



WASC

Accrediting Commission for Schools

ACS WASC ACCREDITATION

Overview

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC), a world-renowned accrediting association and one of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States, works closely with the Office of Overseas Schools under the U.S. Department of State. This regional association provides assistance to schools located in California, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Asia, and other parts of the world.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC, extends its services to over 4,500 public, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K–12 and adult schools, works with 17 associations in joint accreditation processes, and collaborates with other organizations such as the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). One example is the seamless joint process with the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA): there is one initial visit, self-study, full visit and visiting committee report, and ongoing follow-up process; accreditation is awarded independently by the two agencies.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools is composed of 32 representatives from the educational organizations that it serves; this includes representatives from the Association of California School Administrators, California School Boards Association, California Teachers Association, and the California Federation of Teachers.

ACS WASC Philosophy

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

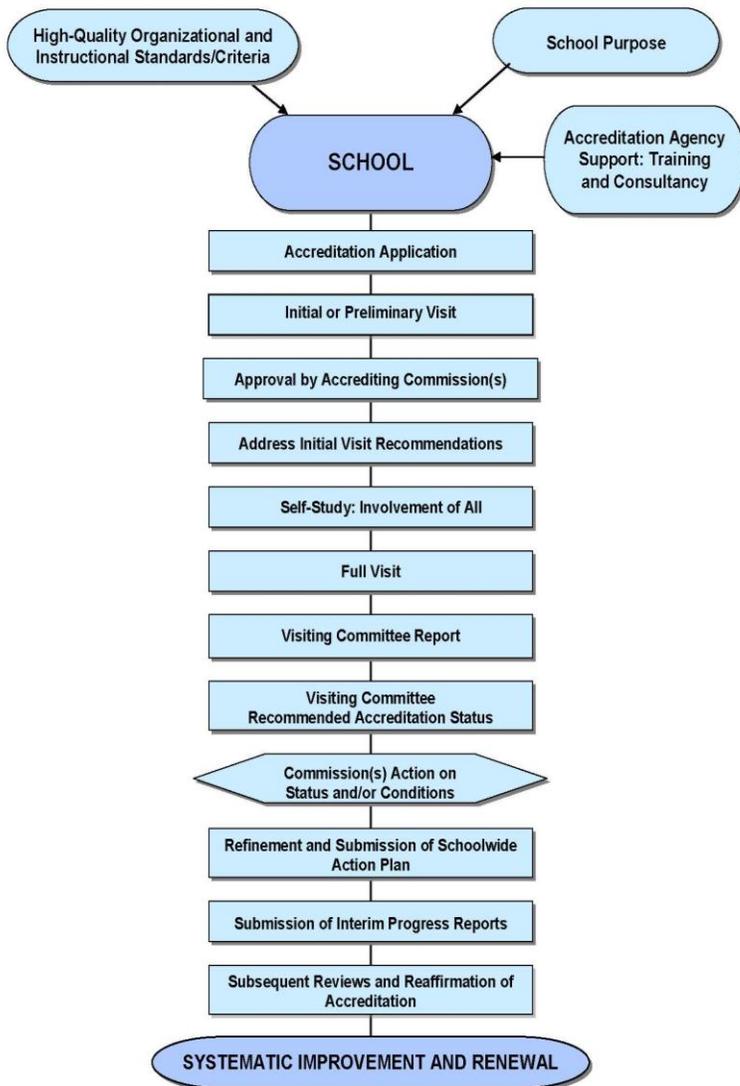
Accreditation is integral to a school's perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and reassessment based upon student achievement. It fosters excellence in elementary, secondary, adult, and postsecondary education by encouraging school improvement through a process of continuing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

Why Accreditation?

- ✓ Assures a school community that the school's purposes are appropriate and being accomplished through a viable education program — a trustworthy institution for student learning
- ✓ Validates the integrity of the school's program and transcripts
- ✓ Facilitates transfer of credits to other English-speaking schools — critical for college/university acceptance worldwide
- ✓ Fosters the ongoing improvement of the school's programs and operations to support student learning
- ✓ Provides valuable insight from fellow educators visiting the school
- ✓ Benefits schools that choose joint accreditation or other collaborative processes, e.g., ACS WASC/WCEA.



ACCREDITATION: A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS



ACS WASC Accreditation Process

Initial Visit Process

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

Self-Study Process/Full Visit

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

Follow-Up Process

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

Contact Us

The ACS WASC staff looks forward to working with you.

- ✓ Ongoing meetings, trainings, and webinars provided throughout the ACS WASC region.
- ✓ Provision of experienced ACS WASC-approved consultants, upon request.
- ✓ Personalized communications: Individual telephone and conference calls, Skype internet communication, and emails.



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