Focus on Learning

for

SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

2016 EDITION

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS, WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
www.acswasc.org

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Introduction

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 for supplementary programs, new communication patterns, evidence gathering techniques, and insight from fellow educators, the appropriate accreditation process can serve as a vehicle to move school community member(s) into meaningful improvement and accountability.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) defines a Supplementary Education Program (SEP) as an organization that offers programs or courses in specific areas of learning designed for elementary or secondary age students. It is a non-degree granting program. Student attendance is limited to the time required for success in a specific area of learning; students attending a Supplementary Education Program also are enrolled in a private or public school at the same time. A Supplementary Education Program may be unaffiliated or under the auspices of a national organization; it must meet the legal requirements of the jurisdiction in which it operates and have the appropriate documentation and licensing.

ACS WASC has designed a supplementary protocol that addresses the critical concepts that are integral to its *Focus on Learning* process but adapted for a supplementary program. It should be viewed as a living document. These include: (1) the defining of quality achievement of SEP learner outcomes for every student by all stakeholders; (2) stakeholder dialogue based on evidence gathering and analysis about what students are doing and producing; and (3) the development, implementation, and accomplishment of a SEP action plan. The ACS WASC SEP criteria address the following areas: organization for student learning; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; support for student personal and academic growth; and resource management and development.

Overview

Focus on Learning: Overview

Background

Focus on Learning is an ongoing improvement process that assists supplementary education programs (SEPs) in an in-depth look at what currently exists and what needs to be improved in relation to student learning and the SEP's program. Basic concepts addressed in this process focus upon student success in meeting learner outcomes and academic standards (i.e., what all students should know and be able to do by graduation). They are:

1. How are the students achieving?
2. Is SEP doing everything possible to support high achievement for all its students?

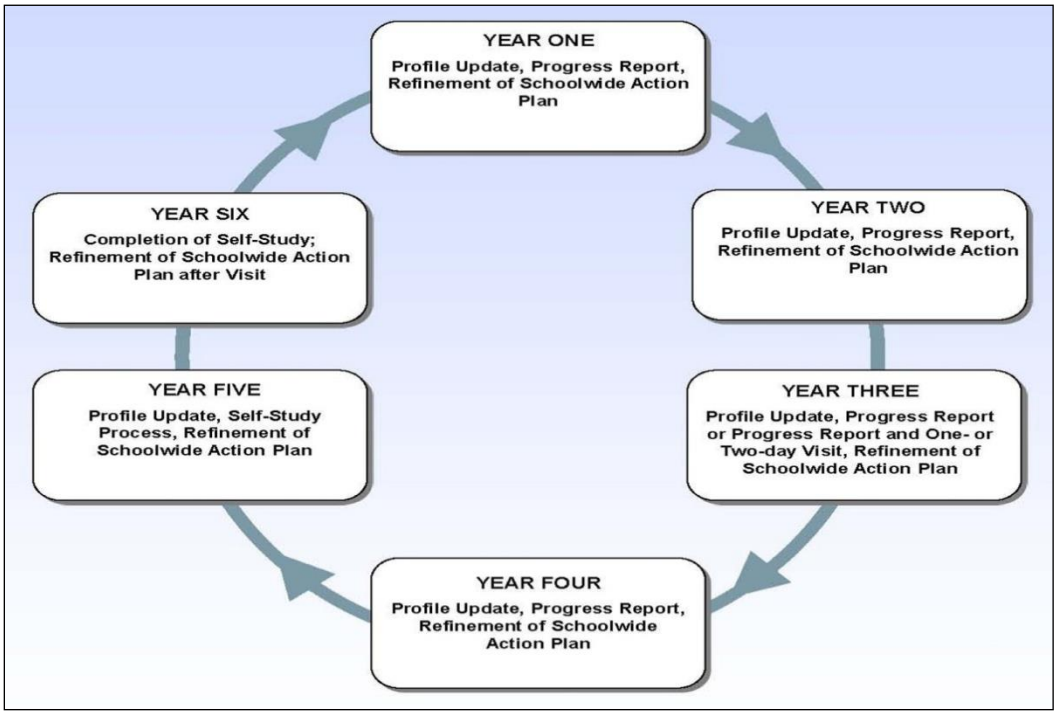
Through the *Focus on Learning* process a SEP fulfills the requirements for accreditation and forms the basis for the SEP action plan through the use of a single set of research-based criteria.

SEP Improvement Cycle

The accreditation process is a perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring, and reassessment: the process is guided and assisted by the self-study, visit, and follow-up. Annually, SEPs are expected to summarize the degree to which all students, including disaggregated subgroups, are accomplishing the learner outcomes, identified critical learner needs, and academic standards. In addition, SEPs must review the progress on the current SEP action plan in relation to student achievement and make appropriate revisions. Every six years, a SEP conducts an in-depth self-study to examine overall progress accomplished since the last self-study and the effectiveness of its current program based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria in relation to student achievement. This results in a written summary of findings supported by evidence and the development of an updated SEP action plan for the next three to five years. The completed report is sent to the visiting committee member(s) for careful study no later than six weeks prior to the visit. Using the results of the visit, the SEP modifies and implements its action plan and so continues the cycle of improvement.

ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

The ACS WASC six-year cycle demonstrates the ongoing improvement cycle.



ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

Year Six — Past Cycle: Completion of self-study/visit/refinement of SEP action plan

New Cycle

Year One: Profile update, progress report, refinement of SEP action plan

Year Two: Profile update, progress report, refinement of SEP action plan

Year Three: Profile update, mid-cycle progress report (potential one- or two-day review), refinement of SEP action plan

Year Four: Profile update, progress report, refinement of SEP action plan

Year Five: Review of all profile data, progress report, self-study process, refinement of SEP action plan

Year Six: Completion of self-study, including refinement of SEP action plan; full self-study visit, including further revision of SEP action plan after the review of visiting committee report.

Accreditation Principles

The ACS WASC accreditation principles, embedded within the Focus on Learning (FOL) process and reflected in the ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality, enable a SEP to demonstrate:

1. Accomplishment of its vision, mission, and learner outcomes
2. High achievement of all students in relation to learner outcomes and academic standards
3. Use of multiple ways to analyze data about student achievement, including student and staff perceptions/interviews, examining student work, and observing students engaged in learning
4. Evaluation of the program effectiveness in relation to 1) impact on student learning based on learner outcomes, critical learner needs, and academic standards; and 2) meeting an acceptable level of quality in accordance with the ACS WASC SEP criteria
5. Alignment of prioritized findings to a SEP action plan focusing on student achievement
6. Ongoing improvement/accountability
7. Total involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders.

Importance of the Vision, Mission, and Learner Outcomes

An essential element of systemic SEP improvement is the collective vision on the part of the SEP's stakeholders for all students: what all students should know, understand, and be able to do to be globally competent citizens. What are the current and future learning needs of the students? What does it mean to be an educated person? What is the most effective preparation of students for their future? The learner outcomes should include the identified critical learner needs of the students.

This vision and mission provide the SEP's foundation for establishing learner outcomes and academic standards which drive the instructional program and the support operations of the SEP.

Importance of the Academic Standards

Academic standards define the concepts, skills, and knowledge that students should know and be able to do in each curricular area, the level at which students are expected to demonstrate this knowledge, and grade-level expectations for performance. In a standards-based educational system, SEPs determine the benchmarks for student work that meet these standards, provide appropriate instruction, and use multiple assessment measures to identify the level of achievement for all students. This approach assists the SEPs in defining the quality accomplishment of the complementary learner outcomes and the degree to which all students are achieving them.

Criteria

The ACS WASC SEP criteria are research-based guidelines for improvement that focus on student achievement of the learner outcomes and academic standards. A SEP will examine all aspects of its program against these four categories:

A. Organization for Student Learning
B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
D. Resource Management and Development

Importance of Data Analysis

The self-study revolves around an in-depth gathering of data and information that will enable a SEP to take a careful and penetrating look at the following:

1. Identified critical learner needs
2. Related learner outcomes
3. Academic standards
4. Effectiveness of the program and operations based on ACS WASC SEP criteria and its impact on student learning.

Examples of strategies which will be used for this review are the examination of student work; observing students engaged in learning; interviewing students about what they are learning; reviewing group test data; and analyzing feedback from the Leadership Team, teachers, parents, graduates, and the community.

Outcomes of the Self-Study

The *Focus on Learning* self-study process is organized to support ongoing improvement efforts. The Leadership Team will facilitate the engagement of all the SEP staff and other stakeholders in a self-study through subject area, support, parent, and student Home Groups and interdisciplinary Focus Groups. Through completing the self-study the SEP will have accomplished:

1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement
2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through learner outcomes and academic standards
3. The analysis of data about students and student achievement
4. The assessment of the entire program and its impact on student learning in relation to the learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
5. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the SEP's areas of need; the capacity to implement and monitor the accomplishment of the plan.

Flexibility

As long as the SEP adheres to the *outcomes*, there is flexibility in the self-study process. For your assistance, a model is provided. If the SEP adapts the model to accommodate a particular community, it should explain how the *outcomes* listed above have been met in the self-study report preface.

Focus on Learning Self-Study Process

The *Focus on Learning* process is the work of the SEP community and will depend upon the organizational structure of the SEP. The expectation is that all stakeholders are involved and collaborate on the self-study. The SEP may organize the stakeholders into three types of groups or may be a *Committee of the Whole*:

1. Leadership Team
2. Home Groups (stakeholder groups organized by roles/responsibilities)
3. Focus Groups (interdisciplinary groups of stakeholders).

Within the Home Groups, participants analyze student data and achievement in relation to the academic standards, the learner outcomes and quality of the SEP program based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria. The Home Groups will share the results within the Focus Groups.

Within the Focus Groups, participants will analyze student results to decide what is most important to change in order to substantively improve student learning. The work of each Focus Group is organized around all or portions of the four categories of criteria with emphasis upon the identified critical learner needs and related learner outcomes. For instance, within a Focus Group concentrating on culture and student support and the critical learner need of reading (e.g., effective communicator, the learner outcome) participants will examine the extent to which the culture and student support contribute to students' high achievement, especially in the area of improved reading.

Each Focus Group must answer the question: What are the implications of each critical learner need and the related SEP learner outcome for this Focus Group?

Note: If the SEP is small, a Committee of the Whole conducts the analysis of data in relation to the academic standards, the critical learner needs, the learner outcomes, and the quality of the program based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria.

The specific tasks of the self-study focus on evaluating the SEP against the criteria and assessing the degree to which all students are achieving the learner outcomes. These tasks are given below:

Task 1: Provide a student/community profile based on analyzed and disaggregated data; clarify the vision, mission and learner outcomes.

Task 2: Summarize the implications of the student/community profile data. Identify two to three critical learner needs; determine important related questions for Home/Focus Group or Committee of the Whole work.

Task 3: Summarize significant developments and progress since initial visit or previous self-study related to ongoing SEP improvement

Task 4: Evaluate the quality of the SEP program and operations in relation to the ACS WASC SEP criteria and iNACOL standards, if applicable, with emphasis on the identified critical

learner needs and related learner outcomes. Synthesize the findings, supported by evidence; show appropriate linkages of the findings to the identified critical learner needs and related learner outcomes. Identify strengths and growth areas for each criterion.

Task 5: Revise the SEP action plan in relation to identified strengths and growth areas. Establish a follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the SEP action plan.

Visit

After careful study of the SEP's report, a visiting committee spends one day at the SEP. The purpose of the visit is to provide an outside perspective from educators who are thoroughly familiar with the criteria used by the SEP.

The visiting committee gives insight to the SEP through dialogue with the Focus Groups and with the Home Groups (or the Committee of the Whole) about the self-study findings and by its own review of evidence and student work. The visiting committee and the Leadership Team and Focus Groups collaboratively compare findings. The resulting discussion and written results assist the SEP in refining the action plan with respect to the critical learner needs, the learner outcomes, the academic standards, and the ACS WASC SEP criteria.

Accreditation Status Factors

The Accrediting Commission for Schools grants accreditation based on the findings of the Visiting Committee. Accreditation factors have been developed by the Commission that reflect the overall aspects of the ongoing improvement process or accreditation. These factors have incorporated the five outcomes of the self-study process, the ACS WASC SEP criteria organized by categories, and important emphases already present within the ACS WASC SEP criteria. These factors are the following:

1. Involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study that accomplish the five outcomes of the self-study.
2. Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined learner outcomes, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.
3. *Organization for Student Learning* that supports high achievement for all students.
4. *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* that supports high achievement for all students.
5. *Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth* that supports high achievement for all students.
6. *Resource Management and Development* that supports high achievement for all students.
7. The alignment of a long-range SEP action plan to the SEP's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.
8. The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive improvement.
9. The capacity to implement and monitor the SEP action plan.

Follow-up

After the visit, the SEP refines and implements the SEP action plan for improvement. The SEP action plan integrates the critical areas for follow-up identified by the visiting committee. The SEP annually reviews progress, and refines the "next steps" in meeting the goals of the SEP action plan. This assessment of progress is always done with respect to evidence that students are accomplishing the learner outcomes and academic standards, especially in relation to the critical learner needs. The governing authority is involved in the ongoing improvement process and ensures that the follow-up process is integral.

ACS WASC SEP Criteria

Category A: Organization for Student Learning

A1. ACS WASC SEP Purpose Criterion: The SEP has a clear vision and mission that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution. The purpose is defined further by adopted SEP learner outcomes that form the basis of the educational program for every student.

A2. ACS WASC SEP Governance Criterion: The SEP governing authority (a) adopts policies which are consistent with the SEP purpose and support the achievement of the SEP learner outcomes, (b) delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff and (c) monitors results.

A3. ACS WASC SEP Leadership Criterion: The SEP leadership (1) makes decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the SEP on student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes, (2) empowers the staff and (3) encourages commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning.

A4. ACS WASC SEP Staff Criterion: The leadership and staff are qualified for their assigned responsibilities, are committed to the SEP's purpose and engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.

A5. ACS WASC SEP Environment Criterion: The SEP has a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the SEP's purpose and is characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student.

A6. ACS WASC SEP Improvement Process Criterion: The SEP leadership facilitates improvement which (a) is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students, (b) has SEP community support and involvement, including a governing authority, (c) effectively guides the work of the SEP, and (d) provides for accountability through monitoring of the SEP action plan.

Category B: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

B1. ACS WASC SEP What Students Learn Criterion: The SEP provides a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the SEP's purpose and results in student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes through successful completion of any course of study offered.

B2. ACS WASC SEP How Students Learn Criterion: 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 SEP's purpose and SEP's learner outcomes.

B3. ACS WASC SEP How Assessment is Used Criterion: 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 SEP learner outcomes and academic standards, (b) regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instructional approaches, and (c) allocation of resources.

Reporting Student Progress Criterion: The SEP leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the SEP's learner outcomes and reports students' progress to the SEP community.

Category C: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

C1. ACS WASC SEP Student Connectedness Criterion: Students are connected to a system of support services, activities and opportunities at the SEP and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular and co-curricular program in order to achieve the SEP learner outcomes.

C2. ACS WASC SEP Parent/Community Involvement Criterion: The SEP leadership employs a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the SEP's established support system for students as applicable.

Category D: Resource Management and Development

D1. ACS WASC SEP Resources Criterion: The resources available to the SEP are sufficient to sustain the SEP program and are effectively used to carry out the SEP's purpose and student achievement of the SEP's learner outcomes.

D2. ACS WASC SEP Resource Planning Criterion: The governing authority and the SEP execute responsible resource planning for the future.

The Self-Study:
Background Information

SEP Self-Study Coordinator
Self-Study Report Preparation Checklist

- **Establish timelines and support mechanisms**
- **Provide orientation for staff and stakeholders**
- **Form Leadership Team and other groups**

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1. **After participating in the first ACS WASC self-study training session, establish (a) a general calendar for the major self-study events and (b) a more detailed timeline of specific committee meetings and tasks to be accomplished.**

2. **Establish support mechanisms such as leadership understanding and assistance, professional time for staff member(s), financial resources, and clerical/technical help.**

3. **Establish a process for ongoing communication with staff about the accreditation process and cycle of quality. Initially orient staff and other stakeholders.**

   This orientation should include:

   a. An explanation of the ACS WASC SEP accreditation process along with its benefits to the SEP community
   b. An overview of the *Focus on Learning* self-study process
   c. The interrelationship between learner outcomes and academic standards
   d. The understanding of the ACS WASC SEP criteria
   e. The importance of using data and the self-study findings (1) to raise the urgency for system change; (2) to recommit to a vision of high academic achievement for all students; and (3) to investigate further the causes, barriers, impediments, challenges, remedies, and solutions to maximize student achievement and learning
   f. The importance of the ongoing improvement process for successful student learning
   g. The nature and purpose of the visiting committee
   h. Accreditation status determination.

   The ongoing communication with staff should provide opportunities for sharing updated findings from the profile analyses, discussion about the implications of the data and identification of the critical learner needs and their relationship to the learner outcomes, strategies to gather and analyze evidence related to student learning and the ACS WASC SEP criteria, review of the findings from all Focus Groups, and input on refining the SEP action plan.

4. **Establish the Leadership Team, Data/Profile Group, Home and Programwide Focus Groups or a Committee of the Whole.**

   ➔ **Note**: Each Focus Group (or Committee of the Whole) usually concentrates on one criteria category and examines the effectiveness of that part of the SEP program; this analysis is also done in relation to two to three identified critical learner needs, related learner outcomes and academic standards that the Leadership Team selected based on student achievement data.

5. Prepare self-study materials. (These can be distributed electronically.)

Suggested information for the self-study packets include: the overview, ACS WASC SEP criteria, general and specific timelines, committee structures and membership, self-study report format, and self-study tasks. *Add to the materials: the student/community profile, the summary of the profile and progress data, and the progress report (Chapters I–III).*

6. Have available pertinent information for the self-study. This information will be used by the student/community profile committee, the Focus Groups, and the Home Groups.

7. **Train Leadership Team and Focus/Home Group leaders in roles and responsibilities, including strategies in group dynamics and data analysis.**

Training should emphasize:

A review of the basic purpose of the self-study, visit, and follow-up: an improvement process

The *outcomes* of the self-study

The importance of verification: in-depth gathering and analysis of evidence

The suggested tasks of the model self-study or the SEP's modifications

The extreme importance of all committee member(s) understanding the use of the learner outcomes, academic standards, standardized testing and reporting and local assessment data, and assigned criteria

The role of the Focus Group chair as:

1) Group facilitators of committee discussions and syntheses
2) Coordinators for gathering of evidence, especially analysis of student work and observations of students working

g. The essential participation in regular meetings to review progress of the self-study.

➔ **Note**: The self-study coordinator and leadership should work with the Leadership Team to clarify its purpose and to develop group norms.

Additional Coordinator Checklists

- The **Self-Study Coordinator Visit Preparation Checklist** can be found on page 61.
- The **Self-Study Coordinator Post-Visit Checklist** can be found on page 107.

Model Timeline: Flow of Activities
— Year Prior to Self-Study —

November–March Activities	Participants	Product in Self-Study
Task 1: • Provide a student/community profile, based on analyzed and disaggregated data. • Clarify the vision, mission and learner outcomes.	– Leadership Team and/or Student Profile Committee – All Stakeholders	Chapter I: Student/Community Profile
Task 2: Summarize the implications of the student/community profile data. Identify two to three critical learner needs; determine important related questions for Home/Focus Group work or Committee of the Whole	– Leadership – Faculty	Chapter II — Student/Community Profile summary
Task 3: Summarize significant developments and progress since initial visit or the previous full self-study related to ongoing SEP improvement.	– Leadership Team	Chapter III: Summary of Significant Developments and Progress
March–June and September–December Activities		
Task 4: • Evaluate the quality of the SEP program and operations in relation to the ACS WASC SEP criteria and iNACOL standards, if applicable, with emphasis on the identified critical learner needs and related learner outcomes. • Synthesize the findings, determine strengths and growth areas.	– Focus Groups, or the Committee of the Whole – Home Groups, or the Committee of the Whole	Chapter IV: Self-Study Findings • Self-Study Report, Chapter IV, "Self-Study Findings" • Pertinent evidence available for review by visiting committee • Strengths and Growth Areas
Task 5: • Revise the SEP action plan in relation to identified strengths and growth areas. • Establish an ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the SEP action plan.	– Leadership Team – All Stakeholders	• Self-Study Report, Chapter V, "SEP Action Plan"
February–March — Ongoing Activities		
• The visit	– SEP/Visiting Committee	VC report
• By June 1, submit an updated SEP action plan to ACS WASC incorporating critical areas of follow-up left by visiting committee.	– SEP	Updated SEP action plan
• Implement and monitor the SEP action plan and its impact on student learning.	– SEP	Ongoing progress reports for SEP

SEP Self-Study Report Format

Preface: Explain the self-evaluation process, i.e., timeline, stakeholder involvement, any modifications of the suggested structure.

Chapter I: Student/community profile that includes the following:

- Vision, mission, learner outcomes
- Demographic data, including the refined learner outcomes
- Disaggregated and interpreted student outcome data
- Perception data summaries, if any.

Chapter II: Summary of the student/community profile data

- Implications of the data related to student achievement
- Identification of two to three critical learner needs related to learner outcomes
- Important related questions for Home/Focus Group or Committee of the Whole work.

Chapter III: Summary of significant developments and progress since initial visit or previous self-study related to ongoing SEP improvement

Chapter IV: Brief analytical summary of findings and evidence for each criterion/indicators to denote what currently exists and the effectiveness in relation to student learning and well-being.

- List of strengths and growth areas for each criteria category.

Chapter V: Revision of the SEP action plan, based on the identified strengths and growth areas.

SEP Groups: Probable Players

Careful thought should be given to the formation of the committees. To conduct a meaningful self-study, the SEP is expected to involve the total staff. In the model process this can be accomplished by establishing the suggested committees; however, these may be adapted to fit local conditions.

➔ **Note**: *Smaller SEPs may find that using a "Committee of the Whole" will be more effective in assessing the program for students.*

Below are the stated responsibilities and potential membership of committees for the model self-study process.

Leadership Team

Responsibilities:

- Facilitate the review and refinement of the vision, mission, and learner outcomes
- Facilitate the entire analytical self-study process, including the data analysis and identification of the critical learning needs
- Create and continually refine the SEP action plan using findings of the Focus Groups
- Coordinate the follow-up process to monitor the implementation and the accomplishment of the action plan that has integrated all initiatives.

Member(s) of the Leadership Team (suggested membership based on the size of the SEP):

- Self-study coordinator
- SEP leader
- Chairs of Focus Groups (faculty representing all disciplines)
- Chair of non-certificated staff groups (and others)
- Chair of student committee (and others)
- Chair of parent committee (and others)
- Representative(s) of advisory committees
- Other key stakeholders, e.g., business/industry partners, representative community organizations.

Student/Community Profile Committee

Responsibility:

- Development/refinement of student/community profile.

Member(s) of the committee (suggested membership based on the size of the SEP)

- Leadership
- Certificated staff
- Students
- Parents
- Focus Groups

Responsibilities:

- Synthesis of all data about student learning and the criteria categories
- Determination of growth needs
- A Focus Group is composed of a representative cross-section of staff member(s) from the various disciplines or grade levels and other stakeholders; the suggested size of a group is 12 to 15, usually a Focus Group oversees one category of criteria

Member(s) of the Focus Groups:

- Administrator
- Faculty member(s) from each subject area, grade level, or programs
- Non-certificated staff
- Students
- Parents/Community member(s).

Types of Home Groups, if applicable

Home groups can be organized by subject, grade level, programs, support roles, professional learning committees, data teams, etc. Some SEPs may find it helpful to use these groups rather than create a new group. However they are constructed, Home Groups provide key evidence to bring forward to the Focus Groups.

Responsibilities:

- Study and understand the student community profile
- Participate in the development of descriptors for the learner outcomes
- Understand the concepts of the ACS WASC SEP criteria
- Gather and analyze what is being taught and learned with respect to student learning needs, selected learner outcomes, academic standards, other curricular references, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
- Provide results of this analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership Team on the SEP action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth areas.

Member(s) of the Home Groups:

- All certificated personnel in a given subject area or grade level
- Non-certificated staff.

➔ **Note**: SEPs with a smaller number of students may have only one teacher per subject area, or only a few individuals providing all support services. In these cases, Home Group discussions may occur in formats different from those described above, as long as the impact on students of each subject area and each support function is discussed. The SEP may have a *"Committee of the Whole."*

Home Groups: Student Group

Responsibility:

- Analyze the SEP's programs from a student perspective with respect to student learning needs, selected learner outcomes, and ACS WASC SEP criteria.

Member(s) of the student group:

- Representative students enrolled in the SEP.

Home Groups: Parent Group

Responsibility:

- Analyze the SEP's programs from a parent/community perspective with respect to student learning needs, selected learner outcomes, and ACS WASC SEP criteria.

Member(s) of the parent group:

- Parents reflecting the diversity of the students enrolled in the SEP
- One or more non-parent representative of the community
- One faculty member.

The Self-Study

Task 1: Provide a student/community profile based on the analyzed and disaggregated data; clarify the vision, mission and learner outcomes

➔ **Note**: The purpose of this profile is to provide a source of basic data that can be used for other processes.

Product

- **Task 1**: Self-Study Report: Chapter I: **"**Student/Community Profile — Data and Findings"

  Provide findings, noting trends, irregular patterns or anomalies for the data, including longitudinal and disaggregated data (see profile guide)
  - Demographic data
  - Student performance data
  - Perception data.

Appendices:

A. Results of student questionnaire/interviews
B. Results of parent/community questionnaire/interviews
C. Additional details of the program
D. Any pertinent additional data (or have on exhibit during the visit)
E. Budgetary information, including budget pages from the SEP action plan
F. Glossary of terms unique to the program.

Participants

- Leadership Team and/or Student Profile Committee
- All stakeholders (suggestion: use Home Groups, Focus Groups, or total staff).

Procedures

1. Leadership Team and/or Student Profile Committee:
   a. Review the student/community profile guide and the current student/community profile. (See the guide on the following pages.)

      The student/community profile should include *demographic data*, describing the SEP, its students, and staff and performance and *outcome data*, describing the students' achievements. A summary of information or *perceptions* collected about how stakeholders view the SEP may also be included.
   b. Gather the needed additional demographic and student performance data.
   c. Present data through the use of appropriate charts, tables, and graphs.
   d. Disaggregate, as appropriate, interpret and analyze the data.
   e. Provide ***findings***, noting trends, irregular patterns or anomalies for the data, including longitudinal and disaggregated data. Include any student and/or parent survey data.
   f. Include data about one or two learner outcomes, at a minimum.

2. Leadership Team and/or Student Profile Committee:

   Review the core values and beliefs, the vision, the mission and existing learner outcomes. Use the profile data and discuss the critical learner needs, future challenges, and needed competencies.

   - What are the current and future learning needs of the students?
   - What does it mean to be an educated person?
   - What is the most effective preparation of students for their future?

   Include the learner outcomes in the profile with pertinent comments about modifications.

   Refine the learner outcomes and indicators as needed. Include the learner outcomes and any pertinent comments in the profile. (**Note**: New SEPs should describe the process used to determine or clarify these.)

3. Leadership Team and Student Profile Committee

   Prepare a draft overall summary of what these data sources tell about student achievement and the SEP community. This will be uploaded after the dialogue with all certificated staff and other stakeholders to prepare the summary (Task 2).

- What are the implications of the data with respect to student performance?
- Select two to three critical learner needs based on the data, noting the correlated learner outcomes.
- List important questions that have been raised by the analysis of the student performance and demographic data.

➔ **Note**: The identified critical learner needs and important questions will be used in the Home and Focus Group work.

Self-Check Questions

- Has the Leadership Team gathered and analyzed all required and other pertinent data to identify the characteristics and trends of achievement of ALL the students?
- Has the Leadership Team produced a user-friendly profile for all stakeholders?
- Have the certificated staff member(s) and other stakeholders scheduled a time for discussion of the profile? See Task 2.
- Has the Leadership Team involved the stakeholders in a review of the current vision, mission, and learner outcomes in relation to the current learner needs and future challenges for the students in order to be globally competent?
- Have the stakeholders refined the measurable indicators of the learner outcomes that define their quality accomplishment?
- Do the stakeholders understand how to use the profile data, including the vision, mission, and learner outcomes, to guide further inquiry about student achievement and the SEP programs?

ACS WASC SEP STUDENT/COMMUNITY PROFILE GUIDE

➔ **Note**: In the Appendix, include the copies of any surveys used and summaries of results, additional information about specialized programs, and the budget pages. Other information may also be included such as the glossary of terms unique to the program.

Brief overview of the SEP:

- The city, community in which the SEP is located, including parent population, nationality, etc.
- When the SEP was founded and by whom
- Location(s) of the SEP and any location changes
- Note whether the SEP teaches core classes, offers tutoring services only, and/or provides online options for students
- Enrollment by grade level.

Provide demographic information and findings regarding the students:

- Grade level distribution
- Gender
- Ethnicity or nationality
- Predominate primary languages other than English
- Number of English language learners, if applicable to the instructional focus of the SEP or may be all students
- Special populations
- Mobility of students
- Percentage of those enrolled that complete their course of study within the expected parameters (Provide statistics for each program that you offer)
- Student admissions data for the past three years.

Provide analyzed and interpreted student achievement data, including subpopulations, if applicable. Include the following (use charts, graphs, or tables as much as possible):

- Three years of all achievement data and comparative national data, if available
- English Language Proficiency Results, if applicable
- Test results during the admissions process based on grade and age levels, if applicable
- Provide student follow-up data, such as pre- and post-test results.

Administrative and Teaching/Support Staff

Provide a table or chart of administrators and teachers and include the following: ethnicity and gender, title/position; percent of employment; certification/credential; degree/major; subject areas or courses teaching at SEP, if applicable, and attrition rates.

- Comment on any teacher not teaching in their areas of major or minor preparation and specify the related preparation interest, experience, or ability qualifying them to teach in the areas assigned
- Verification of a criminal background check on file for each employee

- List the professional development training provided for teachers and other staff member(s); in addition, comment on staff member(s) pursuing addition formal education or degrees.

Community Connections

- List the educational institutions or organizations with which the SEP has a productive working relationship or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Briefly describe the relationship.
- Explain how the SEP follows up on students who have completed its courses/programs? What are the results, and how is this information utilized?
- Explain how the SEP uses a representative group of its stakeholders (parents, students, faculty members) in an advisory basis (informally or formally). Briefly describe.

Task 2: Summarize the student/community profile

Product

- Task 2: Self-Study Report: Chapter II: "Student/Community Profile — Overall Summary from Analysis of Profile Data"
  1. What are the implications of the profile data with respect to student performance since the prior self-study (or initial visit)?
  2. Based on past performance and current data, select two to three critical learner needs, noting the correlated learner outcomes.
  3. What are the 3–4 important related questions for Home/Focus Group or Committee of the whole work?

Participants

- Leadership Team and/or Student Profile Committee
- All Stakeholders (suggestion: use Home Groups, Focus Groups, or total staff).

Procedures

1. Leadership Team:
   a. Disseminate the draft profile report (Chapter I) to all certificated staff and other stakeholders; hold group discussions based on the learner outcomes, and current knowledge about critical learner needs.

      Use the following questions:

      - Who are the students?
      - How are they performing?
      - Who's achieving? Who's not achieving?
      - What has been accomplished? What is in progress?

   b. Have the staff and other stakeholders generate from the discussion their overall implications and critical learner needs. This will be an important verification of the draft work done by the Leadership Team on these areas.
   c. Determine if there is agreement on the identified critical learner needs and important questions. Are there additions? (**Note**: These critical learner needs and questions will be addressed through the Home and Programwide Focus Group dialogue.)
   d. Use the implications and critical learner needs identified by the staff and additional Leadership Committee notes to finalize the summary.
   e. Determine if there needs to be any further modification of the learner outcomes in relation to inclusion of the critical learner needs. Make appropriate modifications and include those in Chapter I, the Student/Community Profile.

   ➔ **Note**: The identified critical learner needs will be used in the Home and Focus Group or Committee of the Whole work.

2. Leadership Team: Finalize and distribute the profile and summary (Chapters I–II) to all stakeholders for use throughout the self-study process and include in the self-study report.

➔ **Note**: The Focus and Home Groups or the Committee of the Whole will use the profile and especially the summary data related to the identified critical learner needs and important questions. The profile and summary will be updated as additional data becomes available throughout the self-study process.

Self-Check Questions

- Have the certificated staff member(s) and other stakeholders discussed the profile and progress since the last full self-study or initial visit?
- Has the program obtained input from all member(s) of the SEP community as the implications and identification of the critical learner needs are determined based on the data and progress?
- Has there been discussion of the relationship of the 2–3 critical learner needs to the learner outcomes and descriptors?
- Is there commitment to accomplishing the SEP's vision, mission, and learner outcomes (including critical learner needs) from all certified staff, all students, and other stakeholder groups?
- Have the 3–4 important questions been determined that will be discussed within the Home/Focus groups?
- Do the stakeholders understand how to use the profile to guide further inquiry about student achievement and the SEP programs?

Task 3: Summarize significant developments and progress since initial visit or the previous full self-study related to ongoing SEP improvement

Product

- Self-Study Report: Chapter III: "Progress Report"

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

➔ **Note**: Have available for review by the visiting committee prior progress reports and earlier (annual) versions of the SEP action plan.

Participants

- Leadership Team
- All Stakeholders.

Procedures

1. **Significant Developments**: Describe any significant developments that have had a major impact on the SEP and/or specific curricular programs since the last full visit.
2. **SEP Critical Areas for Follow-up**: List the critical areas for follow-up from the visiting committee report for the prior full visit and any recommendations from subsequent visits/reports such as initial visits.
3. **Ongoing Follow-up Process**: Comment on the process for implementing and monitoring.

   Comment on how the student/community profile and the annual progress reports, including the ACS WASC mid-cycle (third year) report, have been reviewed and discussed annually by all stakeholders as part of the ongoing improvement focusing on student learning.
4. **Progress, Evidence, Impact on Student Learning for SEP Action Plan Sections or Goals**:
   a. For each current SEP action plan goal or section, indicate how it relates to one or more of the critical areas for follow-up or any additional recommendations. (i.e., cross-reference).
   b. Comment on the accomplishment of each current SEP action plan section or goal, including how each area has met identified growth targets and contributed to the accomplishment of the critical learner needs and one or more learner outcomes for all students. Include:
      - How was the goal determined?
      - What impact has the goal had on student learning?
      - To what extent have the SEP action plan growth targets been met over the past years?
   c. Cite evidence; reference the student performance data as appropriate.

5. **Critical Areas for Follow-up not currently in the SEP Action Plan**: Comment separately on the critical areas for follow-up that have already been addressed and are currently not in the plan. In addition, comment on those "just do its" or isolated critical areas for follow-up that were not included in the ongoing SEP action plan. Comment on the impact of these critical areas for follow-up on student learning. Cite evidence.

Self-Check Questions

- Did the SEP show how the programwide critical areas of follow-up and recommendations identified by visiting committees since the last full self-study were integrated into the SEP action plan?
- Did the SEP address each section of the SEP action plan?
- Did the progress report include data that indicates whether staff and students met established growth targets?
- Does the report show how each section impacted student accomplishment of the critical learner needs and one or more learner outcomes?
- Did the SEP show how other critical areas of follow-up were addressed that were not part of the SEP action plan?

Task 4: Evaluate the quality of the SEP program and operations in relation to the ACS WASC SEP criteria and iNACOL standards, if applicable, with emphasis on the identified critical learner needs and related learner outcomes; synthesize the findings, determine strengths and growth areas

Product

- Self-Study Report
  Chapter IV: "Self-Study Findings"

For each category of criteria, prepare a brief analytical summary that includes:

1. Findings and supporting evidence for each of the criteria guide questions
2. A list of strengths
3. A list of prioritized growth areas.

➔ **Note**: The four criteria categories are:

A. Organization for Student Learning

B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

D. Resource Management and Development

Have available pertinent evidence for review by visiting committee. This includes samples of representative student work that have been analyzed.

Participants

- Leadership Team
- Focus Groups, or Committee of the Whole
- Home Groups, or Committee of the Whole

➔ **Note**: Over a period of months there will be meetings of Home and Focus Groups or the Committee of the Whole, the results of which are mutually shared with each other. Notes or summaries from Home Groups that included the analysis of student work based on the critical learner needs will be used by Focus Groups. Focus Groups are organized around the ACS WASC SEP criteria categories and concentrate on the analysis of the program, emphasizing the critical learner needs, related learner outcomes, and the important questions about students and learning.

Procedures

Note: The SEP may have a Committee of the Whole for these procedures.

1. **Programwide Focus Groups**:

   (**Note**: Ensure all stakeholders have discussed the Student/Community Profile and 2–3 critical learner needs.)

   Review and discuss all four categories of criteria in order to understand that these concepts are guidelines for systematic improvement. The focus is on student accomplishment of the learner outcomes and critical learner needs. These criteria will be used to evaluate the SEP program in relation to the SEP's vision, mission, learner outcomes, and critical learner needs.

   ➔ **Note**: Each Focus Group should use the indicators related to group's designated category and provide supporting evidence.

2. **Focus Groups**:

   a. Discuss in detail the criteria and indicators for the assigned criteria category and decide what is already known from experience at the SEP.
   b. Review the profile and progress report data and summary about the implications, critical learner needs, and important questions.
   c. Based on the criteria and indicators, decide **what data/information/evidence** is needed to determine what currently exists and **its effectiveness.**
   d. Review the list of areas to analyze and examine for each criterion to assist with this discussion.
   e. Particularly, decide what is needed from all the Home Groups.

   ➔ **Note**: Home Groups must conduct a programwide analysis of student work and student engagement in learning based on the identified critical learner needs and related learner outcomes. Written conclusions from this study must be summarized and shared with all Focus Groups, especially, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment and Accountability.

What have the Home Groups learned from examining student work related to the critical learner needs?

3. **Home Groups**:

   Gather and analyze the data and information that is needed by the Focus Groups, including examining of student, observing student engagement, conducting walkthroughs, and interviewing or surveying students.

4. **Home Groups**:

   Share findings with appropriate Programwide Focus Groups. (**Note**: This can be done through notes and evidence for the Focus Group representative from each Home Group and also through shared documents.)

5. **Focus Groups**:

   Discuss and analyze the Home Group information gathered and analyzed about the selected critical learner needs, related learner outcomes, and academic standards. Then

examine the SEP program in relation to the ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators assigned to the Focus Group. (**Note**: The Leadership Team can assist the Organization for Student Learning and Resource Management and Development Focus Groups with the following SEP criteria: A1, Purpose, A2, Governance, D1, Resources, and D2, Resource Planning.)

What do we know about the impact this part of the SEP's program and operation has on student learning?

6. **Focus Groups**:

   Decide what additional pertinent data is needed from the Home Groups and other sources to compare the program to the designated ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators, especially in relation to the identified critical learner needs, related learner outcomes, and academic standards.

7. **Home Groups**:

   All member(s) gather and analyze the additional requested information.

8. **Focus Groups**:

   a. Review all evidence about the designated ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators.

   b. Synthesize the information and data analyzed.

   c. Use the indicators to summarize the analytical findings and related evidence for the criteria and indicators, including what has been learned about the critical learner needs and important related questions.

   d. For the assigned criteria category, identify major areas of strength and prioritized growth areas that show a direct correlation with the written findings and supporting evidence.

Self-Check Questions

- Was the analysis of the SEP program done in relation to the accomplishment of the critical learner needs, the learner outcomes, academic standards, and the criteria concepts?
- Was the accuracy of the findings discussed and supported by evidence?
- Did discussion occur about how the findings relate to supporting the learning needs of all students?
- Were evaluative responses provided for all the criteria and indicators with supporting evidence? (How effective? What has been the impact on student learning?)
- Are strengths and prioritized areas for growth reasonable based on the aligned findings and evidence?

Task 5: Revise the SEP action plan in relation to identified strengths and growth areas; establish an ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the SEP action plan

➔ **Note**: The product is a revised SEP action plan based on the results of the self-study.

Product

- Self-Study Report
- Chapter V: "SEP Action Plan"

A. Revise the SEP action plan. For each section include the elements listed below:
   - Statement of area for improvement that is student-focused
   - Rationale for area based on self-study findings
   - Link to one or more critical learner needs and learner outcomes
   - Ways of assessing progress, including student achievement of the critical learner needs, learner outcomes, and academic standards
   - Means to monitor and report progress
   - Who is responsible and involved
   - Specific steps, including professional development
   - Timeline
   - Resources.

B. State any additional specific strategies to be used by staff within each subject area/support program to support sections of the SEP action plan.

   This includes activities in subject areas related to strengthening a standards-based approach in support of student achievement based on both academic standards and the learning results (optional).

C. Describe the SEP's overall follow-up process for ongoing improvement process.

➔ **Note**: **the SC submits the self-study report after final Leadership Team review.**

The SC distributes the report electronically to the following people/organizations no later than six weeks prior to the visit:

- **The visiting committee member(s)**
- **Staff member(s) and other stakeholders.**

In addition:

- **The SC submits the self-study report to ACS WASC in a single pdf or Word document (reference and support materials are not required) using the Document Upload link on the top navigation bar of the ACS WASC website: www.acswasc.org/document-upload/.**

Participants

Leadership Team
All Stakeholders via Home and Focus Groups.

Procedures

1. Review the Focus Group summaries.
2. Generate a table or matrix of all the strengths from each of the four categories and a second table for the prioritized growth areas from the four categories.
3. Use this list of strengths and prioritized growth areas from all four categories and cluster them into major themes or strands, including the relating of these to the critical learner needs.
4. Review the current SEP action plan and decide upon appropriate modifications based on the resulting themes emerging from the self-study.
5. Synthesize or incorporate the identified growth areas into meaningful action plan sections.
6. Review the current SEP action plan and decide upon appropriate modifications.
6. Ensure that the goals or areas for improvement are student-focused.
7. Ensure that growth targets have been established for each priority critical learner need and related learner outcome(s). These growth targets should address subgroups of students as appropriate.
8. Gather feedback, gain consensus, and ensure commitment of all groups.
9. Make any additional modifications. Revise the plan. Obtain all required approvals.
10. Establish process to monitor student learning based on the critical learner needs, the learner outcomes, academic standards, and progress on each SEP action plan section (i.e., annual progress report to all stakeholders, the governing authority, and advisory groups).
11. Provide an annual progress report to all stakeholders, SEP site council and/or advisory groups, and/or the governing authority. See "The Follow-up: Making Headway" section of this manual.

Self-Check Questions

- Is the SEP action plan organized around growth targets and benchmarks for all appropriate student subgroups?
- Do the SEP action plan sections address the learning needs of students as identified in the student/community profile?
- Has the SEP integrated other initiatives to create one single SEP action plan?
- Are resources dedicated to each growth target?
- Is there an effective process in place to integrate the visiting committee suggestions after the visit?
- Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the SEP action plan and modify as needed?

Formal action plans from each Home Group are not necessary; the critical emphasis is the consensus and commitment from all stakeholders in implementing the various sections of the SEP action plan.

Tools:
ACS WASC SEP Criteria with Indicators

ACS WASC Supplementary Education Program (SEP) Criteria

Category A:
Organization for Student Learning

A1. ACS WASC SEP Purpose Criterion: The SEP has a clear vision and mission that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution. The purpose is defined further by adopted SEP learner outcomes that form the basis of the educational program for every student.

> **Online Programs: iNACOL Standard A: Mission Statement**: The mission statement of a quality online program clearly conveys its purpose and goals. It serves as the basis for the program's day-to-day operations, as well as a guide for its strategic plans for the future. Communications between and buy-in from stakeholders is a critical component of a mission statement. [iNACOL Standard A, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Beliefs and Philosophy

Indicator: The degree to which the written mission and vision (purpose) reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the SEP and its constituency.

Purpose, SEP Learner Outcomes, and Profile Data

Indicator: The degree to which the student/community profile data has impacted the development of the SEP's vision and mission and SEP learner outcomes and identified future global competencies and current educational research.

Consistency of Purpose, SEP Learner Outcomes, and Program

Indicator: The degree of consistency between the SEP purpose, the SEP learner outcomes, and the SEP program.

Communication about Vision, Mission, and SEP Learner Outcomes

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP's means to publicize the vision, mission, and SEP learner outcomes to the students, parents and other member(s) of the SEP community.

Regular Review/Revision

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP's process for regular review/revision of the SEP purpose and the SEP learner outcomes based on current and future learner needs and other local/global trends/conditions.

Relationship of Admission Procedures to SEP Purpose

Indicator: The admissions policies and procedures correlate with the SEP's purpose to ensure the students enrolled will benefit from the program.

A2. ACS WASC SEP Governance Criterion: The SEP governing authority (a) adopts policies which are consistent with the SEP purpose and support the achievement of the SEP learner outcomes, (b) delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff and (c) monitors results.

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard B: Governance Statement: Governance is typically provided by a Board of Directors, an Advisory Board or an School Board. In a quality online program, governance and leadership work hand-in-hand, developing the operational policies for the program and its leadership and staff. [iNACOL Standard B, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Clear Policies and Procedures

Indicator: The clarity of policies and procedures with regard to the selection, composition and specific duties of the governing authority.

Relationship of Policies

Indicator: The degree to which governing authority's policies are directly connected to the SEP's vision, mission, and SEP learner outcomes and program. This includes the evaluation of policies related to online instruction in clarifying the vision for the SEP's use of various types of online curriculum, instruction and support methodologies; examples of policies include upgrading or updating technology, acceptable use policies, CIPA policies, and policies to ensure internet safety.

Involvement of Governing Authority

Indicator: The effectiveness of the governing authority's involvement in the regular review and refinement of the SEP's vision, mission and SEP learner outcomes. The governing authority uses a variety of strategies to remain current in research-based knowledge about effective SEPs.

SEP Community Understanding

Indicator: The degree to which the SEP community understands the governing authority's role.

Relationship to Professional Staff

Indicator: The extent to which there is clear understanding about the relationship between the governing authority and the responsibilities of the professional staff and how that understanding is developed and maintained. The extent to which the governing authority constrains its actions to policy making and strategic planning, while authorizing the administration to implement its decisions.

Governing Authority's Evaluation/Monitoring Procedures

Indicator: The degree to which there is clarity of the evaluation and monitoring procedures carried out by the governing authority, including the review of student performance, overall SEP programs and operations, and the fiscal health of the SEP.

Complaint and Conflict Resolution Procedures

Indicator: The effectiveness of the established governing authority/SEP's complaint and conflict resolution procedures as they apply to the SEP's stakeholders.

Evaluation Procedures

Indicator: The effectiveness of the evaluation procedures carried out by the governing authority.

Evaluation of Governing Authority

Indicator: The effectiveness of the process for evaluating the governing authority.

A3. ACS WASC SEP Leadership Criterion: The SEP leadership (1) makes decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the SEP on student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes, (2) empowers the staff and (3) encourages commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning.

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard C: Leadership: The leadership of a quality online program is accountable to the program's governance body, and is responsible for setting and meeting the operational and strategic goals in supports in support of the program's mission and vision statements. [iNACOL Standard C, 2009]

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard I: Integrity and Accountability: In a quality online program, leadership is transparent in its management of the program, providing regular and timely information on progress towards attainment of goals, alignment with policies and standards, and achievement of student learning outcomes. [iNACOL Standard I, 2009]

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard D: Planning: A quality online program makes planning, managed by the leadership and staff of the organization a regular part of the program. There are several types of planning activities, including strategic planning, long-range and operational planning, which identifies annual goals. Effective planning is not a one-time activity, but instead should provide opportunities for reflection on how to improve the organization's performance. [iNACOL Standard D, 2009]

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard F: Commitment: In a quality online program governance, leadership and staff are responsible for creating an organization that demonstrates a commitment to attaining the program's goals and mission statement. Everyone within the organization understands the mission statement and works to achieve it. [iNACOL Standard F, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Defined Responsibilities, Practices, etc.

Indicator: The clarity and degree of understanding by administration and faculty of the SEP's administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

Existing Structures

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP's existing structures for internal communication, planning and resolving differences.

Involvement of Staff

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP leadership's processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, collaborative structures and actions, and accountability to focus ongoing improvement on teaching and learning that supports student learning.

Evaluation of Existing Processes

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP leadership's regular review of the existing processes to determine the degree to which actions of the leadership and staff focus on successful student learning.

A4. ACS WASC SEP Staff Criterion: The SEP leadership and staff are qualified for their assigned responsibilities, are committed to the SEP's purpose and engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard E: Organizational Staffing: A quality online program recognizes appropriate levels of staffing are critical to the success of an online program. Staff should be well-trained in order to successfully meet their performance goals, and are provided with appropriate levels of support, resources, feedback and management. [iNACOL Standard C, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Employment Policies/Practices

Indicator: The clarity of SEP's employment policies/practices related to qualification requirements of current and potential staff for all programs, including online instruction.

Qualifications of Staff

Indicator: The effectiveness of the procedures to ensure all staff member(s) based on staff background, training, and preparation are qualified for their responsibilities to support student learning, including online instruction.

Maximum Use of Staff Expertise

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP's process to assign staff member(s) and provide appropriate orientation for all assignments, including online instruction, so that the expertise of the staff member(s) is maximized in relation to impact on quality student learning.

Defining and Understanding Practices/Relationships

Indicator: The degree to which the SEP has clear administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff that are understood by administration and faculty.

Support of Professional Development

Indicator: The extent to which the SEP effectively supports professional development/learning with time, personnel, material, and fiscal resources to facilitate all students achieving the academic standards and the SEP learner outcomes.

Supervision and Evaluation

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP's implementation of supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff, including for online professional staff the technological competencies and use of technology within the curriculum, and their fulfilling requirements for quality student-teacher interaction

Measurable Effect of Professional Development

Indicator: The effectiveness of the operating processes that determine the measurable effect of professional development, coaching, and mentoring on student performance.

A5. ACS WASC SEP Environment Criterion: The SEP has a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the SEP's purpose and is characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student.

> **Online Programs: iNACOL Standard P: Organizational Support**: A quality online program has organizational support to oversee the instructional learning environment as it is conveyed through technology. Some organizational support services may be distributed between the programs and other entities, depending on the physical location where the students are taking their online courses. [iNACOL Standard P, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Caring, Concern, High Expectations

Indicator: The extent to which the SEP demonstrates caring, concern, and high expectations for students in an environment that honors individual and cultural differences and is conducive to learning.

Student Self-Esteem

Indicator: The extent to which the SEP fosters student self-esteem through high expectations for each student and recognition of successes.

Mutual Respect and Communication

Indicator: The evidence that mutual respect and effective communication among and between staff, students, and parents exists.

Teacher Support and Encouragement

Indicator: The level of support and encouragement for teachers to use innovative approaches to enhance student learning.

Safe, Clean, and Orderly Environment

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP's existing policies, regulations and use of its resources to ensure a safe, clean and orderly place that nurtures learning, including internet safety.

A6. ACS WASC SEP Improvement Process Criterion: The SEP leadership facilitates improvement which (a) is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students, (b) has SEP community support and involvement, (c) effectively guides the work of the SEP, and (d) provides for accountability through monitoring of the SEP action plan.

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard S: Program Improvement: A quality online program establishes a culture of continual program improvement. Improvement planning focuses on using program evaluations, research, and promising practices to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. It fosters continuous improvement across all aspects of the organization and ensures the program is focused on accomplishing its mission and vision. [iNACOL Standard S, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Broad-Based and Collaborative

Indicator: The extent to which the SEP's planning process is broad-based, collaborative and has commitment of the stakeholders, including the staff, students, and parents.

SEP Plan Correlated to Student Learning

Indicator: The degree to which the SEP's action plan is directly correlated to the analysis of student achievement data about the critical student learner needs, SEP learner outcomes, and academic standards.

Systems Alignment

Indicator: The evidence that supports within the SEP there is alignment of systems in areas such as professional goals, teacher evaluation, and strategic planning for the purpose of ongoing SEP improvement.

Correlation between All Resources, SEP Learner Outcomes, and Plan

Indicator: The degree to which there is correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/personnel/material resources and the implementation, monitoring, and accomplishing of the SEP action plan.

Category B:
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

B1. ACS WASC SEP What Students Learn Criterion: The SEP provides a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the SEP's purpose and results in student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes through successful completion of any course of study offered.

> **Online Programs: iNACOL Standard J: Curriculum and Course Design**: A quality online program will have a well thought-out approach to its curriculum and course design whether it develops its own courses and/or licenses curriculum from other educational providers. [iNACOL Standard J, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Current Educational Research and Thinking

Indicator: The effectiveness of the use of current educational research and thinking, other relevant international/national/ community issues and the needs of all students to maintain a viable, meaningful instructional program for students.

Academic Standards for Each Area

Indicator: The extent to which the SEP provides a comprehensive and sequential documented curriculum that is articulated within and across grade levels for the improvement of programs, learning, and teaching. Include evaluation of courses where English is not the only language of instruction.

Congruence

Indicator: The extent to which there is congruence between the actual concepts and skills taught, the academic standards, and the SEP learner outcomes.

Student Work — Engagement in Learning

Indicator: The extent to which the examination of representative samples of student work and snapshots of student engagement in learning demonstrates the implementation of a standards-based curriculum and the SEP learner outcomes.

Accessibility of All Students to Curriculum

Indicator: The extent to which there is a rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum accessible to all students through all courses/programs offered. The extent to which SEP's instructional practices and other activities facilitate access and success for all students.

Acceptable Student Achievement

Indicator: The evidence that demonstrates acceptable student learning of the academic standards and the SEP learner outcomes through defined performance indicators.

Integration Among Disciplines

Indicator: The extent to which there is integration among disciplines at the SEP and, if applicable, integration of outsourced curriculum into the program for which curricular integrity, reliability and security is maintained.

Curricular Review, Revision, and Evaluation

Indicator: The effectiveness of the assessment of the SEP's curriculum review, evaluation, and review processes for each program area, including graduation requirements, credits, grading policies, and homework policy regarding the impact of these processes on providing a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum for all students.

Collaborative Work

Indicator: The extent to which administrators and teachers use various collaborative strategies to examine curriculum design and student work in order to refine lessons, units, and/or courses.

Policies — Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Curriculum

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP's assessment of the curriculum and its rigor, relevancy, and coherency after examination of policies regarding course completion, credits, grading policies, homework, use of technology, and the SEP's policy for outsourced curriculum to maintain curricular integrity, reliability, and security.

Articulation and Follow-up Studies

Indicator: The effectiveness of student follow-up studies that provide insight to the effectiveness of the instruction to prepare students for pursuing further education, entering the work force, or meeting their personal goals.

B2. ACS WASC SEP How Students Learn Criterion: 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 SEP's purpose and SEP learner outcomes.

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard H: Equity and Access: A quality online program's policies and practice support students' ability to access the program. Accommodations are available to meet a variety of student needs. [iNACOL Standard H, 2009]

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard K: Instruction: A quality online program takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent online teaching for its students. This process begins with promising practices but is equally committed to continuous improvement and adaptation to student learning needs through professional development. [iNACOL Standard K, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Research-based Knowledge

Indicator: The extent to which administrators and teachers use a variety of approaches to remain current in research-based professional knowledge and apply the knowledge to improve teaching and learning. This includes the level of teacher technology competency within the online instruction. All students regardless of background and ability are actively involved in the learning that is based on the SEP learner outcomes and academic standards.

Planning Processes

Indicator: The effectiveness of the planning processes, including the use of formative assessment results, focus on the engagement of all student activity at a high level of learning consistent with the academic standards and SEP learner outcomes.

Professional Collaboration

Indicator: The effectiveness of administrator and teacher use of various collaborative strategies to examine curricular design and student work to improve learning and teaching, including demonstrating critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge, and application. This would include examples of the selection of the instructional approaches based on the learning purpose(s) desired.

Professional Development

Indicator: The effectiveness of the use of ongoing professional development to enhance the curriculum and improve learning and teaching.

Challenging and Varied Instructional Strategies—Teacher Use

Indicator: The degree to which teachers strengthen student understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes through the use of a variety of instructional strategies, including multimedia, that are selected on the basis of the learning purpose(s) and effectively engage students at a high level of learning through direct instruction and other student-teacher interaction opportunities. This includes strategies where instruction may be in languages other than English.

Technological Integration

Indicator: The degree to which teachers systematically integrate technology within the SEP so that all students develop a wide range of technological skills.

Challenging Learning Experiences – Student Demonstration

Indicator: The extent to which students working and their work demonstrate critical and creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application skills, including the effectiveness of reviewing student work online and online communications to determine the degree to which students are analyzing, comprehending and conducting effective research.

Student Understanding of Learning Expectations

Indicator: The extent to which students know the standards/expected performance levels for each area of study.

Student Perceptions

Indicator: The extent to which interviews and dialogue with representative students inform the degree to which learning experiences are relevant in preparing students for college, career, and life.

Student Needs

Indicator: The degree to which teachers address student needs through the instructional approaches used, e.g. English language acquisition, remedial, enrichment, special education.

Student Use of Resources

Indicator: The extent to which students use resources for real world experiences and applications to support the learning beyond the limits of the textbook (e.g., collaborative activities, technology, library/media resources and community resources).

B3. ACS WASC SEP How Assessment is Used Criterion: 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 SEP learner outcomes and academic standards, (b) regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instructional approaches, and (c) allocation of resources.

Reporting Student Progress: The SEP leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the SEP's learner outcomes and reports students' progress to the SEP community.

> **Online Programs: iNACOL Standard L: Assessment of Student Performance**: A quality online learning program values student academic performance and takes a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring student achievement. This includes use of multiple assessment measures and strategies that align closely to both program and learner objectives, with timely, relevant feedback to all stakeholders. [iNACOL Standard L, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Appropriate Assessment Strategies

Indicator: The extent to which teachers regularly use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring understanding of a specific body of knowledge or skills, such as critical thinking and communication skills, English language proficiency; examples of assessment strategies include essays, portfolios, individual or group projects, tests, etc.

Basis for Determination of Performance Levels

Indicator: The impact and effectiveness of the basis upon which students' grades and their growth and performance levels are determined and use of that information to strengthen high achievement of all students.

Additional Online Instruction Indicators:

- The effectiveness for determining if a student is prepared to advance to the next unit, course, or grade level. Evaluate how course mastery is determined and evaluate the "steps" or "gates" that are in place to prevent students from proceeding to the next unit if mastery has not been demonstrated.
- The effectiveness of the procedures for grading student work whether it is done electronically or individually by the teachers.
- The effectiveness of teachers in ensuring academic integrity and determining that students are doing their own work in the online environment. The degree to which the results for assessments are used in decisions about student achievement and advancement and improving the instructional program.

Demonstration of Student Achievement-Monitoring Student Growth

Indicator: The effectiveness in processes to examine a range of examples of student work and other assessments to evaluate student achievement of the academic standards and the SEP learner outcomes, including those with special needs.

Correlation

Indicator: The degree to which teachers correlate assessment to SEP learner outcomes, academic standards, course competencies, and instructional approaches used.

Modification/Decisions based on Assessment Data

Indicator: The effectiveness of how assessment data, including data related to English language proficiency, is collected and analyzed and used to make changes and decisions about SEP curriculum, instruction, professional development activities, and resource allocation. The effectiveness of how teachers modify and revise the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment, both collectively and individually.

Student Feedback

Indicator: The extent to which student feedback is an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on the SEP learner outcomes and the curricular objectives.

Teacher Monitoring

Indicator: The effectiveness of the processes for teachers monitoring student progress over time and the use of student feedback as appropriate to determine whether course objectives and standards have been met.

Reporting Student Progress

Indicator: The effectiveness of the processes to keep the governing authority and parents informed about student progress toward achieving the academic standards and the SEP learner outcomes.

Category C:
Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

C1. ACS WASC SEP Student Connectedness Criterion: Students are connected to a system of support services, activities and opportunities at the SEP and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular and co-curricular program in order to achieve the SEP learner outcomes.

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard N: Students: A quality online program has student support services to address the various needs of students at different levels within the organization. The levels of support are appropriate and adequate for a student's success. [iNACOL Standard N, 2009]

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard O: Guidance Services: A quality online program has guidance services to support students and parents to ensure success of the online program. Depending on the program, these services are either directly provided by the program or a service provider, or in the case of supplemental programs, these services may be provided by the local school. [iNACOL Standard O, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Adequate Personalized Support

Indicator: The availability and adequacy of SEP services, including referral services, to support all students in such areas as health services, college preparation, career and personal counseling, and academic assistance.

SEP Support Systems

Indicator: The effectiveness of the level of SEP coordinated support services that provides for maximum effectiveness, including the processes for intervention and referral.

Strategies Used for Student Growth/Development.

Indicator: The effectiveness of strategies used by the SEP leadership and staff to develop personalized approaches to learning and alternative instructional options which allow access to and progress in the rigorous standards-based curriculum. Examples of strategies include: level of teacher involvement with all students, a curriculum that promotes inclusion, processes for regular review of student and SEP profiles, and processes and procedures for interventions that address orientation, monitoring, retention and redirection.

Support Services and Learning

Indicator: The extent to which SEP leadership and staff ensure that the support services and related activities have a direct relationship to student involvement in learning, e.g., within and outside the classroom or online environment for all students.

Co-Curricular Activities

Indicator: The extent to which SEP leadership and staff link curricular and co-curricular activities to the academic standards and SEP learner outcomes, including the needs of socialization for the students and involvement in the SEP.

Student Involvement in Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities

Indicator: The SEP has an effective process for regularly evaluating the level of student involvement in curricular/co-curricular activities and student use of support services, including within the online instructional environment as appropriate.

Student Perceptions

Indicator: The extent to which SEP is aware of the student view of student support services through such approaches as interviewing and dialoguing with student representatives of the SEP population.

C2. ACS WASC SEP Parent/Community Involvement Criterion: The SEP leadership employs a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the SEP's established support system for students as applicable.

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard Q: Parents/Guardians: In a quality online program, parents and guardians play an integral part in their students' educational life. They work as a team with faculty, administrators, guidance services, and organizational *support to ensure a quality educational experience for their students.* [iNACOL Standard Q, 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Regular Parent Involvement

Indicator: The effectiveness of strategies and processes for the regular involvement of parents and the community, including being active partners in the learning/teaching process for all programs. The SEP involves non-English speaking parents and/or online parents.

Use of Community Resources

Indicator: The effective use of community resources to support students such as professional services, business partnerships, speakers, etc.

Parent/Community and Student Achievement

Indicator: The adequacy and effectiveness of the SEP strategies to ensure that the parents and SEP community understand student achievement of the academic standards/SEP learner outcomes through the curricular/co-curricular program. This includes the understanding of the expectations for the online instruction by the parents in relation to the desired student achievement and the processes for review and counseling of families for whom the selected online instruction format may not be the best match.

Category D:
Resource Management and Development

D1. ACS WASC SEP Resources Criterion: The resources available to the SEP are sufficient to sustain the SEP program and are effectively used to carry out the SEP's purpose and student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes.

Online Programs: iNACOL Standard G: Financial and Material Resources: A quality online program has adequate financial and material resources to accomplish the mission of the organization. These resources are appropriately planned for and expended using sound business practices. [iNACOL Standard G 2009]

Evaluate the following:

Allocation Decisions

Indicator: The extent to which there is a relationship between the decisions about resource allocations, the SEP's vision, mission, and student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes and the academic standards. The SEP leadership and staff are involved in the resource allocation decisions.

Practices

Indicator: The effectiveness of the SEP's processes for development and implementation of an annual budget, an annual audit, and at all times quality business and accounting practices, including protections against mishandling of institutional funds.

Facilities

Indicator: The evidence that the SEP's facilities are adequate, safe, functional and well-maintained and support the SEP's mission, desired learner goals, and educational program.

Instructional Materials and Equipment

Indicator: The effectiveness of the policies and procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials and equipment, such as textbooks, other printed materials, audio-visual, support technology, manipulatives, and laboratory materials are effective.

Well-Qualified Staff

Indicator: The degree to which resources are available to enable the hiring, nurturing, and ongoing professional development of a well-qualified staff for all programs such as online instruction and college/career.

D2. ACS WASC SEP Resource Planning Criterion: The governing authority and the SEP leadership execute responsible resource planning for the future.

Evaluate the following:

Long-Range Resource Plan

Indicator: The effectiveness of the process for the development and implementation of a long-range resource plan. The effectiveness of the process for regular examination of this plan to ensure the continual availability of appropriate resources that support the SEP's vision, mission, and student learning of SEP learner outcomes and academic standards.

Use of Research and Information

Indicator: The extent to which the SEP uses research and information to form the master resource plan.

Involvement of Stakeholders

Indicator: The degree to which the stakeholders are involved in the future planning.

Informing

Indicator: The effectiveness that the governing authorities and SEP leaders are involved in informing the public and appropriate governmental authorities about the financial needs of the organization.

Marketing Strategies

Indicator: The effectiveness of the marketing strategies or business plans to support the implementation of the developmental program.

The Visit

SEP Self-Study Coordinator
Visit Preparation Checklist

- **Finalize schedule and visit arrangements**
- **Self-study report distributions**
- **Visiting committee report distributions**

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1. **Self-study coordinator (SC) and visiting committee chairperson communicate prior to visit.**

   Prior to the visit, the visiting committee chairperson will be in communication with the SC and leadership to answer questions and give assistance. The SEP leadership and the chairperson should establish a date for the chairperson to visit the SEP for a preliminary visit. During the previsit, the chair will become familiar with the SEP and the self-study progress, offer guidance in conducting the self-study, and begin to develop a detailed schedule for the visit. The chairperson will maintain regular communication with the SEP through additional visits, phone calls, faxes, and email. This includes critique of draft sections of the self-study report. (Refer to the "Visiting Committee Chairperson Checklist, Previsit Preparation.")

2. **SC makes lodging and other arrangements for the visiting committee.**

   The SC arranges lodging, if necessary, with prior approval and adequate work space for the visiting committee. There should be an area for exhibit materials that support the self-study in the work space or make it available online. Word processing, printing, copy services, technical, and clerical support should be made available to the visiting committee if needed.

   ➔ **Note**: SEPs directly reimburse visiting committee member(s) for expenses incurred during the previsit and the self-study visit. This includes meals, mileage, and other accreditation visit-related expenses. Lodging should be arranged and directly paid for by the SEP.

3. **After the self-study report is completed, copies are distributed to the appropriate people/organizations. The SC and visiting committee chairperson finalize the schedule for the visit.**

   Self-Check Questions

   Have copies of the Self-Study Report been sent to the appropriate recipients?

   The SC submits the Self-Study Report after final Leadership Team review. The SC ensures all appropriate people/organizations have a copy no later than six weeks prior to the visit:

   - The visiting committee member(s)
   - Staff member(s) and other stakeholders

- The SC submits the self-study report to ACS WASC in a single pdf or Word document (reference and support materials are not required) using the **Document Upload** link on the top navigation bar of the ACS WASC website: www.acswasc.org/document-upload/.

4. **During the month prior to the visit, the SC and the Leadership Team continue discussion of the implementation of the SEP action plan.**

   Staff member(s) and other stakeholders review the SEP action plan and the reports by the Focus Groups; they provide feedback to their committee chairpersons. Using this information, the Leadership Team continues to refine the SEP action plan. The Leadership Team will share these ideas with the visiting committee.

5. **SC completes preparation for the ACS WASC visit.**

   SC verifies all visiting committee visit arrangements: lodging, meals, technical and clerical support, word processing and/or copy services, map, master classroom schedule, parking facilities, name tags, etc. SC ensures the availability of exhibits in the workroom or makes them available online, including representative student work samples that have been analyzed.

Self-Check Questions

- **Have the visiting committee visit arrangements been made?**
- **Have any needed reimbursement issues been worked out?**

6. **During the visit, the stakeholders discuss specific issues of the self-study with the visiting committee.**

   The visiting committee will have extensive dialogue with the Focus Groups and the Leadership Team. Important to these sessions and the subject area/stakeholder meetings will be the visiting committee's examination and understanding of the information and evidence that supported the findings. Throughout the visit the visiting committee chairperson will regularly communicate with the Leadership Team and the self-study coordinator; the visiting committee will meet regularly with the Leadership Team regarding the visiting team's findings.

7. **The SC distributes copies of the final visiting committee report to all stakeholder groups.**

Self-Check Questions

Has the final visiting committee report and supporting evidence been sent to the appropriate recipients after the visit?

8. 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 a modified SEP action plan.

Self-Check Questions

Has the modified SEP action plan been sent to the appropriate recipients?

By June 1 (January 31 for fall visits), the SEP should send:

- An electronic copy of the **modified SEP action plan** to the ACS WASC Office in a single pdf or Word document using the Document Upload link on the top navigation bar of the ACS WASC website: www.acswasc.org/document-upload/.
- Copies to all stakeholder groups.

- The **Self-Study Coordinator Post-Visit Checklist** can be found on page 107.
- The **Coordinator Checklists** can be found on the ACS WASC website.

Visiting Committee Chairperson Checklist

Previsit Preparation

___1. Attend ACS WASC chair training.

___2. Study information about the SEP, the *ACS WASC SEP Focus on Learning* manual, and the accreditation status worksheet.

___3. Review the outcomes of the self-study:

1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement
2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through learner outcomes and academic standards
3. The analysis of data about students and student achievement
4. The assessment of the entire program and its impact on student learning in relation to the learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
5. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the SEP's areas of need; the capacity to implement and monitor the accomplishment of the SEP action plan.

___4. Review the ACS WASC SEP criteria, the criteria indicators, appropriate academic standards, and educational references.

___5. Work with the SEP and maintain regular communication with the Leadership Team and self-study coordinator (SC) to answer questions or give assistance.

___6. Understand the SEP's culture, vision, mission, and learner outcomes and review past reports, action plans, etc. Obtain current SEP action plan, prior pertinent reports, view website, etc. (Examples of reports include prior self-study and mid-cycle reports, revisit report, and corresponding visiting committee reports.)

___7. Discuss expense reimbursement procedures with the SEP and ask if there is any specific reimbursement expense form to be used. SEPs are responsible for reimbursing visit expenses directly to member(s).

___8. Arrange a preliminary previsit onsite or electronically. During the previsit, plan to meet with the SC, Leadership Team, and other staff member(s). Discuss the logistics of the visit.

___9. Communicate with the SEP about the following issues:

➔ **Note**: Begin critiquing draft sections of the self-study, e.g., the profile and the summary, learner outcomes, identified critical learner needs, and progress report, one or more Focus Group summaries, and draft of the updated SEP action plan. Ensure that the critical learner needs are addressed throughout the analysis of the SEP's program based on the criteria areas and found in the SEP action plan. Provide timely feedback.

a. The calendar/timeline for the self-study process
   - Has the timeline been developed so that the self-study will be ready to mail to the visiting committee no later than six weeks prior to the visit?
   - How has maximum time for Home and Focus Group meetings been allotted? Are the meetings well-spaced out throughout the self-study process?

b. Committee organization and member(s)hip

   ➔ **Note**: As long as the SEP adheres to the *outcomes*, there is flexibility in the self-study process. If the SEP modifies the suggested self-study process, it should explain how the outcomes have been met.
   - How is the Leadership Team taking an active role in facilitating the entire self-study process?
   - How is there active involvement of all certificated staff member(s), including administration, and strong representation of other stakeholder groups?
   - Are all certificated staff serving on two groups — a Home Group and a Focus Group or Committee of the Whole?
   - Has the SEP reflected upon the type of committee organization that will be most effective in the implementation of the SEP action plan? For example, has the SEP considered maintaining the Focus Groups after the visit to oversee the action plan sections?

c. Refinement and use of the student/community profile data
   - Has the Leadership Team gathered and analyzed all required and other pertinent data to identify the characteristics and trends of achievement of ALL the students?
   - How has the Leadership Team facilitated the discussion of the profile by all certificated staff member(s) and other stakeholders?
   - How are the stakeholders using the profile to guide the inquiry into the SEP programs, especially the identified critical learner needs and the related important questions noted in the profile summary?

d. Understanding the vision, mission, and learner outcomes
   - Has the Leadership Team involved the stakeholders in a review of the current vision, mission, and learner outcomes in relation to the current learner needs and future challenges for the students in order to be globally competent?
   - To what extent is there commitment to accomplishing the learner outcomes from all certificated staff, all students, and other stakeholder groups?
   - To what extent has the SEP developed measurable indicators of the learner outcomes and defined their quality accomplishment?
   - Do the stakeholders understand how to use the profile data, including the vision, mission, the critical learner needs, and learner outcomes, to guide further inquiry about student achievement and the SEP's programs?
   - Is there understanding of the complementary relationship of learner outcomes to academic standards?

e. Progress since the previous full self-study
   - Did the SEP show how all critical areas of follow-up identified by visiting committees since the last full self-study were integrated into the SEP action plan?
   - Did the SEP address each section of the SEP action plan?
   - Did the progress report include data that indicates whether SEP staff and students met established growth targets?
   - Does the report show how each section impacted student accomplishment of the critical learner needs and one or more learner outcomes?
   - Did the SEP show how other critical areas for follow-up were addressed that were not part of the SEP action plan?

f. Analysis and synthesis of the quality of the SEP program in relation to the learner outcomes, academic standards, and the ACS WASC SEP criteria
   - How are the Home and Focus Groups analyzing the SEP program in relation to the concepts of the criteria and the accomplishment of the learner outcomes?
   - What strategies are being used by the groups to ensure accuracy of the findings discussed?
   - To what extent is discussion occurring about how the findings relate to supporting the learning needs of all students?

g. Development of the SEP action plan and monitoring process. Action plan sections include:
   - Statement of the area for improvement
   - Rationale for area based on self-study findings
   - Impact on student learning of academic standards and learner outcomes
   - Who is responsible and involved
   - Specific steps
   - Timeline
   - Resources
   - Ways of assessing progress, including student achievement of the learner outcomes and academic standards
   - Means to report progress to all stakeholders.
   - Is the SEP action plan organized around growth targets and benchmarks for all appropriate student subgroups?
   - Do the SEP action plan sections address the learning needs of all students as identified in the student/community profile?
   - Has the SEP integrated other initiatives to create one single comprehensive action plan?
   - Are resources dedicated to each growth target?
   - Is there an effective process in place to integrate the visiting committee suggestions into the SEP action plan after the visit?

- Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the SEP action plan and modify as needed?

h. 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, i.e., in classrooms, the visiting committee workroom, and/or electronically?
   - Will the evidence reflect:
     - A linkage to learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
     - A linkage to identified critical learner needs, "identified growth areas," and SEP action plan sections
     - All students.
   - Will the visiting committee be provided a general list of available evidence?
   - What evidence will be available prior to the visit?

i. The visit schedule
   - How can the schedule maximize time for dialogue with the Focus Groups, the gathering and review of evidence (class and program observations, interviews, examination of student work), and meetings with subject area/support/other groups and individuals?
   - Does the schedule for the visit permit dialogue with the Leadership Team regarding preliminary findings, thereby building trust and rapport for ongoing communication and collaboration?
   - What would be effective strategies to use during the Leadership Team, Focus Group, and other meetings?

j. Visiting committee work space at the SEP site

k. Meeting room at the SEP for visiting committee meetings

l. Computer access and compatibility with the system that the chair will be using for draft report

m. Lodging and visit arrangements.

___10. Receive roster of visiting committee member(s); begin communication with member, if applicable.

a. Send the initial letter, including the SEP description, to the member(s) electronically; confirm the member(s)' desired contact information

b. Ask member(s) for their preferred areas of expertise and coverage during the visit

c. Remind member(s) that they are expected to participate in visiting committee training through site-based workshops or webinars.

___11. Continue to maintain contact with the SEP to determine:

a. If the SEP needs further direct assistance

d. Progress on the report

e. Progress on lodging, if preapproved, and other physical arrangements

➔ **Note**: Continue the critique of each section of the report, i.e., table of contents, student/community profile, learner outcomes, progress report, the draft Focus Group summaries, and the SEP action plan.

f. Appropriate technical and clerical support.

___12. Send the second letter to visiting committee member(s) electronically, if applicable:

a. Provide writing assignments

b. Ask the member(s) to review the criteria as the entire self-study report is analyzed

c. Ask for the comparison of the SEP's self-study findings to the concepts of the criteria, the critical learner needs, and the mission, vision, and learner outcomes

d. *Prior to the visit, require* the completion of the previsit preparation worksheets (Suggestion: use the Google Drive template)

e. Use the comments and questions to complete the drafts of Chapters I, II, III, and V

Prior to the visit, require written tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of the visiting committee report; ensure all work on the criteria sections include analytical comments about all related indicators

➔ **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. Some chairs use shared documents using Google Drive.

f. Assign member(s) to write preliminary statements for specified accreditation factors prior to the determination of the accreditation status ratings to ensure correlation with the findings in the visiting committee report

g. Provide the schedule for the visit.

___13. Maintain regular contact with SEP to check the following:

a. Progress of the report, continuing to critique sample report sections and action plan sections

b. Final date the SEP will complete and submit the self-study report

c. Preparation of reference/evidence materials for visit

d. Receipt of list of reference/evidence

e. Availability and knowledge of clerical and technical support.

___14. Make final contact with visiting committee member(s), if applicable:

a. Confirm receipt of the self-study
b. Offer assistance with the understanding of assigned tasks and prewriting
c. Remind member(s) to send questions and tentative writing
d. Offer additional assistance to special visiting committee member(s)
e. Confirm the initial meeting time
f. Remind member(s) to take cash/credit card for expenses that will be reimbursed after visit and to keep receipts of any such expenditures.

___15. Prepare the first draft of the visiting committee report correlated to the self-study report chapters. Ahead of time begin writing the following: Chapter I, summary of key information from the student/community profile; Chapter II, response to the SEP's progress report; Chapter III, brief comments on the self-study outcomes and Chapter V, ongoing improvement based on the SEP action plan; include all thoughts from the visiting committee member(s) for these sections and their drafts for Chapter IV, the SEP program based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators; have the tentative report ready for the initial orientation visiting committee meeting. **Note**: Using Google Drive can facilitate all member(s) being aware of the draft visiting committee report.

___16. Plan the orientation meeting for visiting committee member(s) prior to initial meeting at the SEP, if applicable. The meeting should cover:

a. The purpose of visit
b. Conducting the visit in an atmosphere of collaborative and open communication
c. Emphasis upon ACS WASC SEP criteria, the critical learner needs, and the learner outcomes and academic standards as the basis for the self-study and visit
d. Discussion of SEP direction(s) and where SEP is with respect to the refinement of learner outcomes and academic standards
e. Discussion of the self-study report: trends and perceptions based on the learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria (questions, concerns, and tentative written comments); type of verification needed
f. Discussion of ways to gather and review evidence with emphasis upon important areas to observe, ask about, or examine based on the self-study perceptions
g. Review of the initial meeting with the SEP staff and the overall schedule, including important strategies to use during the meetings
h. Modeling the collaborative development of questions for the Leadership Team meeting to ensure consensus of all visiting committee member(s)
i. Review of the accreditation status determination and the summary for the Commission
j. Reminder to the member(s) to keep expenses to a minimum.

The Visit: How Do We Know Students Are Learning? What is the Actual Program for Students?

___1. Conduct the orientation meeting for the visiting committee member(s), if applicable.
➔ **Note**: See the suggested agenda in number 16 above.

___2. Conduct an initial meeting with the SEP's Leadership Team that includes a reflective discussion on the general perceptions gleaned from the self-study report (planned jointly with the Leadership Team and SC prior to visit).

___3. Facilitate the visit; keep in mind the following:

a. Maintain a positive atmosphere
b. Keep to the task
c. Maintain open communication and collaboration at all times
d. Ensure that all visiting committee member(s) are active participants in the SEP committee meetings
e. Ensure that the gathering and review of evidence occurs throughout the SEP; this includes class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work and other data, subject area/support group meetings
f. Ensure that no area is overlooked
g. Assist the visiting committee member(s), if applicable
h. Ensure consensus on the critical questions for all groups based on overall visiting committee findings
i. Avoid issues related to SEP policies or negotiations not related to ACS WASC SEP criteria
j. Stress with the visiting committee to avoid prescription and "how we do it at our program" discussion
k. Lead all visiting committee discussions on the findings, relating them to the accomplishment of the learner outcomes and the ACS WASC SEP criteria
l. Coordinate the preparation of the visiting committee report.

___4. At all visiting committee meetings, facilitate the dialogue about the SEP's program and its impact on student learning in relation to the learner outcomes, academic standards, and the ACS WASC SEP criteria.

___5. Regularly communicate with the SEP Leadership Team about the visiting committee findings and their implications for refinement of the SEP action plan.

___6. At the final meeting with the Leadership Team, facilitate a thorough dialogue about the SEP action plan based upon the SEP and visiting committee findings in relation to the learner outcomes, academic standards, and the ACS WASC SEP criteria.

a. Ensure the Leadership Team has an opportunity to ask questions and clarify areas of the report
b. Ensure that the critical areas for follow-up include a "who," "what," and "why" in terms of impact on student learning. Distinguish the different types of critical

areas for follow-up with an introductory stem: e.g., the visiting committee concurs with the areas already identified by the SEP

c. Point out that after the visit the Leadership Team needs to integrate the visiting committee's key issues and critical areas for follow-up into the SEP action plan
d. Work with visiting committee member(s) to discuss and investigate any issues or questions raised in the dialogue with the Leadership Team.

___7. Facilitate necessary visiting committee report modifications as the visiting committee report is finalized.

___8. Have visiting committee member(s) individually complete the accreditation status worksheets based on the findings noted in the visiting committee report. Have them review each ACS WASC SEP criterion and supporting indicators within the four categories. Have them individually make decisions regarding the quality of the SEP's educational program with respect to these and the other accreditation factors, if applicable.

___9. Facilitate the visiting committee discussion of the accreditation status worksheet ratings and come to consensus regarding the ratings. Complete the "Documentation and Justification Statement" that includes the ratings and aligned comments that reflect the visiting committee report.

___10. Facilitate the discussion of the accreditation status recommendation and complete the final page of the "Documentation and Justification Statement" with compelling evidence that supports the visiting committee's recommendation. Complete this final page or rationale for the recommended status.

___11. Coordinate the completion of the "Accreditation Status Recommendation" and the "Documentation and Justification Statement" for the Commission.

Ensure:

a. Alignment between the visiting committee report and the recommended accreditation status
b. Member signatures are on the status recommendation sheet
c. Brief description of the discussion and status options considered by the visiting committee
d. A clearly stated rationale based upon factors impacting the accreditation status.

___12. Edit the final visiting committee report with the assistance of the visiting committee member(s). Ensure that 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 accreditation status. Leave a draft copy of the visiting committee report with the leadership.

___14. Continually stress the importance of immediate follow-up to integrate the visiting committee narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up into the SEP's action plan for yearly implementation and assessment.

___15. Have the visiting committee complete the evaluation of chairperson form (optional).

___16. Review the visiting committee expense forms and submit them to the SEP for reimbursement. Be sure to keep copies of the forms and receipts for your records. Remind the SEP that reimbursement is expected within three weeks of the visit.

After the Visit

___1. Finalize the necessary ACS WASC SEP forms: the "Accreditation Status Recommendation" and the "Documentation and Justification Statement" for the Commission.

___2. Complete the final editing on the visiting committee report within ten (10) working days. Ensure that the SEP receives a final copy of the visiting committee report.

___3. Submit copies of the: (1) Accreditation Status Recommendation, (2) Documentation and Justification Statement, and (3) Visiting Committee Report electronically to the ACS WASC office using the **Document Upload** link on the top navigation bar of the ACS WASC website: www.acswasc.org/document-upload/.

___4. Keep a copy of all ACS WASC SEP forms and the visiting committee report.

___5. Send the completed member evaluation forms to the Burlingame ACS WASC Office.

___6. Send the appropriate letters of appreciation.

___7. Follow up on any outstanding reimbursement payment yet to be received. Contact the ACS WASC Business Office if payment has not been received from the SEP within four weeks after the visit.

___8. Communicate to the visiting committee member(s) the decision of the Commission on the final accreditation status awarded to the SEP. This decision is reached either at the January, April, or June ACS WASC Commission meeting. (A copy of the official letter will be sent to the chairperson electronically.)

Visiting Committee Member Checklist

Previsit Preparation

___1. Receive the first letter from the visiting committee chairperson that addresses:
   a. Requests for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
   b. Training sessions schedule reminders
   c. The review of accreditation materials.

___2. Attend ACS WASC member training.

___3. Study information about SEP description and the *ACS WASC SEP Focus on Learning* manual.

___4. Become aware of the outcomes of the self-study followed by the SEP:
   - The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement
   - The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through learner outcomes and academic standards
   - The analysis of data about students and student achievement
   - The assessment of the standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
   - The alignment of a long-range SEP action plan to the SEP's areas of need; the capacity to implement and monitor the accomplishment of the SEP action plan.

___5. Review the ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators, appropriate academic standards, and educational references.

___6. Receive additional instructions from chairperson, including:
   a. Writing assignments
   b. Review of the criteria as the self-study report is analyzed
   c. Member(s) will be asked to provide questions and comments for all sections of the report on the previsit preparation worksheet; member(s) will also be asked to write tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of the SEP report; the chair should receive these prior to the initial team meeting in order to compile a tentative visiting committee report (Some chairs might be using Google Drive for the previsit preparation worksheets and the draft visiting committee report)
   d. Visit schedule.

___7. After receiving the self-study report, complete the previsit preparation:
   a. Review the criteria with respect to the analysis of the self-study report; study other pertinent materials (e.g., academic standards)
   b. Compare the SEP's findings to the concepts of the criteria, the critical learner needs, and the learner outcomes; critique the SEP action plan.

      To what extent:

- Do the SEP's findings and supporting evidence provide a sound basis for determining the effectiveness of the SEP's programs based on the criteria concepts?
- Was the analysis of the SEP program done in relation to the critical learner needs, the learner outcomes, the academic standards, and the concepts of the criteria?
- Does the SEP action plan address the major identified growth areas and enhance the learning of all students as identified in the student/community profile?
- Are the critical learner needs and the learner outcomes being addressed through the SEP action plan?
- Is the implementation of a standards-based system being addressed through the SEP action plan?
- Has the SEP integrated other initiatives to create one "umbrella" SEP action plan?
- Is the action plan feasible and realistic? Are resources considered for each SEP action plan section?
- Do the ways of assessing progress include the analysis of student learning?
- Is there sufficient programwide commitment to the SEP action plan?
- Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the SEP action plan?

c. Write tentative narrative statements in response to the criteria including the relationship of the concepts of the criteria and indicators to the learner outcomes and critical learner needs. Include questions regarding issues, concerns, clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit. Send these to visiting committee chair prior to the visit.

___8. Ensure that the chair has received in a timely manner all previsit preparation questions and comments for the entire self-study report and the tentative narrative statements for the assigned sections of the report.

___9. Receive the final communication from the chairperson that:

a. Offers further assistance and clarification of tasks based on the SEP schedule
b. Confirms the initial meeting time and visit logistics
c. Reviews how reimbursable expenses are to be handled.

___10. Bring the following materials electronically or in hard copy to visit: (Note: Some chairs might be using Google Drive so the templates and other materials are already available for sharing online.)

a. *ACS WASC SEP Focus on Learning* manual
b. Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet
c. Sample of visiting committee report, Documentation/Justification Statement
d. Reference cards
e. Self-study report

f. All notes
g. Credit card or cash to cover reimbursable expenses.

___11. Arrive on time for the 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 an interest in the SEP's welfare and express a desire to be helpful. Establish a rapport with the staff.

___2. Use the concepts of the ACS WASC SEP criteria as a comparison base throughout entire visit.

___3. Look at the quality of the program experienced by students and evidence of successful student learning — the degree to which the learner outcomes and academic standards are being accomplished.

___4. Look for evidence of an ongoing process for improvement.

___5. Let the program unfold: don't prejudge. Validate, verify, and document. Be aware of personal biases that can influence observations.

___6. Structure the gathering of evidence (class/program, observations, interviews, examination of student work and other information, dialogue with Home Groups) so the needed appropriate information is obtained.

___7. Assure teachers that classroom visits are not evaluative but are planned to observe the general instructional atmosphere and climate of the SEP.

___8. Frame open-ended questions to all SEP committee member(s) and individuals to elicit information without reflecting a value judgment.

___9. Allow adequate time for responses and give appropriate feedback to responses to questions.

___10. Concentrate on being a good listener. Be aware of nonverbal feedback.

___11. Meet and lead discussions with the SEP self-study committees that are pertinent to your assigned areas of writing responsibility or Committee of the Whole.

➔ **Note**: Time is limited, so don't overemphasize particular concerns. The goal is to clarify information already in the self-study report and secure information not yet provided.

___12. Don't allow pressure groups or individuals to distract you from the main task and the schedule.

___13. Make every effort to avoid involvement in issues that are not pertinent to the self-study and visit.

___14. Work cooperatively with all other visiting committee member(s) as findings are discussed and decisions made.

___15. Write quality analytical responses according to the suggested guidelines. Make sure they reflect the important concepts of the criteria and indicators and are supported by evidence.

___16. Give feedback to all staff, noting the regular meetings with the Leadership Team.

___17. Meet daily with the Leadership Team to present and thoroughly discuss the synthesis of the concepts of the criteria, the self-study report, and the findings during the visit, as reflected in the draft visiting committee report. Continually, discuss the SEP's next steps as outlined in the proposed SEP action plan.

___18. Meet with other visiting committee member(s) to investigate any issues or questions raised during the Leadership Team meeting.

___19. Make necessary visiting committee report modifications and finalize the report.

___20. Individually review each ACS WASC SEP accreditation status factor. Individually make decisions regarding the quality of the SEP's educational program with respect to the ACS WASC SEP criteria and the other factors impacting the accreditation status.

___21. Participate in the visiting committee discussion of the Accreditation Status Recommendation with respect to the ACS WASC SEP criteria categories and all findings.

___22. Assist the chair in preparing the confidential visiting committee "Documentation and Justification Statement" for the Commission ensuring that the correlation is evident between the recommended status and the visiting committee report.

___23. Complete the expense voucher and submit to the chair for submission to the SEP for reimbursement. (Keep a copy of all forms and receipts.)

___24. Complete and submit the chair evaluation form.

___25. Participate in the presentation of the findings to the entire staff. The recommended accreditation status is confidential; do not imply the recommended accreditation status.

___26. Support and encourage the SEP in its ongoing improvement process.

Sample Schedule for Visit

The following sample schedule is provided for full self-study visits. This sample schedule should be adjusted by the SEP and the visiting committee (VC) Chair to fit the local situation. In this process, it is very important to allow enough time for extensive dialogue with the 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 findings. The VC chairperson should be in regular communication with the leadership and self-study coordinator to discuss the progress of the visit.

Sample Schedule

_____–_____	Meeting with site administration
_____–_____	Meeting with leadership/follow-up team
_____–_____	Meeting with parents
_____–_____	Classroom visitations
_____–_____	Meeting with Focus Group or Committee of the Whole
_____–_____	Lunch with students
_____–_____	Meeting with teachers
_____–_____	Visiting team to synthesize findings, identifying strengths and critical areas for follow-up
_____–_____	Exit meeting with site leadership

Visiting Committee Report Format

Title Page

SEP Name
City
Dates of Visit
Names and Titles of Visiting Committee Member(s)

Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the SEP. Include the following:

- Brief description of the students and community served by the SEP
- SEP's analysis of student achievement data
- Other pertinent data (e.g., size of English learner population, teacher credentialing, class size, programs for students)
- Appropriateness of identified critical learner needs and their linkage to learner outcomes

➔ **Note**: Show data in chart format and comment. Include sections of the profile that show student achievement findings and interpretations.

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

Chapter II: Progress Report (2 pages)

Since the last self-study:

- Comment on the SEP's major changes and follow-up process
- Discuss how the SEP through its action plan has incorporated each of the critical areas for follow-up, including the impact on student learning.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process (1–2 pages)

- Include a copy of the learner outcomes.
- Comment on the SEP's self-study process with respect to the outcomes of the self-study.
    1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement
    2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through learner outcomes and academic standards
    3. The analysis of data about students and student achievement
    4. The assessment of the entire SEP program and its impact on student learning in relation to the learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
    5. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the SEP's areas of need; the capacity to implement and monitor the accomplishment of the plan.

Chapter IV: Quality of the SEP's Program

Part A: What Currently Exists (10–20 pages)

Based on the self-study and visiting committee findings, for each criterion in the following categories:

A. Organization for Student Learning
B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
D. Resource Management and Development

- Summarize an analysis of what currently exists and its impact on student learning
- Highlight areas of strength (if any)
- Highlight the key issues (if any)
- 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 *ACS WASC SEP Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet*).

Part B: Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up (2 pages)

- Briefly comment about the previously identified strengths and critical areas for follow-up
- Synthesize areas of strengths and list numerically. *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report*
- Synthesize critical areas for follow-up and list numerically. *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*
  - ✓ Confirm areas already identified by the SEP in the action plan sections
  - ✓ Confirm areas to be strengthened within the already identified areas
  - ✓ Identify any additional areas to be added to the SEP action plan that have been identified by the visiting committee. *This includes areas related to student achievement and other profile data, the SEP program and operation, and the SEP action plan.*

Chapter V: Ongoing Improvement (1–2 pages)

- Include a brief summary of the SEP action plan
- Comment on the following improvement issues:
  - ✓ Adequacy of the SEP action plan in addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up
    - Do the SEP action plan sections address the critical areas for follow-up?
    - Will the SEP action plan steps enhance student learning?
    - Is the SEP action plan a "user-friendly" action plan that has integrated all major SEP initiatives *(e.g., technology plan, staff development plan)*?

- Is the SEP action plan feasible within existing resources?
- Is there sufficient commitment programwide to the SEP action plan?

✓ Existing factors that will support improvement

✓ Impediments to improvement that the SEP will need to overcome

✓ Soundness of the follow-up process that the SEP intends to use for monitoring the accomplishment of the SEP action plan.

Accreditation Status Determination

The visiting committee will recommend an accreditation status which will be acted upon by the Accrediting Commission. ACS WASC accreditation is an ongoing six-year cycle of quality whereby the SEP demonstrates the capacity, commitment, and competence to support high-quality student learning and ongoing improvement.

Current status options are: six-year accreditation status with a required mid-cycle progress report; six-year accreditation status with a mid-cycle progress report and one-day visit; six-year accreditation with a mid-cycle progress report and two-day visit; one- or two-year probationary accreditation with an in-depth progress report and two-day visit; or accreditation status withheld. The Commission reserves the right to grant additional conditions of accreditation other than those above. Such action will follow a Commission review of the visiting committee report.

Accreditation status will be based upon a SEP demonstrating the following:

1. Involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study that addresses the self-study outcomes.
2. Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined learner outcomes, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.
3. *Organization for Student Learning* that supports high achievement for all students.
4. *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* that supports high achievement for all students.
5. *Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth* that supports high achievement for all students.
6. *Resource Management and Development* that supports high achievement for all students.
7. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the SEP's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.
8. The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive improvement.
9. The capacity to implement and monitor the SEP action plan.

Accrediting Commission for Schools
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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FRED VAN LEUVEN, ED.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARILYN S. GEORGE, ED.D.
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Supplementary Education Programs
Accreditation Status Recommendation

Name of SEP Visited:
Address of SEP:

Name of District:
Manual Used in Self-Study:
Visit:
Date of Visit:
Accredited Grade Span: Enrollment:

ACS WASC accreditation is an ongoing six-year cycle of quality whereby the SEP demonstrates the capacity, commitment and competence to support high-quality student learning and ongoing SEP improvement.

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

☐ **Six-Year Accreditation Status with a Mid-cycle Progress Report**: There is compelling evidence that the SEP needs little, if any, additional support for high-quality student learning and the implementation, monitoring, and accomplishment of the SEP action plan, which includes the identified critical areas for follow-up.

Provide the rationale for the accreditation status recommendation in the Justification Statement.

☐ **Six-Year Accreditation Status with a Mid-cycle Progress Report and** (choose one option below):

- ☐ **One-Day Visit:** There is compelling evidence that the SEP needs additional support in strengthening student achievement by addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up. Based on the scope and seriousness of the issues and the size of the SEP, a one-day visit is recommended.
- ☐ **Two-Day Visit**: There is compelling evidence that the SEP needs additional support in strengthening student achievement by addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up. Based on the scope and seriousness of the issues and the size of the SEP, a two-day visit is recommended.

Provide the rationale for the accreditation status recommendation in the Justification Statement.

☐ **Probationary Accreditation Status with an In-depth Progress Report and Two-Day Visit** (choose one option below)**:**

- ☐ **One-Year**: There is compelling evidence that the SEP deviates significantly from the ACS WASC criteria in one or more critical areas requiring immediate attention and support.
- ☐ **Two-Year**: There is compelling evidence that the SEP deviates significantly from the ACS WASC criteria in one or more critical areas that need to be addressed within two years.

Provide the rationale for the accreditation status recommendation in the Justification Statement.

☐ **Accreditation Status Withheld**: There is compelling evidence that the SEP does not meet one or more of the ACS WASC criteria and deviates significantly in critical areas that impact student learning and well-being, the SEP's program, and supporting operations.

Provide the rationale for the accreditation status recommendation in the Justification Statement.

Note: The Commission reserves the right to grant accreditation status 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 SEP's chief administrator.

VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

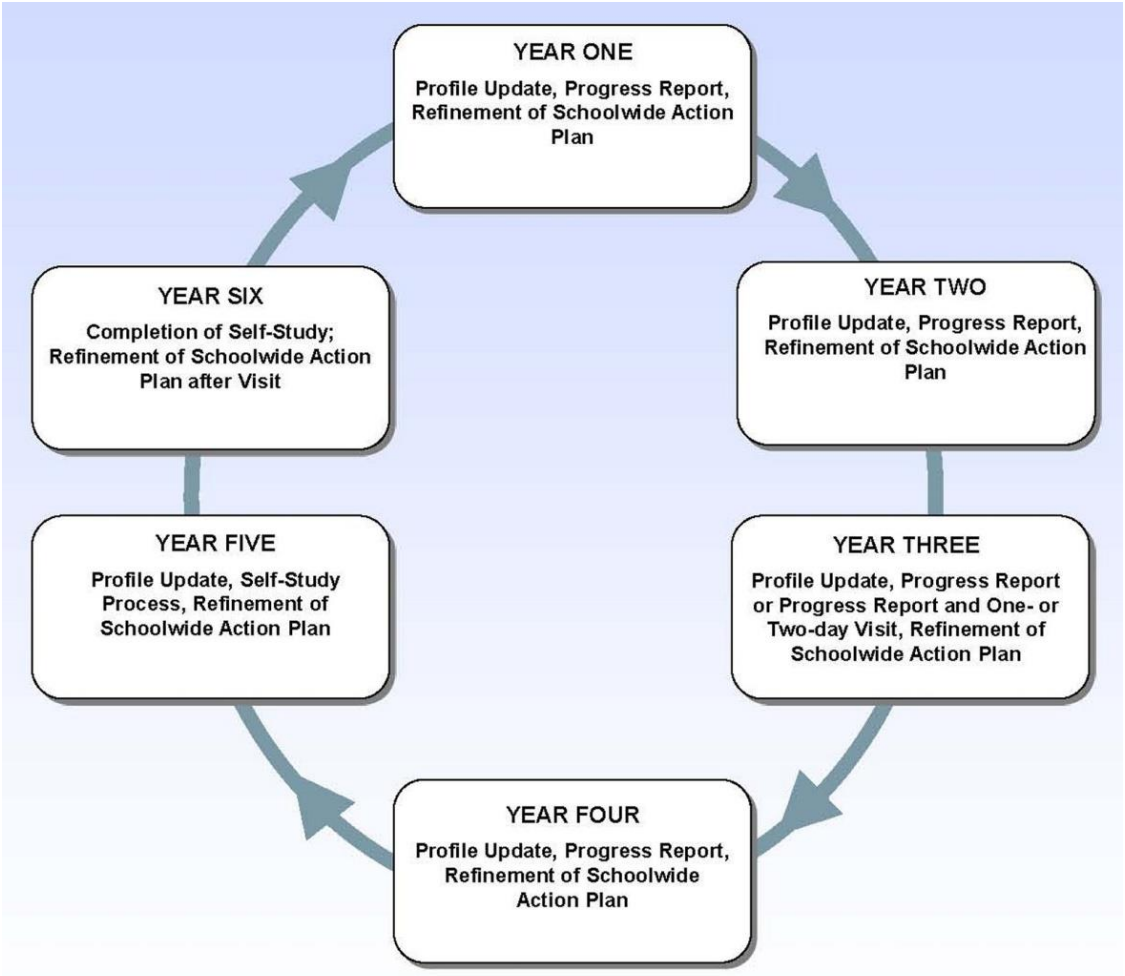
Provide Name and Signature	Date	Committee Chairperson	Date

ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality: A Focus on Learning

ACS WASC accreditation is an ongoing six-year cycle of quality whereby the school demonstrates the capacity, commitment, and competence to support high-quality student learning and ongoing school improvement. The school assesses its program and its impact on student learning with respect to the ACS WASC criteria/indicators and other accreditation factors. Schools are expected to participate in self-study training provided by ACS WASC throughout the 18 months prior to the full self-study visit. This self-study process culminates in the refinement of a 3–5 year schoolwide action plan. Throughout the cycle, a school is expected to address the schoolwide action plan and demonstrate evidence of acceptable student achievement and school improvement.

Using the ACS WASC criteria, indicators, and other accreditation factors, the visiting committee will base its accreditation status recommendation on evidence contained in the self-study and encountered during the school visit indicating:

- The degree to which high achievement by all students is occurring
- The capacity of the school to implement, monitor, and accomplish the schoolwide action plan aligned to the areas of greatest need impacting student achievement
- The school's position with respect to institutional and/or governing authority expectations.



Accreditation Status Explanation*

Overall Question: What accreditation status option best supports defined high-quality learning for all students and the school's improvement needs?

Six-Year Accreditation Status with a Mid-cycle Progress Report

Based on the ***ACS WASC criteria, indicators, and other accreditation factors/rubrics***, this option is appropriate if there is compelling evidence that the school needs little, if any, additional support for high-quality student learning and the implementation, monitoring, and accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan, including addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up. The school is expected annually to report progress to its governing body and stakeholders, update the student/community profile, and refine its schoolwide action plan as needed.

The school will be required to submit a comprehensive mid-cycle progress report demonstrating that the school has:

- Addressed the critical areas for follow-up through the schoolwide action plan
- Made appropriate progress on the implementation of the schoolwide action plan
- Improved student achievement relative to the schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards.

ACS WASC will review the mid-cycle progress report to affirm the accreditation status and determine whether any additional reports, visits, or other conditions will be required.

Six-Year Accreditation Status with a Mid-cycle Progress Report and <u>One-Day</u> Visit

Based on the ***ACS WASC criteria, indicators, and other accreditation factors/rubrics***, this option is appropriate if there is compelling evidence that the school needs additional support in strengthening student achievement and the school's program through the schoolwide action plan, including addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up. A <u>*one-day visit*</u> is recommended, based on the scope and seriousness of the issues and the size of the school. The school is expected to report annual progress to its governing body and stakeholders, update the student/community profile, and refine its schoolwide action plan as needed.

The school will be required to host a one-day visit after submitting a comprehensive mid-cycle progress report demonstrating that the school has:

- Addressed the critical areas for follow-up throughout the schoolwide action plan
- Made appropriate progress on the implementation of the schoolwide action plan
- Improved student achievement relative to the schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards.

ACS WASC will review the progress report and the results of the visit to affirm the accreditation status and determine whether any additional reports, visits, or other conditions will be required.

* No changes have been made to the ACS WASC initial visit process.

Six-Year Accreditation Status with a Mid-cycle Progress Report and Two-Day Visit

Based on the ***ACS WASC criteria, indicators, and other accreditation factors/rubrics***, this option is appropriate if there is compelling evidence that there needs to be more time spent at the mid-cycle in reviewing the schoolwide action plan progress in areas such as the analysis and use of student achievement data, the instructional program, the growth and development of the leadership and staff, governance, and resource allocation. A *two-day visit* is recommended, based on the scope and seriousness of the issues and the size of the school. The school is expected to report annual progress to its governing body and stakeholders, update the student/community profile, and refine its schoolwide action plan as needed.

The school will be required to host a two-day visit and submit a comprehensive mid-cycle progress report demonstrating that the school has:

- Addressed the critical areas for follow-up through the schoolwide action plan
- Made appropriate progress on implementation of the schoolwide action plan
- Improved student achievement relative to the schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards.

ACS WASC will review the progress report and the results of the visit to affirm the accreditation status and determine whether any additional reports, visits, or other conditions will be required.

One- or Two-Year Probationary Accreditation Status with an In-depth Progress Report and Two-Day Visit

Based on the ***ACS WASC criteria, indicators, and other accreditation factors/rubrics***, this option is appropriate if there is compelling evidence that the school deviates significantly from the ACS WASC criteria in one or more critical areas and needs serious additional support, feedback, and encouragement in meeting the identified critical areas for follow-up in the visiting committee report. A *one-year* probationary status indicates there is a need for *immediate* attention and support. A *two-year* probationary status signifies the need for *prompt* attention and support, but more time may be needed to address the identified issue(s).

The school will be required to host a two-day visit in one or two years and submit an in-depth progress report demonstrating that the school has:

- Addressed the critical areas for follow-up in the schoolwide action plan
- Made appropriate progress on the implementation of the schoolwide action plan
- Improved student achievement relative to the schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards.

After the probationary visit, the ACS WASC Commission may grant one of the following:

- Continued probationary accreditation for one additional year of the accreditation cycle (applicable for one-year probationary accreditation only)
- Probation removed and full accreditation status restored; the accreditation cycle continues with an in-depth progress report and two-day mid-cycle visit
- Accreditation withheld.

Accreditation Status Withheld

Based on the ***ACS WASC criteria, indicators, and other accreditation factors/rubrics***, this option is appropriate if there is compelling evidence that the school does not meet one or more of the ACS WASC criteria and deviates significantly in critical areas that impact student learning and well-being, the school's program, and/or supporting operations.

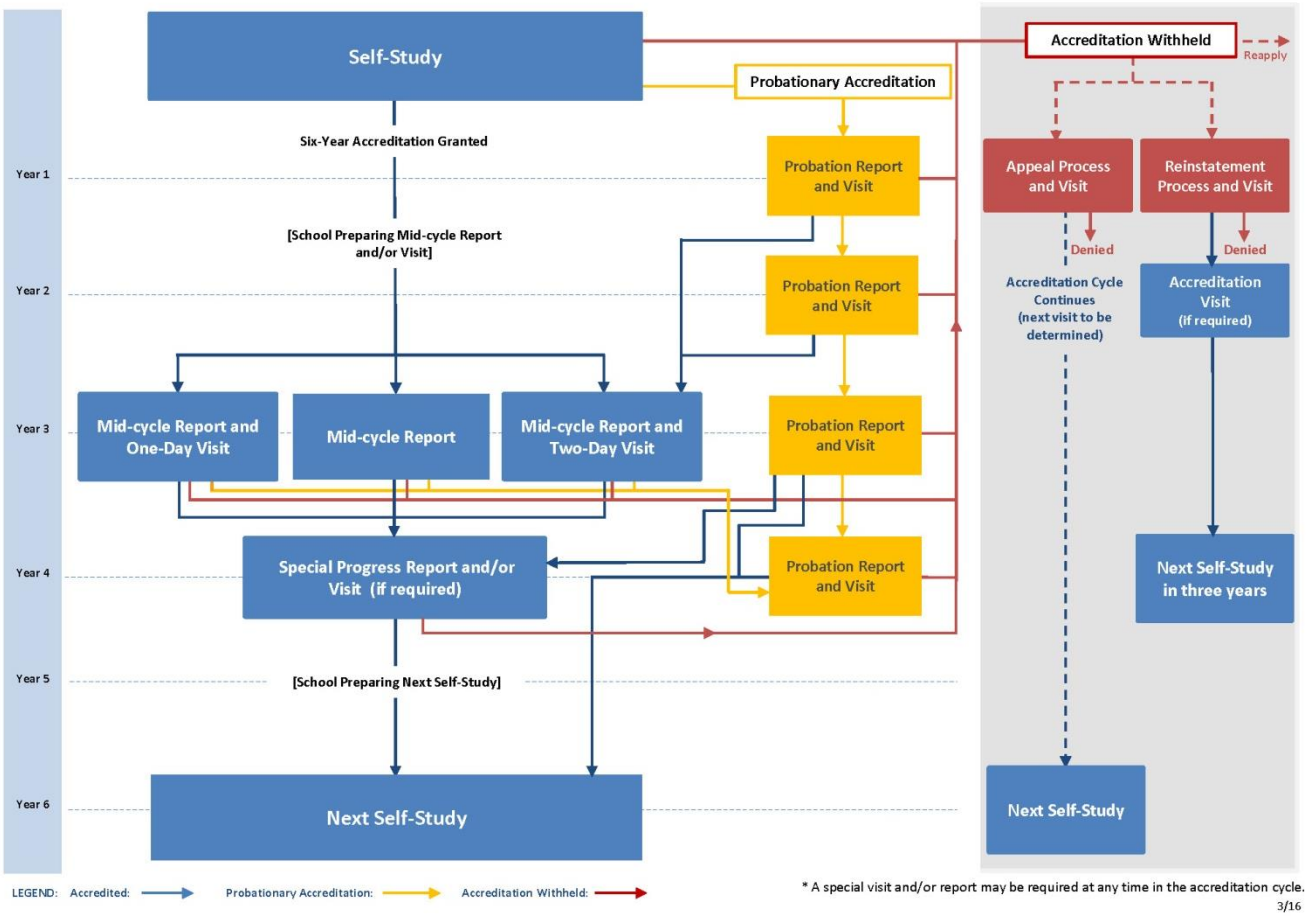
In order to be reinstated, the school must address the critical areas for follow-up identified by the visiting committee and update the self-study report to provide evidence of the progress made. ACS WASC will then decide upon an appropriate time for a two-day reinstatement visit. The visit must occur within 12 to 18 months from the date of the original visit or the school will need to reapply for accreditation through the initial visit process.

After the reinstatement visit, the ACS WASC Commission may grant one of the following:

- Accreditation status with annual in-depth progress reports and a full self-study within three years of reinstatement
- Accreditation status with an in-depth progress report and two-day visit in one year and a full self-study within three years of reinstatement
- Accreditation status withheld.

NOTE: The Commission reserves the right to grant accreditation status 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 school's chief administrator.

ACS WASC Accreditation Status Timeline



SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT FOR THE ACS WASC SEP FOL PROCESS

For proper processing, please complete the following information:

Chair Name		Name and City of Center/Program Visited
Chair's Work Phone	Chair's Home Phone	Chair's Cell Phone
Email address		

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 program and the organization'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 program, and the organization'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 program, and the organization'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 program, and the organization's operation.

An accreditation status will be based upon a SEP demonstrating the following:

1. **The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study reflects a thorough, accurate description and analysis of what currently exists at the program, as well as aligned prioritized areas of strength and growth.**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

SAMPLE

2. **Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined learner outcomes, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

3. **Organization for Student Learning: Purpose that supports high achievement for all students. Defining of the SEP's vision and purpose through learner outcomes and academic standards. (A1)**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

4. **Organization for Student Learning: Governance that supports high achievement for all students. (A2)**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

5. **Organization for Student Learning: Leadership and Staff that support high achievement for all students. (A3 & A4)**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

6. **Organization for Student Learning: Environment that supports high achievement for all students. (A5)**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

7. **Organization for Student Learning: Improvement Process that supports high achievement for all students. (A6)**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

8. **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: What Students Learn that supports high achievement for all students. (B1)**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

9. **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: How Students Learn that supports high achievement for all students. (B2)**

   Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

   Narrative Rationale:

10. **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: How Assessment is Used that supports high achievement for all students. (B3)**

    Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

    Narrative Rationale:

11. **Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth: Student Connectedness and Parent/Community Involvement that support high achievement for all students. (C1 & C2)**

    Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

    Narrative Rationale:

12. **Resource Management and Development: Resources and Resource Planning that support high achievement for all students. (D1 & D2)**

    Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

    Narrative Rationale:

13. **The alignment of a long-range SEP action plan to the SEP's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.**

    Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

    Narrative Rationale:

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

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

15. The capacity to implement and monitor the SEP action plan.

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 status: ***(If there is an unresolved minority opinion please indicate and explain.)***

- **Status options seriously considered**
- **List the reasons for the status recommended and provide compelling evidence that supports the Visiting Committee recommendation**

In the comments reflect upon the following:

- The Visiting Committee's discussion for each status option considered
- The degree to which students are learning
- Important identified strengths and growth areas
- The capacity of the SEP to implement and monitor the SEP action plan.

Status Options Considered

Accreditation Status Recommendation Rationale (provide compelling evidence):

1.
2.
3.
4. …

The Follow-up:
Making Headway

SEP Self-Study Coordinator
Post-Visit Checklist

- **Revise the SEP Action Plan**
- **Submit the revised SEP Action Plan to ACS WASC**

- **After the visit, the self-study coordinator (SC) and Leadership Team meet immediately 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 SEP action plan. The narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up left by the visiting committee should be integrated into the SEP action plan.

  A copy of the modified SEP action plan should be submitted to ACS WASC.

  Some SEPs may continue to use the 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 learner outcomes and academic standards; this will result in modifications annually of the SEP action plan, including annual executive approval, if applicable. If the SEP annually reviews its plan and progress, the reports generated will comprise the major portion of the next self-study.

  Self-Check Questions

  Has the modified SEP action plan been sent?

  An electronic copy of the modified SEP action plan to the ACS WASC Office in a single pdf or Word document using the Document Upload link on the top navigation bar of the ACS WASC website: www.acswasc.org/document-upload/.

- The **Coordinator Checklists** can be found on the ACS WASC website at www.acswasc.org.

ACS WASC Accreditation Process: Ongoing Improvement

In preparation for the self-study every six years, the SEP should engage in an accreditation process that focuses on student learning and ongoing improvement.

1. Annually update the student/community profile and discuss with all stakeholders.
2. Annually summarize progress on the SEP action plan sections, noting key evidence, and make any necessary modifications or refinements in the plan.
3. Periodically, review the learner outcomes, the vision, and mission.
4. Analyze and synthesize data that provides evidence of progress, and complete a mid-cycle report for submission to ACS WASC.
5. Potentially, host a one-day mid-cycle review if the SEP was granted a six-year accreditation status. (**Note**: If a SEP received a one-year probationary status, the SEP prepares an in-depth progress report and hosts a one-day probationary visit. The Commission then grants additional years of accreditation depending upon the progress made. Accreditation may also be withheld.)
6. In preparation for the next self-study (usually 18 months prior to the full self-study and visit), ensure that a) key staff member(s) participate in ACS WASC self-study training; and b) all stakeholders are knowledgeable of student achievement and other current data, and progress on all aspects of the SEP action plan. Use the following information with stakeholders:
    a. The current, updated student/community profile, emphasizing student achievement, and other pertinent evidence noted during the annual progress reports on the SEP action plan
    b. The operating SEP action plan
    c. Annual progress reports.
7. Based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria, involve stakeholders through Focus and Home Groups or Committee of the Whole 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 important analytical findings for each criterion organized by categories.
9. Revise the SEP action plan to show what will be accomplished in detail for the following year and more broadly during the subsequent two years. Annually, the SEP action plan is refined based on progress made and impact on student learning.
10. Finalize the self-study report that will include:
    a. The current student/community profile, critical learner needs
    b. Vision, mission, and learner outcomes
    c. Overall progress report since last full visit (or initial visit)
    d. Findings and supporting evidence
    e. Updated SEP action plan.

Outcomes of the Self-Study

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

1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement

2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through learner outcomes and academic standards

3. The analysis of data about students and student achievement

4. The assessment of the entire SEP program and its impact on student learning in relation to the learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria

5. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the SEP's areas of need; the capacity to implement and monitor the accomplishment of the plan.