Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC
Accreditation Process Overview
ACS WASC Focus on Learning
On Target for 21st Century Schools
ACS WASC Overview

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

- A private, nonprofit, regional accrediting association in the United States
- Accrediting K-12 schools and non-degree granting postsecondary institutions
- Serves schools worldwide, primarily to schools located in California, Hawaii, Guam, Asia, the Pacific Region, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe
Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC

- ACS WASC works closely with the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools
- ACS WASC extends services to approximately 4,600 pre-K to 12 public and private schools of various types and non-degree granting postsecondary institutions
- Works with 17 other associations in joint processes, such as California and Hawaii state departments of education, CIS, ACSI, and CAIS
- The ACS WASC Commission (Board) is composed of 32 members from various organizations
What is Accreditation?

- The quality or state of being trustworthy or credible for student learning (Root is French word meaning “to credit”)
- An Ongoing Cycle of School Improvement
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
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
Focus on Learning ↔ School Change

ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

Built on

ACS 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
Students will be:

INNOVATIVE THINKERS

• Build on the ideas, explanations, and reasons of others
• Summarize, analyze, interpret, and evaluate information
• Define problem and use problem-solving strategies appropriate to the context
• Create original work
• Use technology to create products of high quality
2. High achievement of all students based on schoolwide learner outcomes/curricular standards
3. Use of multiple ways to analyze data about student achievement
ACS WASC Seven Accreditation Principles (cont.)

4. Program evaluation in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, standards and research-based ACS WASC criteria and indicators
ACS WASC Criteria Categories

Focus on Student Learning

- Organization for Student Learning
- Resource Management and Allocation
- Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
- What Students Learn
- How Students Learn
- How Assessment Is Used
5. Alignment of findings to a schoolwide action plan

- Strategic Plan
- Technology Plan
- Staff Development Plan
ACS WASC Seven Accreditation Principles (cont.)

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
Initial Visit: Beginning the Accreditation Process

- **Initial Visit**

  A 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 ACS WASC criteria and indicators

  - Dialogue with all stakeholders
  - Observation of students involved in the program
  - Review of documentation
  - Initial visiting committee report with recommendations
ACS WASC Commission action on candidacy

School addresses initial visit recommendations

School begins and completes self-study/full visit within 2–3 years of candidacy
ACS WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality

1. Self-Study
2. Assess
3. Plan
4. Visit
5. Focus on Learning
6. Reassess
7. Implement
8. Follow-up

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Summary: Focus on Learning Self-Study Process

**What?**

*What is the ideal based upon...?*

- **Vision, Mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes**
- **ACS 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?*
Observable evidence includes analyzing results of...

- **What students are doing and producing**
- **Student interviews and observations**
- **Hard data and information**
- **Other interviews, observations, etc.**
Self-Study Process: The “So What” Question?
What currently exists? How effective?
Self-Study: Schoolwide Action Plan
Important School Questions about the Action Plan

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

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

Self-Study

Assess

Plan

Focus on Learning

Visit

Reassess

Implement

Follow-up

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The Visit: Visiting Committee (VC) Members

ACS WASC VC Members Strengthen School’s Core Work — Improving Student Learning
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

- Insight and perspective of the Visiting Committee
  - Validation
  - Enhancement
- Support of the chair
- Three to eight educators
- Visit is usually 3–½ days, Asia 4–½ days
- The Visiting Committee Report is based on:
  - Self-Study
  - Findings during visit
  - ACS WASC criteria (or joint ACS WASC/affiliate criteria, e.g., ACS WASC/ACSI)
Accreditation Status Factors: VC Recommendation and Commission Action

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

1. Meeting the ACS 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. Use of prior accreditation findings
7. Involvement and collaboration of all
The Follow-Up: After Visit

The school:

- Revises the schoolwide Action Plan
  - Includes recommendations from the Visiting Committee
  - Submits Plan to ACS WASC
- Annually reviews progress on Action Plan based on Schoolwide Learner Outcomes — Global Competencies
- Revises the Action Plan as needed
- Submits annual progress report to ACS WASC
- Has periodic visits from ACS WASC
We Are Student Centered