Getting Started with WASC: The Initial Visit Process

WASC Focus on Learning
On Target for 21st Century Schools
WASC Presentation Outline

- Background of WASC accreditation
- What is accreditation?
- Why accreditation is so important?
- WASC seven accreditation principles
- Focus on Learning (FOL) Accreditation’s Cycle of Quality
  - Self-Study
  - The Visit
  - The Follow-up or Ongoing Improvement
- Getting Started: The Initial Visit Process
- Focus on Learning: A Powerful Process for School Change
Western Association of Schools and College (WASC)

- A private, nonprofit, regional accrediting association in the United States
- Serves schools in California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, and worldwide, especially East Asia (The Hague, 1961)
- Composed of three commissions
  - Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, e.g., Stanford University
  - Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, e.g., San Francisco Community College
  - Accrediting Commission for Schools
Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC

- Works closely with the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools
- Extends services to over 4,500 pre-K to 12 elementary and secondary public and private schools of various types (225 in East Asia)
- Works with 16 other associations in joint processes, such as California and Hawaii state departments of education (CDE, HDOE, WCEA, SDA, CIS, ACSI, NLSA, and CAIS)
- WASC Commission (Board) composed of 32 members from various organizations
WASC Accreditation: An Ongoing Journey
What is Accreditation?

- The quality or state of being trustworthy or credible (Root is French word meaning “to credit”)*
- An ongoing Cycle of Quality...
  - a non-hyperventilating” school improvement process that supports high-quality student learning
- Equivalent to a University Educational Course entitled: Change 101

*Dr. John Stoops, MSA
Accreditation: A Value Added Evaluation

Schools add value by...

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

Dr. Donald G. Haught
Retired WASC Executive Director
Why Accreditation?

- Assures a school community school is trustworthy for student learning in a global society
- Validates integrity of school’s program and transcripts worldwide for university acceptance
- Fosters ongoing improvement to support learning
- Provides valuable insight from educators visiting the school
- Benefits schools choosing collaborative processes, e.g., WASC/CDE
I taught Spot how to whistle.

I don't hear him whistling.

I said I taught him. I didn't say he learned it.
WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

Built on

WASC Seven Accreditation Principles
WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

1. Accomplishment of school purpose (core beliefs, vision, mission) and schoolwide learner outcomes...
What all students should know, understand and be able to do in order to be globally competent, i.e., a global citizen.
Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Characteristics:

- Include current learning needs and global competencies/21st century skills
- For all students
- Interdisciplinary (within all subjects)
- Assessable
The school educates students to become:

*Effective communicators who...*

- express ideas, emotions, and personal experiences clearly and creatively through the written and spoken word and through the arts.
- listen critically with understanding and empathy.
Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (excerpts)

Students will be:

Global-minded Citizens who...

- Act with the future in mind
- Embrace diversity
- Engage responsibly in the world’s problems with compassion, empathy, and tolerance
- Respect and support family and community
- Protect and advocate for local and global environments
Students will be:

**Literate Individuals who...**

- Are multi-lingual
- Articulate communicators in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and through artistic expression
- Can analyze information to create new knowledge and understandings
- Are literate in information and communication technologies
EAGLES: Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (excerpts)

Students will be:

**Skilled Inquirers who...**

- Apply content knowledge and skills in authentic situations
- Strive for academic excellence
- Can express themselves through sound, movement and image
- Apply skills and knowledge to broader systems
- Reason soundly and critically
WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

2. High achievement of all students based on schoolwide learner outcomes/curricular standards
WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

3. Use of multiple ways to analyze data about student achievement
4. Program evaluation in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, standards and research-based WASC criteria and indicators
WASC Criteria Categories

- ORGANIZATION for STUDENT LEARNING
- WHAT STUDENTS LEARN
- HOW STUDENTS LEARN
- HOW ASSESSMENT IS USED
- SUPPORT for STUDENT PERSONAL and ACADEMIC GROWTH
- RESOURCE MANAGEMENT and ALLOCATION

FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING
5. Alignment of findings to a schoolwide action plan

- Strategic Plan
- Technology Plan
- Professional Development Plan
WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

6. Evaluation of ongoing improvement and impact on student learning

7. Total involvement/collaboration of all leaders, board members, teachers, staff, students, parents and others
WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality (five or six years)

YEAR ONE
Profile Update, Progress Report, Refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan

YEAR TWO
Profile Update, Progress Report, Refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan

YEAR THREE
Profile Update, Midterm Progress Report or Midterm Progress Report and one-day Review, Refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan

YEAR FOUR
Profile Update, Progress Report, Refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan

YEAR FIVE
Review of all Profile Data, Progress Report, Progress and Program Analysis, Beginning of next Self-Study, revision of Schoolwide Action Plan

YEAR SIX
Completion of Self-Study, including refinement of Schoolwide Action Plan; Self-Study Visit; revision of Schoolwide Action Plan after Visit

FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING
Initial Visit: Starting the Accreditation Process

- **Initial Visit**
  
  A one or two-day visit by a two-member team to understand the school...
  
  - its vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes
  
  - its program and operations based upon the WASC criteria
Affiliation Categories

1. Candidacy
2. Initial Accreditation
3. Denial
A school ...

- is progressing toward, but does not assume accreditation
- is not yet ready for the full evaluation based on the WASC criteria
- provides evidence that sound planning exists with resources to implement these plans within a reasonable time (continued)
A school …

- Submits an annual progress report to WASC on recommendations integrated into an action plan left by initial visiting team
- Completes a self-study and undertakes a full accreditation visit by the third year of candidacy
A school...

• meets the organization and support criteria for full accreditation

• has a history and support system that indicates that a high quality program can be sustained into the foreseeable future

• completes a self-study and undertakes a full accreditation visit by the third year of initial accreditation
A school …

- does not fully meet WASC criteria for affiliation with the Accrediting Commission for Schools
  
  *Note: A school may wish to re-apply after deficiencies have been remedied.*
Initial Visit Procedures Materials

• **On-line Materials** ([www.acswasc.org](http://www.acswasc.org))
  – Steps for WASC Affiliation
  – Request for WASC Affiliation Form
  – Conditions of Eligibility
  – Initial Visit Procedures Manual

• **Materials Sent from the WASC office**
  – Initial Visit School Description Template
Initial Visit Procedures

- Submit the Request for WASC Affiliation form
- Pay $150 non-refundable fee
- WASC will review the Request for Affiliation form; if approved, WASC will send the Initial Visit School Description template to the school for completion along with additional accreditation materials
Initial Visit Procedures

- Complete and submit the Initial Visit School Description by the deadline (see Steps)
- Work with appointed Visiting Committee chair on date
- Pay invoice for the initial visit ($600)
- Work with the assigned Visiting Committee chair on schedule of day
- Prepare documentation for review by Visiting Committee prior to and during visit
Initial Visit School Description

- **Part I: Identifying Data**
- **Part II: School (Student/Community) Profile**
  - Introductory Paragraph(s)
  - School Description
  - Student Demographic Data
  - Analyzed and Interpreted Student Achievement Data
  - Student Follow-up
Types of Data: Demographic

Examples:

- Ethnicity or Nationality
- English proficiency
- Gender/age mix
- Special Populations
- Mobility of students
Types of Data: Outcome/Achievement

Examples:
- Achievement
  - College SAT, Advanced Placement
  - CST
  - API, AYP
  - CELDT
  - ERB
- Post Graduation Data (University entrance)
Initial Visit School Description

- Part III: The Criteria
  - Use the Rubrics (See the Initial Visit Procedures Manual)
Sample Rubric Structure for Each Criterion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIAL</th>
<th>CANDIDATE</th>
<th>Examples of Documentation</th>
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### Sample Rubric Structure for Each Criterion

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<th>EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The school has established a clear statement of purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution.</td>
<td>- The school has adopted a clear statement of purpose</td>
<td>- Statement of school purpose (Note: school purpose is a general term for terminology used by schools such as vision, mission, or philosophy and objectives).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The student/community profile data has impacted the development of the school purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results.</td>
<td>- The student/community data has impacted the development of the school purpose.</td>
<td>- Schoolwide student goals (expected schoolwide learning results) and the process for development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A high degree of involvement by representatives of the entire school community has occurred in the development of the school purpose and expected schoolwide learning results.</td>
<td>- The school has designed a system and process to communicate the school's purpose that will lead to further development of expected schoolwide learning results.</td>
<td>- Student/community demographic and performance information and data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There is a clear and systematic network of communication of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results within the school community.</td>
<td>- Plans to carry out the school purpose are in place and implementation has begun that show the school's progress.</td>
<td>- Admission policies and materials.</td>
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<td>- Staff, students, parents, and other</td>
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<td>- Master schedule.</td>
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<td>- Any academic or</td>
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Initial Visit School Description

- Part III: The Criteria
  - Respond to questions for each criterion
  - Provide documentation
Initial Visit School Description

• Part III: The Criteria, School Purpose and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes)
Sample Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

An interdisciplinary statement about what all students should know, understand and be able to do by the time they graduate or complete the planned program

Characteristics:

- Global
- Interdisciplinary
- All Students
- Assessable
Sample Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Note: Schoolwide Student Goals—another name for expected schoolwide learning results (ESLRs)

- Problem solver
- Collaborative worker
- Information manager
- Perceptive thinker
- Healthy individual
- Academically competent individual
- Creative individual
- Technologically literate individual

- Involved citizen
- Productive worker
- Quality producer
- Effective communicator
- Self-directed learner
- Life-long learner
- Culturally empowered person
- World citizen
“Every student will be an effective communicator”

Each student may demonstrate this by:

• Writing English clearly and proficiently.
• Receiving information and constructing meaning through reading and listening skills
• Using nonverbal techniques to communicate accurately with others
• Using verbal language to communicate clearly when giving presentations to groups or talking with other individuals
• Exchanging information when working in a cooperative group.
Initial Visit School Description

- Part IV: School Description
  - Major Achievements/Accomplishments of students, staff and school
  - Major School Needs, focusing on student achievement
The Initial Visit: Learning about School

Are students learning?
Are systems and operations supporting learning?
The Initial Visit

The Schedule includes:

• Dialogue with all stakeholders
• Observation of students involved in the program
• Review of documentation
• Initial visiting committee report with recommendations
Documents

For example...

• Student work
• Handbooks
• Curriculum documents
• Recruiting brochures
Alignment of Findings to WASC Criteria
Initial Visit Results

WASC Commission action

School addresses initial visit recommendations

School begins and completes self-study/full visit within 2–3 years of candidacy
Follow-up from the Initial Visit

- Implementation of recommendations that have been integrated into the schoolwide action plan
- Update of Student/Community Profile
- Refinement of schoolwide learner outcomes (expected schoolwide learning results)
Follow-up from Initial Visit

- Preparation of annual progress report on school’s action plan, including the progress on the recommendations left in the initial Visiting Committee report (due June 1st of following year)

- Pre-planning and preparation for first self-study
  - WASC Self-Study Training: 18 months from scheduled visit (e.g., November 2013, March 2014, September 2014 for a 2015 spring visit)
WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality

Assess

Self-Study

Plan

Visit

Reassess

Implement

Follow-up
For 20 years, WASC FOL process has asked schools two questions

How do you know that all students are achieving...

✓ schoolwide learner outcomes
✓ essential core knowledge and skills?

• Are you doing everything possible to support students being global citizens?
Self-Study = Putting Together A Puzzle
Summary: Focus on Learning (FOL) Self-Study Process

What?

What is the ideal based upon...?
- Vision, Mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- WASC international criteria and indicators
- Curricular standards

So What?

What currently exists?
How effective is it?

Now What?

What and how will we modify?
What should be in the schoolwide action plan?
Self-Study Committees

Leadership Team
Plans & guides

Focus Groups
Criteria & student work

Stakeholder Groups
Student work & criteria
WASC Criteria Categories

- Organization for Student Learning
- Resource Management and Allocation
- Support for Student/Personal and Academic Growth
- How Assessment is Used
- What Students Learn
- How Students Learn

Focus on Student Learning
Sample WASC Criterion: Instruction—How Students Learn

Criterion:
To what extent 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 schoolwide learner outcomes?

Sample Indicator
- Students working and their work demonstrate critical, creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application skills.
Sample WASC Criterion:
How Assessment Is Used (Excerpt)

To what extent...

Do teachers and students use assessment results to modify the ongoing learning and teaching process?
## Focus Groups use WASC Criteria & Indicators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the criteria concepts?</th>
<th>What evidence is needed for analysis?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gathering and Analyzing Data/Information</td>
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Types of Data/Evidence for Self-Study

Demographic

Outcome

Process/Perception
Self-Study Process: The “So What” Question?
What currently exists? How effective?
Self-Study Process and Product

**Process**
- Home Groups
- Leadership Team
- Focus Groups

**Product**
- Response to criteria
- Evidence
- Strengths
- Key areas for follow-up

Professional knowledge
- Data
- Observations
- Surveys/interviews
- Student work
- Documents
Self-Study: Schoolwide Action Plan
Important School Question about Plan

Through implementing the Plan, what will be different for students as global citizens?

— One year from now?
— Two years from now?
— Three years from now?
WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality

- Asses
- Plan
- Visit
- Follow-up
- Self-Study
- Reassess
- Implement
The Visit: Are Students Achieving as Global Citizens?

Where's the school now?
Where's it going?
Does it have a good road map?
The Visit by Fellow Educators: Purpose

Based on WASC criteria, school’s purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes and self-study, the Visiting Committee (VC)*...

- Provides insight about student learning and school program
  - Validates school program
  - Celebrates school strengths
  - Provides recommendations on growth areas

* Visiting Committee chair/members: team size based on school size, spends a week at school.
The Visit by Fellow Educators: Purpose

- Prepares a written report for school and Commission
- Recommends an accreditation status
- Commission takes action
  - Six years
  - Three years
  - Probation:
  - Denial or Withheld
Accreditation Status Factors:
VC Recommendation and Commission Action

➢ To what extent is the school demonstrating quality student achievement/improvement?

1. Meeting the WASC international criteria and indicators
2. Clear globally-minded purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes
3. Quality processes to analyze student achievement
4. Action plan aligned to areas of greatest need
5. Capacity to implement/monitor action plan
6. Total involvement and collaboration
7. Use of prior accreditation findings

© ACS WASC
Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC: A Focus on Learning
WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality

Assess

Self-Study

Plan

Visit

Implement

Follow-up

Reassess
The Follow-Up: After Visit

The School

• Revises the Schoolwide Action Plan
  – Includes recommendations from the Visiting Committee
  – Submits Action Plan to WASC
• Annually reviews progress on Action Plan based on Schoolwide Learner Outcomes — Global Competencies
• Revises Action Plan as needed
• Submits annual progress report to WASC
• Has periodic visit from WASC
WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality (five or six years)

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FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING
Focus on Learning

Schools (on)

Global Competencies
The Foundation

What do students need to know, understand and be able to do to become Global Citizens?

Schoolwide Learner Outcomes = Global Competencies
We Are Student Centered