include the examination of evidence used to determine growth needs by the stakeholders. The focus of the subject area and support staff meetings will be to understand their information and evidence that led support to the schoolwide findings. The Visiting Committee (VC) chairperson should be regularly communicating with the chief administrator and self-study coordinator to discuss the progress of the visit.

Day before Visit (Usually Sunday)

(12:00 NOON)	(Visiting Committee may meet for Sunday brunch.)
1:00 PM	Meeting of VC members to begin group discussion on perceptions of self-study
3:00 PM	Meeting with the chief administrator, Self-Study Coordinator, and Leadership Team to clarify issues in the self-study and explain the visit. The VC and school leaders participate in a reflective discussion of the self-study; school leaders conduct a brief school tour for VC
4:30 PM	Brief meeting with the governing authority, district, school and/or community representatives
5:00–6.00 PM	Meeting with Parent/Community Committee
7:00 PM	Meeting of VC to receive instructions from the chair, organize the work of the committee, and examine supplementary materials

First Day

7:30–8:00 AM	Meeting with Leadership Team (Total VC Team)
8:00–9:30 AM	Meeting with Organization for Student Learning Focus Group(s) (total VC, if possible)
8:00 AM–12:00 PM	Gathering of Evidence: class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work
11:00 AM–12:00 PM	Meeting with Student Committee (VC reps.)
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch in school cafeteria. Informally talk with students and staff

1:00–2:30 PM	Gathering of Evidence: class visits, etc.
3:00–5:00 PM	Meeting with Curriculum and Instruction Focus Group(s) (Total VC, if possible)
6:00–7:00 PM	Dinner VC alone
7:30 PM	Discussion of findings and work on written summary

Second Day

7:30–8:30 AM	Meeting with Leadership Team (VC reps)
7:30–8:30 AM	Home Group Staff meetings as needed (VC reps) Note: The school and the VC Chair should agree upon what Home Group meetings are needed in addition to the Schoolwide Focus Groups.
8:30–11:00 AM	Gathering of Evidence: class/program observations, interviews examination of student work
11:00 AM–12:00 PM	Committee work
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch in the school cafeteria. Informal contact with student and staff
1:00–3:00 PM	Meeting with the Support for Personal and Academic Growth Focus Group(s) (VC reps.) Gathering of Evidence: class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work
2:00–3:00 PM	District meeting at the school site [VC chair and rep(s), if applicable]
3:00–5:00 PM	Meeting with Subject Area/Support Staff Committee Meeting with Resource Management and Development Focus Group (VC reps)
6:00 PM	Dinner, VC alone VC works on draft of its report

Third Day

7:30–8:30 AM	Meeting with Leadership Team (Total VC)
8:30–11:00 AM	Completion of draft report, contacting school staff as needed
11:00 AM–1:00 PM	Meeting with the Leadership Team and other invited by the school to discuss/clarify findings of visit and the VC Report
1:00–3:00 PM	Closure on issues raised in the earlier session discussing the draft VC Report. The VC may revise the report as a result of this meeting. VC members complete the final draft of the VC Report
	Completion of the Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation and the Confidential Summary
3:00–3:30 PM	Report to staff/stakeholders. The chief administrator is encouraged to invite representatives of students, classified staff, and community to attend

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 school description, the *Focus on Learning* manual, and the reference cards. (Sections of *Focus on Learning* to emphasize: The Big Picture; The Self-study: Background Information; The Self-Study; The Visit; The Follow-up; The Tools: Criteria/Suggested Evidence; Expected Schoolwide Learning Results; Gathering Evidence.)

- ___4. Become aware of the 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 suggested evidence and appropriate curricular/educational references.

- ___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 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

- ___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 criteria and the expected

- schoolwide learning results. Critique action plan.
 - c. Write questions regarding issues, concerns, clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit and develop tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of the 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. *Focus on Learning* manual
 - 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 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.
- ___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 instruction 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 in responses to questions.
- ___ 10. Concentrate on being a good listener. Be aware of nonverbal feedback.
- ___ 11. Meet and lead discussion with the school self-study committees that are assigned areas of writing responsibility. Allow adequate time for the other Visiting Committee members to explore their concern 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.
- ___ 16. Provide regular feedback to the Leadership Team and other staff members regarding findings as a result of the visit, not the self-study alone.
- ___ 17. Meet with the Leadership Team 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 meeting.
- ___ 19. Make necessary Visiting Committee Report modifications and come to closure on it.
- ___ 20. Individually review each WASC criterion within the four categories and overall findings. Individually make decisions regarding the quality of the school's educational program with respect to the four categories of criteria 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 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).
- ___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.

Visiting Committee Chairperson Checklist

Previsit Preparation

- ___1. Receive training.
- ___2. Study the school description, the *Focus on Learning* manual, and the reference cards. (Sections of *Focus on Learning* to emphasize: The Big Picture; the Self-Study: Background Information; The Self-Study; The Visit; The Follow-up; The Tools: Criteria/Suggested Evidence; Expected Schoolwide Learning Results; Gathering Evidence.)
- ___3. Review the parameters to be accomplished through the self-study:
 - 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
- ___4. Review the WASC criteria and suggested evidence and appropriate curricular/educational references.
- ___5. Begin regular communication with the chief administrator and self-study coordinator (SC) to answer questions or give assistance.
- ___6. Arrange initial one day visit. During that visit plan to meet with chief administrator or head, self-study coordinator, leadership team, and other staff members. Possibly speak briefly to entire staff.
- ___7. Communicate with school about the following issues: (Many of these can be discussed at the initial visit.)
 - a. The calendar/timeline for the self-study process
 - b. Orientation of staff/training of committee chairperson
 - 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 certified staff members, including administration, and strong representation of other school community groups? (i.e., members of Home Groups and Schoolwide Focus Groups).
 - How is the Leadership Team taking an active role in facilitating the entire self-study process?

- d. Development of student/community profile
 - How is the Leadership Team insuring that the school is considering ALL student characteristics/subpopulations in the self-study process?
- e. Clarification of expected schoolwide learning results
 - How is the school using the student profile information in the process of developing/refining its expected schoolwide learning results? How is the school beginning to define quality accomplishments of the expected schoolwide learning results 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 expected schoolwide learning results.
 - Is the school examining student success in meeting the expected schoolwide learning results as an integral part of its comparison to the criteria?
- f. Progress since previous full self-study
 - Is the school responding to each recommendation from the previous full self-study, recognizing that some recommendations may have been more helpful than others?
- g. Analysis of student program, both discipline-specific and support areas
 - How has evidence been gathered and analyzed with respect to curricular references, the expected schoolwide learning results, and the criteria?
- h. Use of WASC criteria and expected schoolwide learning results, collection and analysis of evidence, synthesis of findings, and the writing of the focus group summaries.
 - Are all certified staff members/or other representative stakeholders using the criteria and expected schoolwide learning results as the basis for determining “what exists,” “how effective is it,” and “where do we want to be?”
 - Is the information from the student/community profile being used to ensure that the comparison to the criteria is being conducted with respect to all students?
 - How are the certified 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?
- i. Review of school report’s table of contents, a sample of schoolwide focus group summary, and an action plan section
 - 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 action plan sections supported by the Subject Area/Support Committees and are they realistic, specific and meaningful? Will the action plan sections effectively guide the work of the school ensuring quality learning for students?

- Can the action plan sections be implemented immediately within existing resources? Action Plan sections include:
- a statement of the areas of improvement
 - brief statement of the rationale for identifying this area
 - expected schoolwide learning results addressed
 - ways of assessing progress
 - specific steps, including professional development
 - timeline (month, year)
 - person(s) responsible (indicate with asterisk) and involved
 - resources
 - means to report progress to all members of the school community
- j. School’s follow-up process (including school board/district understanding and support of accreditation process)
- Have the administrators, SC, Leadership team and district representatives begun discussion of a sound follow-up process that includes:
 - ways of monitoring progress
 - accountability of all stakeholders
 - individual commitment
 - benchmarks/celebration of progress
- k. 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 expected schoolwide learning results and criteria?
 - a linkage to identified “growth needs” and action plan sections?
 - all students?
- l. 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?
- m. Visiting Committee work room and exhibit area at the school site
- n. Meeting room at school committee meetings
- o. Computer access and compatibility with system chair will be using for draft report
- p. Clerical support throughout process
- q. 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)
- r. Copies of previous self-study, mid-term report, and /or revisit committee report as well as other pertinent background materials

- ___8. Receive roster of Visiting Committee members by January; begin communication, i.e., letters, calls, fax.
 - ___a. Send initial letter, including school description; WASC will send *Focus on Learning* and reference cards directly to Visiting Committee members
 - ___b. Ask for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
 - ___c. Remind members that they are required to participate in Visiting Committee training

- ___9. 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?
 - 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 expected schoolwide learning results?
 - Will the action plan section impact quality learning for students and is it realistic?
 - a. Progress on housing and other physical arrangements
 - b. Appropriate clerical support

- ___10. 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 expected schoolwide learning results
 - d. Prior to visit require written questions about issues, concerns, clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit
 - 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 chair prior to the visit. The chair 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

- ___ 11. Maintain regular contact with school to double check the following:
 - a. Progress of report by actual critique of sample report sections and/or action 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

- ___ 12. If two or more schools are being evaluated, work with WASC appointed “coordinator” (one of the chairpersons) to schedule meeting(s) with district office representatives.

- ___ 13. 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

- ___ 14. 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 III). Include all writing from the visiting committee members. Have the tentative report ready for the initial orientation Visiting Committee meeting (i.e., Sunday or Monday afternoon).

- ___ 15. Plan orientation meeting for Visiting Committee members prior to initial meeting at school (e.g., Sunday 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 expected schoolwide learning results 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 expected schoolwide learning results
 - e. Discussion of Self-Study Report: trends/perceptions, (questions, concerns and tentative written comments); relationship to concepts of criteria and expected schoolwide learning results; alignment of schoolwide action plan to findings
 - f. Discussion of ways to gather 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 #15 above.
- ___2. Conduct initial meeting with school that includes a reflective discussion on the general perceptions gleaned from study of the School Report (planned jointly with chief administrator/self-study coordinator prior to visit) on first day of visit (i.e., Sunday).
- ___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 chief administrator (head), administrators, 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 criteria in the four categories
 - l. Coordinate the preparation of the Visiting Committee Report
- ___4. Facilitate the thorough discussion and synthesis of the key concepts of the criteria in the four categories, the school report, and the visiting committee findings at all visiting committee meetings during the 3 ½ days.
- ___5. Regularly communicate with the school leaders, including the Leadership Team, about Visiting Committee findings.
- ___6. At the final meeting with the Leadership Team, facilitate the thorough discussion of the synthesis of 1) the key concepts of the criteria, 2) the school report, 3) student learning based on the expected schoolwide learning results, 4) the schoolwide action plan, and 5) the visiting committee findings, as reflected in the draft Visiting Committee Report.

- 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
- ___7. Facilitate necessary Visiting Committee Report modifications and come to closure on Visiting Committee Report.
- ___8. Have Visiting Committee members individually review each WASC criterion within the four categories. Have them individually make decisions regarding the quality of the school's educational program with respect to the four 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 page and the confidential Visiting Committee 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
- ___11. Have Visiting Committee members complete expense vouchers and evaluation of chairperson form (optional). Review expense forms.
- ___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.
- ___14. Continually stress the importance of immediate follow-up to integrate the Visiting Committee narrative suggestions and recommendations into the school's schoolwide action plan for yearly implementation and assessment.
- ___15. Work with self-study coordinator to decide who will send ten (10) copies to the WASC office.

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 Visiting Committee Summary for the Commission. In addition, complete final editing on the Visiting Committee Report. Ensure school has final copy of the Visiting Committee Report and ten (10) copies are received by the WASC office as soon as possible after the 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 and a copy of the official letter is sent to the Chair.)

The Follow-up: Making Headway

Coordinator Guidelines: School's Follow-up Checklist

- **After the visit the SC and chief administrator meet immediately with the Leadership Team to review the Visiting Committee Report and begin the follow-up process.**

The Leadership Team coordinates the refining and implementation of the action steps for each section of the schoolwide action plan. The narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up left by the Visiting Committee should be integrated into the schoolwide action plan. A copy of the modified schoolwide action plan must be sent to the following office:

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

Some schools may continue to use the schoolwide focus groups as “change agent” committees in the follow-up process. The leadership team involves the total staff in annual assessment of progress, including data analysis about student learning in relation to expected schoolwide learning results and curricular objectives; this may result in modifications of the action plan. If the school annually reviews its plan and progress, the reports generated will comprise the major portion of the next self-study. Most schools will conduct one more annual review in relation to their expected schoolwide learning results, curricular objectives, and WASC criteria and refine their action plan areas for the next three to five years.

- **At the midpoint of the term of accreditation, the Leadership Team prepares a third year progress report summarizing the school's major accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan and other changes since the visit.**

The Governing Authority reads, reviews, and formally accepts the report which is forwarded to the Accrediting Commission for Schools. Depending upon the term of accreditation, a school may be required to have a one or two day review by two or more members of the original Visiting Committee.

Below are brief comments about the *ongoing nature* of *Focus on Learning*.

1. Annually update the student/community profile and discuss with all stakeholders.
2. Annually summarize progress on the schoolwide action plan sections, noting key evidence, and make any necessary modifications or refinements in the plan.
3. Periodically, review the schoolwide student goals (expected schoolwide learning results) and school purpose.
4. Synthesize all progress and complete a three-year progress report for submission to WASC; obtain Board approval of the report.
5. Host a mid-term review if this is a condition of the accreditation term granted. (Note: If a school received a term of one, two or three years, progress reports and one or two-day revisits are conducted. The Commission then grants additional years of accreditation or denial).
6. In preparation for the next self-study (usually 1 ½ years prior to full visit), ensure that all stakeholders are knowledgeable of student achievement data and other current data, including progress on all aspects of the action plan. Utilize the following information with stakeholders:
 - a. current, updated student/community profile, emphasizing student achievement, and other pertinent evidence noted during the annual progress reports on the action plan
 - b. the operating schoolwide action plan
 - c. all progress via reports (usually an ongoing summary of action plan progress on computer)
7. Using the WASC criteria involve stakeholders through focus and home groups in the examination of the program using the information from the past years about student achievement and program changes (see #6). Gather and analyze any additional data/information needed.
8. Summarize key findings organized by the categories of criteria.
9. Revise the schoolwide action plan to show what will be accomplished during the forthcoming five-six years.
10. Finalize the self-study report that will include:
 - a. the current profile
 - b. overall progress report
 - c. schoolwide student learner outcomes (expected schoolwide learning results)
 - d. findings and supporting evidence
 - e. schoolwide action plan

**The Tools:
Criteria/Guide Questions/
Suggested Areas to Analyze**

**Category A:
Organization for Student Learning**

WASC Criteria Guide Questions & Suggested Areas to Analyze

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

Category A: Organization for Student Learning

A1. School Purpose Criterion

- ✦ Guide Questions: To what extent:
 - has the school established a clear statement of purpose that reflect the beliefs and philosophy of the institution?
 - is the purpose defined further by adopted expected schoolwide learning results that form the basis of the educational program for every student?
- ✦ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:
 - the written statement of purpose reflecting the beliefs and philosophy of the school and its constituency
 - student/community profile data and its impact on the school purpose and schoolwide learning results
 - national and state educational issues
 - the degree of involvement by representatives of the entire school community in the development of the purpose and expected schoolwide learning results
 - the process for reaching consensus among the stakeholders regarding the purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results
 - the level of understanding and commitment to the purpose of the staff, students, parents and other stakeholders
 - the process for regular review or revision of the school purpose and expected schoolwide learning results based on global and local needs such as job market trends and community conditions
 - the means by which the purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results are publicized to the school and its constituency
 - the degree of consistency between the school purpose, the expected schoolwide learning results, and the school program
 - publications used to inform parents and community members about the school program

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

A2. Governance Criterion

★ Guide Questions: To what extent:

- does the governing authority adopt policies which are consistent with the school purpose and support the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results for the school?
- does the governing authority delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?
- does the governing authority monitor results?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the legal ownership and organization of the school
- the selection, composition and specific duties of the governing authority
- board policies
- the connection between the governing authority's policies and the school's purpose/expected schoolwide learning results
- the nature and extent of the school community's understanding of the governing authority's role
- the relationship between the governing authority and the responsibilities of the professional staff
- the evaluation procedures carried out by the governing authority
- the process for evaluation of the governing authority
- the degree of participation of board and district personnel in the development of the vision and expected schoolwide learning results
- additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

A3. School Leadership Criterion

- ✪ Guide Questions: To what extent:
 - does the school Leadership make decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?
 - does the school leadership empower the staff?
 - does the school leadership encourage commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning?
- ✪ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:
 - administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities and relationships
 - the existing structures for internal communications, planning and resolving differences
 - strategies for team building used at the school
 - examples of collaboration across the school
 - the process for regular review of the existing structures
 - the leadership’s processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, actions, and accountability to support student learning
 - the level of actual staff involvement in actions focusing on successful student learning
 - the degree to which the actions of the leadership are directly linked to student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results
 - additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

A4. Staff Criterion

★ Guide Questions: To what extent:

- are the school leadership and staff qualified for their assigned responsibilities?
- are the school leadership and staff committed to the school’s purpose?
- does the school leadership and staff engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- employment policies/practices related to qualification requirements
- information on staff background, training and preparation
- staff assignments to maximize use of their expertise that will result in student achievement
- the feeling of the teachers about their sense of efficacy in their work as they translate the expected schoolwide learning results into reality in their classes
- the degree to which school leadership supports professional development with time, personnel and fiscal resources
- the written professional development plan
- the description of how the plan was developed and how priorities were set the description of follow-up to professional development activities
- the perceptions of the staff members about the purpose and effectiveness of professional development
- the evaluation procedures utilized and their effectiveness in promoting professional growth
- the degree of participation in professional opportunities that will promote student learning
- the degree to which the environment enables teachers to focus on students accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results
- the types of collegial strategies used to implement innovations and encourage improvement, such as shadowing, coaching, observation, mentoring, group presentations
- the process used to determine the measurable effect of professional development on student work and accomplishment of the expected schoolwide learning results
- additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

A5. School Environment Criterion

★ Guide Questions: To what extent:

- does the school have a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school's purpose?
- is the school environment characterized by a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support and high expectations for each student?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the policies, codes and use of resources to ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that is conducive to learning
- the level of understanding of the codes of student conduct by students, teachers and parents, (if applicable)
- the degree to which caring, concern, and high expectations for students is demonstrated on a daily basis
- the degree to which specific strategies demonstrate an atmosphere of trust, respect, and professionalism
- recent sensitivity training for cultural, racial, individual differences
- the level of mutual respect, two-way communication, and support in relationships among the staff, between staff and students, between staff and parents, where applicable, and between staff and leadership
- the level of teacher support and encouragement to utilize innovative approaches to enhance student learning
- the degree to which student self-esteem is fostered through high expectations for each student and recognition of their successes
- student work
- students working together in a supportive manner academically or personally as appropriate
- interview data from students, staff and leadership
- teachers working with students during non-class hours
- telephone and written communication to and from the home
- additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

A6. Reporting Student Progress Criterion

★ Guide Questions: To what extent:

- does the school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the school’s expected schoolwide learning results?
- does the school leadership and staff report student progress to the rest of the school community?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- how student progress is determined and monitored
- existing standards used in the determination of learning
- the degree to which the linkage between what is learned and the expected schoolwide learning results is understood by staff, students and parents (if applicable)
- student/work performance to determine the degree to which students are achieving the expected schoolwide learning results
- student follow-up studies
- the procedures to communicate to the governing authority and members of the school community about student progress
- the degree of correlation between school improvement, professional development activities/topics and student progress of the schoolwide learning results
- published lists of
 - graduates
 - students progressing from one level to another
 - job placements
 - students pursuing further education
- additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

A7. School Improvement Process Criterion

★ Guide Questions: To what extent:

- does the school leadership facilitate school improvement which is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students?
- does the school leadership have school community support and involvement?
- does the school leadership effectively guide the work of the school?
- does the school leadership provide for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- rosters, minutes of meetings, interview/survey data or other indicators of inclusion showing that the school planning process is broad-based, collaborative and has commitment of the stakeholders
- the degree of correlation between the school plans and analysis of student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results
- the degree of correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/personnel resources, improvement plans, and learning results
- appropriate levels of specificity in the school plans
- the specific benchmarks and accountability tools used in the monitoring process
- indications of the number of staff involved in school action plans
- evidence of student involvement in implementing action plans
- evidence of employer involvement in school improvement or implementation of action plans
- data or information gathered from ongoing contact with graduates
- additional evidence

**Category B:
Curriculum and Instruction**

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

Category B: Curriculum and Instruction

B1. What Students Learn Criterion

★ Guide Question: To what extent:

- does the school provide 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?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the degree of consideration by the school to citations and indications of current educational research and thinking related to various subject areas and curricular programs in order to maintain a viable, meaningful instructional program for students. (e.g., state and national standards, curriculum associations, affiliated educational associations)
- the degree of consideration by the school of national/community/student issues and needs in the modification of the curricular program
- the written competencies for each subject area and level
- minutes of meetings where curricular issues are discussed
- evidence that expected schoolwide learning results have been used as the basis for development of:
 - curricular goals
 - teaching processes
 - evaluation of learning
 - instructional competencies
- articulation processes among and between levels and other schools/programs
- evidence of student work and engagement in learning that demonstrate the implementation of the curricular goals including effective communications, critical thinking, problem solving and application of concepts and skills in realistic situations
- the procedures used for curriculum development, evaluation and revisions
- policies regarding course completion, certification, credits, grades, homework, etc., that guide student progression through the program

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

B1. Suggested areas, continued:

- evidence of a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum accessible to all students, given legal parameters
- class schedules
- class enrollment lists
- the assessment processes used by the professional staff to measure the expected schoolwide learning results
- student follow-up studies that provide insight to the effectiveness of the instruction in the preparation of students for pursuing further education, entering the work force, or meeting their personal goals
- additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

B2. How Students Learn Criterion

★ Guide Questions: To what extent:

- does the professional staff use research-based knowledge about teaching and learning?
- does the professional staff design and implement 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?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the planning processes for implementation of a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning that is consistent with the school's purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results
- demonstration that students are actively engaged in learning, especially through examination of students working and their work
- student use of resources for learning beyond the limits of the textbook such as effective use of technology, collaborative activities, community resources
- the degree of student understanding of the expected level of performance
- the degree to which teachers implement teaching techniques that enhance the active involvement of students appropriate to the subject matter
- students' working and their work that demonstrates critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge, and application
- student portfolios, projects/performances/discussions
- the degree of involvement of students with diverse backgrounds and abilities
- observations of students working
- perceptions of students about the learning experiences and their relationship to the expected schoolwide learning results
- the degree to which various learning styles are addressed through the instructional approaches
- the level of teacher currency and master of instructional content relative to the subject matter
- additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

B3. How Assessment is Used Criterion

★ Guide Questions: To what extent:

- is teacher and student use of assessment frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process?
- are the assessment results the basis for measurement of each student's progress toward the expected schoolwide learning results?
- are the assessment results the basis for regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction?
- are the assessment results the basis for the allocation of resources?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the nature and types of assessment that teachers regularly use to measure student progress towards acquiring a specific body of knowledge or skills such as portfolios, oral or group projects, etc.
- the correlation of assessment to expected schoolwide learning results, curricular objectives, course competencies and instructional approaches used
- student work that demonstrates understanding and application of knowledge and skills
- student portfolios, projects/performances/discussions
- student assessment of the learning
- the monitoring of student progress over time
- the degree of effective use of student feedback as appropriate to determine whether course objectives have been met
- the modifications and revisions in the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment, both collectively and individually
- the degree to which parents and community are active in the learning assessment process
- the allocation of resources, including the provision for professional development opportunities, based upon assessment of the expected schoolwide learning results
- additional evidence

**Category C:
Support for Student Personal
and Academic Growth**

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

Category C: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

C1. Student Connectedness Criterion

- ★ Guide Question: To what extent:
 - are students connected to a system of support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular/co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results?
- ★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:
 - student profile
 - the correlation of personalized student support with student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results
 - the level of school coordination of a system of support services that allows maximum effectiveness
 - processes for intervention or referral
 - the relationship of the support services and activities to the classroom instruction
 - the level of involvement of teachers with students within and outside the classroom
 - the strategies to develop students' self-esteem, a personalized approach to learning, and connections to the learning environment
 - the availability of adequate services, including referral services, to support students in such areas as health, career and guidance counseling, personal counseling and academic assistance
 - the degree to which the co-curricular activities are linked to the expected schoolwide learning results
 - the level of involvement of students in curricular/co-curricular activities such as student leadership organizations and service projects
 - student use of support services
 - student interview and survey data on the effectiveness of all support services
 - the relationship of support services and activities to continuing education, career planning and preparation
 - additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

C2. Parent/Community Involvement Criterion

★ Guide Question: To what extent:

- does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the school's established support system for students?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- the level of parent and community involvement in the school's program
- the procedures for keeping parents and community members involved
- the degree to which community resources are utilized to support students such as career days, business partnerships, speakers, professional services
- the level of understanding regarding student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results through the school's program
- additional evidence

**Category D:
Resource Management and Development**

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

Category D: Resource Management and Development

D1. Resources Criterion

- ✪ Guide Question: To what extent:
 - are the resources available to the school sufficient to sustain the school program and effectively used to carry out the school’s purpose and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?
- ✪ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:
 - the relationship of decisions about resource allocations to the school’s purpose and assessment of the expected schoolwide learning results
 - the degree of involvement of leadership and staff in the resource allocation
 - the annual budget
 - the most recent audit
 - protections against mishandling of institutional funds
 - the business and accounting practices
 - the adequacy of the facilities to meet the purpose of the school, i.e., safe, functional, and well-maintained
 - the procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials, such as textbooks, other printed material, audio-visuals, support technology, manipulatives, laboratory materials
 - the resources available for hiring and nurturing a well-qualified staff
 - advisory committee minutes, if appropriate
 - additional evidence

Explanation: The criteria guide questions and suggested areas to analyze should be used by the Home and the Schoolwide Focus Groups to accomplish Tasks 4–6 (beginning pg. 44). **Note:** The guide questions address the concepts of the criteria.

D2. Resource Planning Criterion

★ Guide Question: To what extent:

- do the governing authority and the school execute responsible resource planning for the future?

★ Suggested areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

- a master resource plan
- a procedure for regular examination of the master resource plan to ensure the continual availability of appropriate resources that support the school's purpose and learning results
- the marketing strategies used to support the implementation of the developmental program
- the research and information used to form the master resource plan
- the involvement of stakeholders in the future planning
- governing authorities and school leaders involved in informing the public and appropriate governmental authorities about the financial needs of the organization
- additional evidence

Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

Definition

What each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program.

An expected schoolwide learning result of significance is one that as a result of *meaningful* and *authentic* learning experiences over time, learners will be able to exhibit a *culmination* of their *learning* in a *real world context* that has significant *purpose* and *meaning* for them and others over time (adapted from Fontana USD).

Descriptors

- global
- include all students
- must be able to assess
- cornerstone of school improvement
- cornerstone of *Focus on Learning*

Rationale

Working From Learning Results:

- Equips ALL students with the knowledge, competencies, and orientations needed for success in a thinking, meaning-centered curriculum.
- Enables teachers to implement programs and conditions that maximize learning success for ALL students in a standards-based curriculum.
- Provides schools with a means to restructure pedagogy in ways that facilitate student success in a thinking, standards-based curriculum (adapted from Fontana USD).

Establishing Expected Schoolwide Learning Results: A Sample Procedure

- Invite stakeholders – staff, students, parents, business people, central office, school board, etc. Participants should sit at tables to encourage discussion.
- Overview of the entire process including “why.” Review the literature. (Participants are going to build a collective meaning of “learning results” and their purpose).
- Table groups discuss, “What are some purposes of the expected schoolwide learning results?” (5 minutes) Then share briefly with the other groups.
- Table groups discuss “What should every student who leaves our school be able to do, know, understand or value to be successful in the real world?” (The wording here is critical).
 - Individuals write a maximum of 8 expected schoolwide learning results (exit outcomes, outcomes of significance). (10 minutes)
 - Table groups create a consensus, composite list of 10 expected schoolwide learning results (15 minutes). The individual results may be merged, dropped or kept intact to create the table’s list.
 - Tables pair up and create consensus, composite list of 12 expected schoolwide learning results.
 - Post the composite lists of all table pairs and make one consensus composite list of 14 expected schoolwide learning results maximum.
- Each group identifies which learning results are currently assessed formally and which are not.

Subsequent discussions should begin to address how those expected schoolwide learning results could be assessed in all classes, courses and subject areas.

Expected Schoolwide Learning Results: Samples

Sample #1

Golden Oak Students Will Be Prepared To Be:

Effective communicators who:

- Utilize spoken and written communication.
- Incorporate technology as a communication device.
- Reflect self-expression and artistic appeal.
- Demonstrate literacy.

Literate individuals who:

- Integrate learning and apply it in real life situations.
- Follow directions.

Critical thinkers and problem solvers who:

- Analyze and apply new information.
- Use technology effectively.

Productive individuals who:

- Set personal and collective goals and work with others towards their achievements.
- Apply professional and technical skills.
- Demonstrate responsibility for self and to others.
- Work collaboratively.
- Are self-directed.

Involved citizens who:

- Demonstrate a sense of community.
- Show respect for the rights of others.
- Participate as productive members of society.

Sample #2

Learner Results for Student Success

Effective communicators who:

- Convey significant messages to others both verbally and in writing.
- Receive and interpret the messages of others in an effective manner.

Complex thinkers who:

- Apply complex problem-solving processes and critical thinking to real life scenarios.
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate significant concepts within various contexts.
- Create images to represent significant concepts.

Quality producers who:

- Create intellectual, artistic, practical and physical products.
- Reflect original, high standards and the use of advanced technology.
- Set, pursue, and accomplish realistic and challenging goals for themselves and their peers.

Collaborative workers who:

- Use effective leadership skills to foster, develop, and maintain relations within diverse settings.
- Establish and accomplish effective goals with others.

Self-directed learners who:

- Assess their needs and apply appropriate strategies to learn the identified concepts and skills.
- Use effective goal setting strategies to create a positive vision for themselves and their future in order to set priorities and achievable goals.

Community contributors who:

- Contribute their time, energies and talents to improve the quality of life in our schools, communities, nation and world.
- Demonstrate positive and productive citizenship.

Sample #3

The School's Purpose Statement:

A strong core curriculum in the traditional disciplines forms the foundation which challenges and supports students to work hard on assignments to meet high standards. It engages students in the learning process so that they are active participants who can seek accuracy, apply their knowledge across areas of learning, and persist when answers are not apparent. In order for students to become independent learners, the following interdisciplinary expectations for lifelong learning have been developed:

1. Articulate ideas clearly, creatively, and effectively.
2. Develop meaningful questions.
3. Design and implement appropriate strategies to solve various problems.
4. Use the evaluation process by establishing and applying criteria to support judgment.
5. Work effectively as a member of a self-directed team.
6. Exhibit social responsibility.
7. Design, establish and pursue goals, both personal and professional.

Sample #4

Every student will demonstrate:

- ✓ Higher level thinking skills
- ✓ Active problem solving
- ✓ Effective communication
- ✓ Appropriate social skills
- ✓ Cooperative learning
- ✓ The ability to access resources
- ✓ The curiosity/desire to learn more

Gathering Evidence: The Power of Reality

Gathering Evidence

Evidence gathering has the overall purpose of verifying the actual program for students and determining if students are successful learners. The basic ways to collect information are observations, interviews, and examination of pertinent information/data, including student work.

Observations

Observation is a critical step in the multi-method of approach of collecting information. Much insight is gained about questions that need to be asked during interviews through observing what is happening with students and adults. This is an active process that includes talking to students; looking at their work and records of their work, as available; and talking to the adults working with the students – teachers, instructional aides, and specialist teachers – in addition to observing. What to observe in instructional settings (classrooms, labs, resource centers, libraries, etc.) is determined by what information is needed. However, there are some initial observations that focus on the important instructional issues common to all curricular areas. These are:

- What the students are doing. Receiving information? Applying skills? Practicing newly acquired skills? Synthesizing and evaluating information? Waiting? Causing a disturbance?
- Are the students task oriented? Are they engaged in their work?
- Range of activities taking place from acquisition of factual knowledge to the use of higher level thinking skills.
- What sort of assignments do the students receive? How much time are the students actually spending on the assigned activity? Do they know what to do?
- How students are applying the skills of reading, writing, speaking, computing and thinking.
- How the students are challenged to think and to communicate their thoughts orally and in writing.
- How students with special needs are participating in the classroom activities.
- How the instructional settings are varied according to the needs of the student and/or what is to be learned.

As with observation in instructional settings, observation in other places (library, school offices, campus grounds, etc.) establishes a schoolwide sense of the culture of the school. Shadowing students or conducting student case studies can be an effective means of gathering observable data about the entire school program. Some of the additional aspects of school life to observe are:

- The interactions among staff and other stakeholders
- How students are supported and how they support others
- The extent to which the school values learning
- The interactions between staff and students
- Evidence of school pride
- How parents and community members contribute to the program
- What the school rules are and how they are enforced
- Ways students and staff are recognized and rewarded and recognize and reward others
- The interaction among the various age levels and groups of students

Interviews

Interviews are used as part of the accreditation process to find out information that is not directly observable, such as what has happened and what is planned. They are used to find out people's beliefs, ideas, and intentions and to validate and expand prior information gained through observation and the review of documents such as the school's curricular materials, the school plan, schoolwide policies, and so forth.

The following "Keep in Mind" summarizes some important points about interviews.

KEEP IN MIND

- There is no one "right way" to interview; there is no one correct format.
- There is no one "right way" to ask a question.
- LISTEN to responses; be an active listener.
- Explain purposes of questions.
- Keep initial questions simple and non-threatening.
- Use open-ended questions. Yes/no response questions set a feeling of interrogation and provide little information.
- Ask questions which will verify what you think you know and will add missing pieces of information.
- Ask questions which do not imply the answer, and which do not reflect the committee members' biases.
- Use clear and concise language which is appropriate to the interviewee.
- Note-taking should record what is said – not committee members' reactions.
- Allow adequate time for responses.
- Give appropriate feedback to responses.
- Do not assume that people understand what you are asking about – make sure they do.
- Do not push for answers at the expense of the interviewee.
- Be mindful of nonverbal feedback, i.e., facial expressions, turning away, and so on.
- Be alert to "clues" of interviewees and follow-up what is not being said.

Suggested questions to validate and expand prior information gained through observation and document review.

- How do the teachers, the administration, and the school community work together to have a shared vision of desirable educational outcomes for all students?
- How do the school's educational practices and other activities facilitate equal access and successful educational and social outcomes for students who are learning English, economically disadvantaged, underachieving, gifted and talented, average ability and students receiving special education services?
- How are students actively engaged in learning the subject area?
- What evidence is there that the students are able to do the following?
 - think, reason, solve problems
 - construct meaning, make connections
 - be creative, be productive
 - communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking, listening and drawing
- How often and in what ways do students apply their knowledge and conceptual understanding?
- How do teachers know whether their students have acquired a particular body of knowledge and can perform at a particular level?
- How is assessment integral to instruction? (e.g., helping students to analyze, evaluate and communicate).
- How do teachers use assessment to reflect on student academic achievement, effective teaching practices, program strengths and weaknesses and progress on curriculum and instructional implementation?
- How do staff members use a variety of student performance-based assessment techniques to adjust strategies and programs to best serve students? (e.g., more challenging learning activities).
- How do staff members allow for diversity in assessment? (e.g., students that have a developed primary language other than English)
- How are opportunities provided for parents, teachers, guidance staff and students to confer over students' progress, choices and the possible consequences of their decisions?
- How are assessment results used by colleges and employers as indicators of successful preparation for advanced study or work?

Sample Student Interview Questions

- What kinds of projects do you do?
- How often do you work on a project alone?
- What kinds of problems do you solve?
- How often do you solve difficult but interesting problems for which there are often many possible answers?
- How often do you do research in the library and elsewhere with other students?
- Are the resources, such as books and other materials at your school, adequate for your research projects and other activities?
- How often do you talk about what you have just read with a group of students in your class?
- What kinds of oral reports do you put in your portfolio? Why?
- What kinds of homework do you have?
 - What ways can you suggest to better show how and what you know?

Examination of Student Work

The examination of student work is integral to ongoing determination of successful student learning. Instructional staff members will be involved in this process individually and through discussions within and among disciplines; for example, those who teach the same courses or are at the same grade level may engage in dialogue. There are many ways to gather and analyze student work. Some specific examples of strategies that can be used by instructional staff members include:

- Conduct initial observations of students and engage in subsequent formal or informal interviews with individuals or groups of students. *Use a guide that includes important schoolwide and program-related factors to be observed that has been developed by instructional staff members within the various school programs. In addition, involve staff in establishing ground rules for these observations. Similarly create a form containing a few quality questions that reflect important issues to address through student interviews.*
- Examine student work to determine the nature, frequency and quality of work that the students are doing. *This includes observation of students working.*

Suggestions for collecting work:

- “high quality,” “medium quality,” and “low quality” samples from each course
- representative students selected based upon the student /community profile information
- student work collection days for a program
- anonymous work from anonymous teachers
- schoolwide student work collection based on two or three students randomly selected from the teacher role sheet during a designated day and time
- Examine student work representative of the school population two to three times during the year to monitor growth over time.
- Develop a cover sheet to summarize key information resulting from the analysis of the representative student work.

Initially, the quality of student work may be examined with respect to course or discipline/program goals and objectives. However, ultimately, the student work analysis should also provide information about the degree to which the students are accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results.

The following pages contain additional information about the examination of student work that will be helpful in school site training.

Appendix

Appendix: Setting the Stage

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 expected 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 and synonymous to school (and district) 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 the appropriateness and the accomplishments of the student program with respect to its established philosophy and objectives.
- 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 an individual 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 essential 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 goals are then implemented and assessed in a perpetual cycle of instructional improvements for students.

**How Do We Know
Students Are Learning?**



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

- 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/practices for an effective educational program;
- The advantage of an additional dimension/perspective from the visiting committee as the school redefines and establishes 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 attain curricular improvement, strategic planning, staff development and restructuring.

WASC Organization

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (**WASC**) is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States. The Commission 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, and 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 skill 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 twenty-six representatives from educational organizations appointed as follows:

California

- Association of California School Administrators
- California School Boards Association
- California Teachers Association
- California Federation of Teachers
- California State Department of Education
- Western Catholic Educational Association
- Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists
- California Association of Independent Schools
- California Congress of Parents and Teachers
- California Association of Private School Organizations

Hawaii

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

East Asia

- East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools

Public Members

- Four public members

The search for “Good” schools is elusive and disappointing if by goodness we mean something close to perfection... Good schools reveal imperfections, uncertainties, and vulnerabilities...In fact, one could argue that a consciousness about imperfections, and the willingness to admit them and search for their origins and solutions is one of the important ingredients of goodness in schools.

**Sara Lawrence Lightfoot
From the Good High School**

Candidacy or Interim 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 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 plan. The school must also be willing to meet WASC criteria for accreditation in a reasonable time.

Private schools must meet the legal requirements of the jurisdiction in which they are located. For example, California private schools must list with the California State Department of Education and submit an affidavit indicating compliance with Education Code section 33190. Likewise, Hawaii private 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 team to conduct a 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 candidacy status not to exceed three years. Normally, the school will be expected to undergo their full self-study (full accreditation process) in their third year of candidacy. Candidacy status shall expire at the end of three years, but may be extended up to a maximum of three additional years by Commission action, following a revisit.

Schools in an established district or diocese where at least one school is already accredited, or well established schools with a record of high performance credibility, may be granted a three-year interim term of accreditation by the Executive Director, after a satisfactory one-day initial visit to the school conducted by a two-member team. The written report is reviewed by the Commission along with the Executive Director's decision regarding interim 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 high schools. (Bylaws, 1991)

Full Accreditation Process

Each institution is evaluated on the basis of the WASC criteria and the appropriateness of the school's stated purpose, schoolwide learning results and the degree to which it accomplishes these.

The full accreditation process has three stages: the self-study, the visit, the follow-up. A school's philosophy and the WASC criteria serve as the underlying bases for these stages.

Self-Study

While WASC publishes its own evaluation instruments, an institution which applies for full accreditation may be provided with a choice of documents that have been designed in cooperation with educators from the various schools/organizations to meet their unique needs. In carrying out its accreditation functions, WASC works cooperatively with several educational agencies:

- 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
- East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools
- European Council of International Schools
- Golden State Christian School Accrediting Association
- Hawaii Department of Education
- Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
- Lutheran Schools, Missouri Synod
- National Lutheran School Association
- Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Western Catholic Educational Association

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 candidly assess the school's strengths and areas needing improvement with respect to the criteria. Basically, the steps of the self-study are:

1. Understand the school improvement purpose of the self-study
2. Analyze/understand the criteria
3. Develop, clarify and assess accomplishment of schoolwide learning expectations for students.

4. Compare the school program to the criteria
 - a. Collect and analyze verifying information
 - b. Analyze and deliberate the results of the comparison
 - c. Agree on the status of the program
 - d. Agree on strengths and areas for improvement
5. Develop a schoolwide action plan to increase the effectiveness of the program for students
 - a. Decide on priorities based on self-study findings
 - b. Discuss possible solution steps
 - c. Agree on the action to be taken, by whom and when
 - d. Agree on ways to monitor and assess progress

Working through numerous committees, staff members summarize their finding of this in-depth assessment which becomes part of a school self-study report. At least four weeks prior to the visit, this completed self-study is shared with members of a Visiting Committee composed of fellow educators.

Full Self-Study Visit

The visiting committee is usually composed of three to eight people, one of whom is the 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 board members. 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.

Subsequent to 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. The visiting team members review student performance data, confer separately with each school committee, observe the school in operation, visit classes, and dialogue with individual administrators, teachers, students and others. Then the visiting committee prepares a report for the school outlining its findings.

After the visiting committee report is discussed with the school steering committee and shared with the entire staff, it is formally submitted to the school and the WASC Commission. The visiting committee also recommends a term of accreditation based upon the school's philosophy, the WASC criteria, the self-study, and its findings during the visit.

Commission Action and School Follow-up

The Accrediting Commission for Schools meets at regularly scheduled times to consider accreditation for the schools. Prior to each meeting, the Commission members review the visiting committee reports and the recommended terms for the schools. At these sessions, the school's self-studies are available for reference. The resulting decision of the Commission on a term of accreditation for each school is the composite judgment of the Commission members after examining the data concerning the school.

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.

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. The cycle of self-study, visit and follow-up is normally repeated every six years, a full term. However, schools may receive lesser terms or be required to take and report on remedial actions as a condition of continual accreditation. To support and encourage continual school improvement, the Commission will communicate with school during the cycle through written reports and short visits.

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

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/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/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.

Parameters of Self-Study

Through the completion of the accreditation process the school will have accomplished:

1. the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study
2. the clarification of the school's purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results
3. the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on the student learning with respect to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results
4. the development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs
5. the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan