



# REACH 2.0

## Standards Manual for Accreditation

for EE–12 North American and International Schools

Reaching for **E**xcellence Through **A**ccreditation and **C**ontinuous Improvement for **H**igher Achievement

ACSI gratefully acknowledges the tireless effort, significant contributions,  
and excellent leadership of Merry Clark  
in the development and publication of *REACH 2.0*.

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# FOREWORD

Accreditation by a well-recognized agency is a seal of quality on an educational organization. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) promotes the value and worthiness of accreditation and encourages each school and early education program to continuously pursue excellence. We believe that this pursuit matches the biblical directive of approving “things that are excellent” (Philippians 1:10, KJV). The “accredited” seal denotes a school that has met institutional standards of quality and that verifies a commitment to strategic improvement and ongoing accountability. The process of accreditation involves three significant elements:

1. Intensive, institution-wide self-appraisal, analysis, and improvement planning
2. External consultation, review, validation, and insights from a visiting peer group
3. Ongoing accountability for improvement through annual reporting and renewal

ACSI’s internationally recognized accreditation program is designed to assist schools in obtaining widely recognized accredited status. The following are some of the benefits of being an ACSI accredited educational institution:

- Accredited membership status in ACSI and a listing as such in the online directory
- Approval by the U.S. Department of Education for the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), I-20 and I-17 forms
- Various U.S. state and several national recognitions for credits/athletics
- Endorsement to administer College Board/ACT exams on the school site
- Early education accreditation process approved in various states
- Eligibility for joint accreditation status with the following:
  - AdvancED (North Central Association, Southern Association, and Northwest Association accrediting organizations)
  - New England Association of Schools and Colleges
  - Middle States Association (Elementary and/or Secondary)
  - Western Association of Schools and Colleges

- Recognition of early education accreditation status in several states, allowing the program to receive higher reimbursement rates for subsidized children. (E-mail [earlyeducation@acsi.org](mailto:earlyeducation@acsi.org) to receive information on the state approval process.)

ACSI accreditation is a highly effective way for a Christian school to evaluate itself in light of its unique educational mission. An authentic Christian school may be thought of as involving the four interwoven educational strands of (1) academic ideas and thinking, (2) skills for life and living, (3) biblical worldview grounding, and (4) personal character, values, and spiritual formation. The self-study process guides a school to evaluate and reflect on all that it does in light of this distinctive four-pronged mission.

The *REACH 2.0* process is thought provoking in its approach, stimulating in its methods, and efficient in its procedures. Its core goal is to provoke a reflective and interactive dialogue among the stakeholders of a school. The school will be positioned to refine its strategic plan for student learning and organizational effectiveness, on the basis of its reflection on each of the eight standards and the insights of the visiting team.

Accreditation is what all good educational organizations seek in order to validate their quality and to verify that they are striving for excellence. Most ACSI schools bear the name of Christ, which is excellent (Psalm 8:1, KJV), and as such they should reflect His name in the way they provide high-quality education.

Derek J. Keenan, EdD

Executive Director, ACSI Accreditation Commission

# INTRODUCTION

The *REACH 2.0: Standards Manual for Accreditation for EE–12 North American and International Schools* is designed for Christian schools in the United States and around the world that are preparing students for direct transition to English language tertiary programs such as those in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and elsewhere. The eight standards in this document are broad declarations of quality performance, procedures, and practices that should exist in all Christian schools and early education programs. **(Note: throughout this manual the word *school(s)* is intended to reflect early education, elementary, middle, and secondary programs.)**

There are three manuals that are part of the accreditation process:

1. *Standards Manual for Accreditation* (print and CD)
2. *Rubrics Manual* (CD only)
3. *Early Education Evidence Guide* (EEEG, CD only)

The *Standards Manual for Accreditation* and the *Rubrics Manual* are applicable to all EE–12 schools and EE stand-alone programs seeking accreditation with ACSI. The *Early Education Evidence Guide* is required in addition for any school with an early education program, attached or stand-alone, that is included in the accreditation process.

The *Standards Manual for Accreditation* includes an overview of the process and extensive appendixes of related materials for schools beginning the initial or renewal accreditation. It lists each of the eight standards and the rationale and justification for the standard as well as presenting the indicators that relate to the standard. The *Rubrics Manual* unpacks each standard with a number of indicators and with a rubric for the school to use in rating itself. These ratings assist the school in determining to what extent it is meeting the standard. The indicators and rubrics also serve the purpose of having the school's stakeholders engage in a healthy and deep dialogue about quality. The *Early Education Evidence Guide* (EEEG) is for attached or stand-alone preschools, and it notes the additional indicators in which the “compliance” level must be met for standards 3, 5, and 6 for these programs. The *EEEG* also notes the evidences or observations that support meeting or exceeding compliance.

The goal for a school is to reach the compliance level for every indicator. A number of indicators are identified as nonnegotiable. These are indicators that the school must meet or exceed the “compliance” level for an initial or renewal

accreditation visit to take place. These are reviewed with the school at the time of granting candidacy and on the annual report submitted by schools continuing accreditation. Visiting teams do not come to a school until these compliance requirements are met. If a school finds a particular nonnegotiable indicator that is not possible for it to meet, the school may follow the process to request an exception from ACSI. (See appendix J.)

The standards, standard justification statements, indicators, rubrics, and early education evidence are meant to be viewed as an entire entity and not as discrete elements to be addressed in isolation. The school's self-study report, including the school improvement plan, should reflect this holistic approach to its self-evaluation. The report must reflect clear alignment among the standards reports, its summary findings, and its plan for school improvement. The school improvement plan should identify both curricular achievement goals as well as organizational improvements that will enhance the educational experience of students. The various standards subcommittees should represent the school's stakeholders and provide a forum for lively and engaged conversation about the present status of the school and about its preferred future in both the short- and long-term.

Schools in the accreditation process will routinely find areas of needed improvement in some and possibly all standard areas. Authentic dialogue and transparent self-assessment are central to getting the most value out of the self-study process.

Accreditation should be viewed as integral to an ongoing process of institutional assessment, improvement, and development. It is voluntary, invigorating, demanding, and worthwhile. It is for a school that is determined to demonstrate that it has achieved a recognized standard of quality, and it also recognizes opportunities for continuous school improvement.

## STANDARDS NOTE:

ALL EIGHT STANDARDS APPLY TO EACH LEVEL (EE–12).  
SOME INDICATORS MAY NOT APPLY TO ALL LEVELS.

# OVERVIEW OF THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Before applying for accreditation, the school should carefully review the standards and process. Meeting standards and completing the self-study require a strong commitment by the governing body, faculty, and staff.

The following steps outline the application process:

## 1. APPLICATION

The accreditation application is on the accompanying CD, or it may be obtained from your ACSI regional office or from the ACSI website. The completed application and applicable attachments should be returned to the regional office, along with the application fee, a copy of the governing body minutes indicating approval for the school to pursue accreditation with ACSI, and a preliminary profile. The preliminary profile includes a brief paragraph narrative of no more than 300 words (no data or supporting evidences are to be included or attached with the narrative), for each required element, that presents a snapshot on each of the following topics :

1. Founding and purpose of the school
2. Ownership, legal standing, organizational and governance structure
3. Description of the school community/stakeholders
4. Significant trends in past three years (e.g., enrollment, finances, facilities)
5. Type of instructional program (e.g., traditional, classical, on-line, bilingual, IGCSE)
6. Staff numbers and hiring qualifications
7. School funding sources
8. Vision for the future (three to five years)

International schools apply through the ACSI Global office in Colorado Springs.

Schools that wish to obtain joint accreditation with ACSI and another recognized agency should notify the ACSI regional office or ACSI Global office upon application. ACSI should be identified as the lead agency, and in such cases ACSI will inform the school about its separate application to the other accrediting agency. If a school desires to proceed with a joint accreditation plan, a statement to that effect, which also names the other accrediting agency, should be included in the initial letter of inquiry that the school sends to the ACSI regional office in its area.

It should be noted that a joint accreditation may require an alteration of some of the processes described in this document.

## 2. CANDIDATE STATUS VISIT

Once the accreditation application has been received by the regional or Global office, the school will be contacted to establish a date for a candidate status visit. The purpose of this brief visit is to determine whether the school can meet the standards, complete the self-study, and host the visiting team within a three-year period. It is also an appropriate time to discuss specific questions related to the accreditation process and/or to further familiarize parent groups, governing body members, or faculty with the meaning and the process of accreditation.

Once candidate status has been granted, the school will receive official notification from the ACSI regional office. A consultant will be assigned to work with the school.

The purpose of the candidacy visit is threefold:

1. To gain sufficient knowledge of the school and assess its suitability and readiness for entry into the ACSI accreditation process
2. To assist the school leadership in organizing the self-study process and set a tentative timeline for the candidacy period through the team visit
3. To orient, answer questions, and consult with the leadership, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders about the accreditation standards and their role in the various aspects of the process

In order to accomplish the first objective, the consultant will determine the extent to which the following are in place:

- a. The school has a clearly formulated Christian educational philosophy and a set of objectives, both of which are set forth in a written statement that takes into account the distinctive location, nature, and goals of the school.
- b. There is evidence that the school will be able to meet each of the accreditation standards by the time of the visit.  
  
If the school is renewing, all required recommendations or improvements must be made before the team visit since the school cannot be accredited until these are corrected.
- c. The governing body is committed to the accreditation and school improvement process, including their participation in the self-study.



- d. Staff (executive leadership, instructional, and support) are sufficient in number, qualified, and appropriately assigned, such that they provide for effective operation of the school.
- e. Instructional elements and pedagogical practices, including overall curricular content and design and organizational arrangement, support an educational culture that meets the needs of the students, and they are consistent with the mission and schoolwide expected student outcomes of the school.
- f. Day-to-day organizational policies and procedures are clearly established and communicated.
- g. The school ensures that the services it provides—transportation, food, residence, and/or others—meet acceptable standards of health, safety, and comfort, fulfilling all applicable legal requirements.
- h. Instructional materials and equipment are appropriate, and the school has a sufficient quantity to fulfill the basic needs of the instructional program.
- i. Grounds, buildings, technical installations, basic furnishings, and supporting equipment are adequate for effective support of the total school program.
- j. Financial resources, including budgeting and fiscal management, are capable of sustaining a sound educational program that is consistent with the stated philosophy and objectives of the school.
- k. The school complies with all national, state, provincial, and local legal guidelines.

In order to achieve the second objective of the candidate status visit, the consultant will wish to do the following:

- a. Review the entire self-study process with the executive leadership team of the school, faculty, governing body members, and others as appropriate.
- b. Review the ACSI self-study instrument and all standard practices with the leadership of the school to ensure that everyone concerned is fully cognizant of what is expected.
- c. Establish a proposed schedule of dates for accomplishing the steps in the process, including dates for the evaluation by the visiting committee.
- d. Agree on the general composition of the visiting committee, including the number of members and the fields of particular knowledge and competence they should represent.

- e. Inform the school of any areas of operation and/or facilities that, in the opinion of the consultant, are seriously deficient and suggest improvements that might be made before the visit of the committee.

The school can help the consultant and save time by providing the consultant with as much documentation as possible to assist with his or her inquiry, in advance of arrival or at least upon arrival.

The candidacy visit, if well organized, should normally take no more than one or two full days at the school. The consultant will want to look over the entire school plant but will not have time to sit in individual classes. He or she will need to meet at some length with the executive leadership of the school and/or the early education director.

### 3. CONSULTANT

The consultant assigned to the school has been trained in the many components of the ACSI accreditation program. The consultant serves as a resource person throughout the entire self-study process. All the expenses incurred by the consultant are paid by the school. ACSI team members are reimbursed for their expenses but are not paid a stipend for their service.

For international schools, the consultant is required to make an on-site visit six to nine months before the arrival of the visiting team to ensure the school's readiness for the visit.

### 4. SELF-STUDY

The school is required to complete a self-study. It must organize the school staff and other stakeholders into standard study groups to complete the process. Each of the eight standards is carefully reviewed, using the indicators and rubrics to guide the preparation of an accurate, complete, well-written report. It must rate itself on each of the indicators, write a concluding narrative in regard to the standard, and compile a list of evidence that validates the school's conclusions.

In addition to the accreditation and rubric manuals, the early education programs will use the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* for standards 3, 5, and 6. This guide will assist programs to determine if they are at the compliance or exceeds compliance level in regard to each indicator. It will also note particular strengths and areas where needed improvements are indicated.

Completion of a quality self-study normally takes 18 to 24 months for a school that is going through its initial accreditation. The self-study is a high-value aspect of the accreditation process, and it must be approached with deliberation and high levels of involvement to attain the quality report that is needed. (See appendixes C, D and E.)

## 5. TEAM VISIT

Upon completion of the self-study, a team of peer Christian school educators and administrators is scheduled to visit the school. The number of members on the team depends on the size of the school, the number of grades and ages served, and the number of campuses involved. The length of the visit is at least two and a half days; it can be up to four days. The school is responsible for all the travel and hosting expenses of the visiting team members.

The primary purpose of the team's visit is to verify the integrity of the self-study and observe that the standards are being met. In other words, does the self-study accurately reflect the programs and overall ministry of the school? The team's final report will address every section of the self-study. The team members will prepare a list of commendations and recommendations for each section of the self-study. Other report formats may be necessary in the case of joint accreditation and/or as directed by state approval agreements for early education programs.

### What to Expect During the Team Visit

The visiting team will conduct scheduled visits and interviews, as well as randomly talk to students, parents, faculty, board members, and support staff. The purpose of these visits is to get a sense of the school and how it is functioning. Scheduled interviews will take place with student leaders, the board, and the leadership of the parent organization. The various groups that compiled the sections of the self-study will have meetings with visiting team members assigned to each of the standards. Classroom observations take place to overview the academic rigor, classroom management, student engagement, teacher-student relationships, and pedagogy in the school. The tone of the interviews and classroom visits is collegial and not inspective.

The visiting team will write a report that follows an established template. There is a narrative section for each standard that summarizes the "what is" assessment of the school by the visiting team. The team will identify commendable practices and make recommendations to the school for improvements. In the concluding section of the report, the visiting team will identify significant areas that are commendable and also major recommendations that the school must address.

Members of the visiting team will keep the following points clearly in mind: In view of the public responsibility assumed by ACSI in undertaking the accreditation of schools, an important trust has been placed in the visiting team to conduct and report its investigations thoroughly. Thus, ACSI will ensure that every committee member does the following:

1. Becomes familiar with the self-study report, in particular those parts for which he or she has been assigned specific responsibility, in order to be able to use the observation time efficiently.
2. Contributes to a report that will be sufficiently detailed and comprehensive to be both a reliable basis for the decision of the accreditation commission and a useful working document for the future development of the school.
3. Holds all information of the school in confidence.

Though the school's standards must warrant ACSI approval if accreditation is to be granted, committee members will be aware that the school is being evaluated first and foremost in terms of its own philosophy and objectives. It must also be clearly understood that when classrooms are being observed, teams should look for compliance with health and safety standards and age-appropriate instructional strategies.

The team members, when in private with one another and when in contact with representatives of the school, will have an open-minded and constructive attitude and will endeavor to be of service, with an emphasis on assisting the school rather than sitting in judgment on it.

The visiting team may conclude its visit with a faculty meeting at which it reviews major commendations and recommendations. However, no decision or recommendation about whether the school will be accredited can be suggested at this stage, nor will information about the school and the visit be released or communicated to any outside parties by the visiting team.

## 6. ACCREDITATION COMMISSION


At the conclusion of the committee visit, the committee's report will be forwarded to the appropriate ACSI regional or global office. The committee's report will be reviewed at the appropriate meeting of the ACSI Regional Accreditation Commission, and action will be taken regarding the school's status and term of accreditation. A final report will be mailed to the school after the decision on accreditation has been made.

## 7. MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION: A COMMITMENT TO A SYSTEMATIC PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Improvement plans: The continuous school improvement plan (CSIP) that the school has developed for its self-study before the team visit lists prioritized improvements that school leaders feel are necessary for the school to grow. After the team visit, the major recommendations from the team must be incorporated into the school's CSIP.

When the school submits its first annual report to its regional office, it should include procedures for addressing each of the action items in the CSIP.





Annual reports: Annual reports should be sent to the appropriate ACSI regional or global office. The annual report seeks information on the demographics of the school each year, financial status (reviews, practices, or audits) when applicable, and requires the school to identify how it has progressed on its CSIP.

Midterm visit and interim report: For international schools, a midterm accreditation visit is usually made to the accredited school two or three years after the initial granting of accreditation status. In the United States, a midterm visit may or may not be required, depending on the term granted by the regional commission. In joint accreditation, the timing of the visit is coordinated with the other accrediting agency. The school interim/midterm report gives an account of the school's progress regarding all recommendations of the visiting team.

# STANDARD 1: PHILOSOPHY AND FOUNDATIONS

The school has developed written statements of philosophy, vision, mission, beliefs, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcomes as well as a statement of faith. These statements are well defined, systematically reviewed, and broadly implemented throughout the school. They outline the school's Christian distinctives and communicate a clear purpose and direction for school effectiveness and student growth and development.

## STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

Biblical principles support, influence, and drive all aspects of the school's philosophy and foundations, which provide perspective for the past, give context to the present, and establish direction for the future of the school and its educational programs. The Christian school looks to the Bible as the primary source for all its foundational statements of education. Because the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God, the philosophy, mission, vision, and core values derived from it will be God honoring. Christian schools exist because their philosophy is unique in the educational world. Christian school philosophy is based on belief in Jesus Christ, who said in John 14:6, "I am ... the truth," and in John 17:17, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (NIV).

In determining its educational philosophy and guiding statements, every school must ask these questions:

1. Why does our school exist?
2. What are the biblical implications for educational priorities and practices?
3. What are the distinctives that set us apart?
4. What are the goals of our school?
5. How will these goals be achieved?
6. What are the characteristics of a student completing the school's educational program? (What are our schoolwide expected student outcomes?)

Philosophy and guiding statements must be written clearly and concisely if they are to give the school direction and permeate every part of its life. The faculty, staff, governing body, parents, and other stakeholders should be involved in formulating, reviewing, and revising these documents. These statements should also be inculcated into the key elements of the school annually.

Of equal importance is the value this philosophical development process has in melding the school together as an educational institution. The task of preparing, communicating, and regularly reviewing the philosophy statement is foundational to the evaluation necessary for accreditation and is central to the healthy life of the school. The more the executive leadership, staff, and governing body come to know and express the guiding statements

of the school, the greater the impact will be on the families and the community.

If the school is part of a larger entity, responses must include how the philosophy and guiding statements are specifically applicable to the school, including the early education program.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

- (C)—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)
- (E/S)—Applies only to K–12 schools
- (EE)—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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**All indicators in boldface are considered nonnegotiable and are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.**

- 1.1 The statement of faith and the philosophy, vision, mission, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcomes statements of the school are established and are reviewed regularly and systematically in a collaborative manner. (C)**
- 1.2 The school communicates its philosophy, vision, mission, and core values statements and schoolwide expected student outcomes to its constituents and community. (C)
- 1.3 The philosophy statement is consistently applied as an integrative, coordinating, and examining device throughout all aspects of the programs, operations, and curriculum. (C)**
- 1.4 The executive leadership, faculty, and staff continually support the advancement of the philosophy, vision, and mission of the school. (C)
- 1.5 From a distinctively Christian perspective, all staff demonstrate a commitment to the development of the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially (Luke 2:52). (C)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

#### **Required Documentation and Supporting**

**Evidence:** Provide the required documentation and any other supporting evidence that will help to verify compliance with the standard.

#### **Required Documentation**

- Philosophy, vision, mission statements, beliefs, and core values
- Statement of faith
- School profile
- Schoolwide expected student outcomes
- Samples of communications with parents, students, and constituents
- Wide distribution of the mission, vision, and philosophy statements and goals throughout the school community
- Linkage established in the curriculum guides/plans and the teacher lesson plans to the stated mission, vision, philosophy, and goals of the school

#### **Supporting Evidence**

- Involvement by parents, staff, students, and community members in the formation and/or processing of the school's vision, philosophy, foundations, and goals
- Indication by parents, staff, students, and community members that they are familiar with the school's mission, vision, philosophy, foundations, and goals
- Leadership actions that develop commitment to the mission and the vision
- Constituent understanding of how the allocation of resources within the school reflects the stated vision, philosophy, and goals
- Perceptions among the constituents regarding the extent to which the articulated vision, purpose, and goals characterize the operation of the school
- Surveys/evaluation instruments and results
- Annual and long-range goals
- Handbooks, policy manuals
- Newsletters, brochures, and other publications containing information about the vision and purpose
- Other

## STANDARD 2: GOVERNANCE AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

The school has Christ-centered governance and executive leadership that promotes effectiveness of the school and growth of the student through an established structure that contributes to an operationally and financially sound Christian educational institution. The executive leadership and governing body work in partnership to ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the institution through the establishment of written policies and procedures. The head of school is responsible for the supervision of all operations of the school and implementation of board policies.

### STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

#### Governance

Schools vary widely according to location, culture, purpose, and sponsorship; every school has specific nuances. Together, the variables create the distinctive nature of the school. Just as each school is unique, each is also similar in the areas of need and stakeholder expectations. Most important, the governing body provides vibrant spiritual leadership when addressing their responsibilities.

The governing body of a school is a body of informed decision makers who commit to worthy, ongoing pursuits. Oversight includes accountability, evaluation, advocacy, facilitation of the collaborative creation of guiding statements, and policy development.

Educational institutions receive enthusiastic support when they secure the confidence of the constituency in operational matters. Sound business practices are foundational to the growth, development, and ongoing testimony of Christian schools. Every reasonable step should be taken to establish and maintain a strong relationship of financial trust between the governing body and executive leadership, faculty, and the school community. As a result, an atmosphere of mutual respect and purpose exists between all parties on behalf of the students and their learning.

The governing body empowers the head of school to make day-to-day decisions concerning the implementation of the policies and programs being offered by the school. These policies reflect the mission, vision, core values, and philosophy of the education program. The role of the governing body is not to manage the day-to-day operation of the school but to empower the head of school by establishing appropriate policies to accomplish the mission of the school. Generally, the head of school is the sole employee of the board, and staff members report to the head of school. Some church-sponsored schools have different reporting structures, and the head of school could report to a pastor, executive pastor, or church board in

addition to a school board. In these situations, it is critically important that roles and reporting relationships are clearly established and communicated.

#### Executive Leadership

Educational leaders must have a clear testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. They must be spiritually qualified and be committed to the doctrine, philosophy, goals, vision, and mission of the school. Educational leaders are held to a high biblical standard of accountability for their actions and demeanor (James 3:1, Titus 1:7–9, and 1 Timothy 3:1–13). Schools that are seeking to influence the spiritual growth of students and families must be led by individuals who have strong spiritual, as well as professional, qualifications. The character and work ethic of the leadership are tied to a higher purpose: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23).

The personal and professional qualifications of the head of school have a significant influence on the entire school. The leadership skills of the head of school enhance the effectiveness of the entire educational faculty and staff. As the leader of the school, the head of school is responsible for the development of the curricula, the spiritual formation of the students, and the foundational principles for the programs.

Faculty and staff members are invited to participate in leadership through ideas, solutions, and perspectives they bring to the process. Collaboration is invited and valued, and the head of school nurtures this culture in the school.

Note: *Head of school* always refers to the chief administrator. Titles for that role vary significantly from school to school (for example, principal, administrator, headmaster, head of school, director, president, superintendent).

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

**(C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

**(E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools

**(EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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**All indicators in boldface are considered nonnegotiable and are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.**

- 2.1 A governing body has been established, and its primary responsibilities include developing general school governance policy, hiring the head of school, providing direction and strategic planning, ensuring the financial stability of the institution, defining the role of the governing body, defining the role of the head of school, and conducting systematic board self-evaluation. **(C)**
- 2.2 **The governance and executive leadership team of the school reflects a clear Christ-centered governance and executive leadership model. A policy is in place that requires a testimony and evidence of faith in Jesus Christ from all board members and executive leadership.** **(C)**
- 2.3 The governing body supports the head of school prerogatives and responsibilities, and it provides for an appropriate annual evaluation of the head of school. **(C)**
- 2.4 Constituents and stakeholders are provided appropriate input by leadership in the decision-making process, a practice that promotes a culture of participation, responsibility, transparency, and ownership. **(C)**
- 2.5 **Established written policies and procedures promote effective operations in admissions, governance, finance, and other operational aspects. Appropriate legal documents and clearly articulated articles of incorporation, governing body policies, and bylaws are established and are available for review.** **(C)**
- 2.6 **Established written policies are in place to see that the educational and developmental needs of each admitted student are being met on the basis of biblical principles, professional ethics, and high standards. Staff members are sensitive to the culture, gender, language, and special needs of students and their families.** **(C)**
- 2.7 **Financial resources are available to fulfill the mission and programs of the school, and financial operations and decisions are conducted with integrity and in accordance with biblical principles. Income received from tuition is appropriately used for education-related expenses within the school.** **(C)**
- 2.8 The budget is constructed carefully—using input from program heads—and is managed properly in accordance with the stated goals of the school. The budget reflects an accurate assessment for educating a student, including instructional supplies and informational technology. Stated student outcomes are appropriately financed. **(C)**
- 2.9 **A financial review is conducted by an external CPA that has no vested interest in the school at the time of initial accreditation and renewal. The annual statement of financial practices is submitted with the annual accreditation report. The school complies with GAAP.** **(C)**
- 2.9a Stand-alone preschool programs, with an annual budget of \$250,000 or less, may choose to have an annual examination of their finances in lieu of a financial statement review. The examination must be completed by a qualified accountant who is independent of the program and its sponsoring church, school, or board. **(EE)**
- 2.10 Just compensation packages are documented for all employees and are commensurate with the training and services rendered. **(C)**
- 2.11 The school ensures compliance with *applicable* local, state, and federal laws, and it is in good standing with all regulatory agencies. **(C)**
- Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)
- Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.
- Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

## Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:

Provide the required documentation and any other supporting evidence that will help to verify compliance with the standard.

### Required Documentation

- Governing body policy manual and bylaws
- Operational policy and procedures manual
- Organizational chart (offices, roles, terms, etc.)
- Budget development plan and budget documents
- Admissions policies and procedures
- Governing body and leadership job descriptions (including testimony and evidence of faith)
- Financial audits or reviews
- Governing body and leadership evaluation instruments
- Long- and short-range goals/plans
- Certificates of compliance with local, state, federal, and provincial laws if applicable
- Salary and benefits/compensations documentation
- Clear understanding of the role of the board and the administration
- Understanding among the constituency of the decision-making procedures of the school and evidence of securing appropriate stakeholder input in the process
- Evidence of liability insurance
- Hiring procedures

### Supporting Evidence

- Information (agendas/minutes) on constituency meetings offered by the school
- Brochures and other publications on admissions
- Tuition and fee rates
- Program and/or project descriptions
- Governing body minutes
- Understanding among constituency of the specific and general policies and procedures established within the school
- An evaluation of instructional and organizational effectiveness
- Meaningful leadership roles assigned throughout the school community
- Accomplishments of subordinate leaders within the school community
- Leadership opportunities provided by parent and community groups to school operations
- Avenues for two-way communication with constituency



## STANDARD 3: HOME AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

The school exists and functions as an institution of reliability and authority by exhibiting a pattern of respect, trust, accountability, and dignity to its constituents, both internally and externally. Effective communication and relationships are fostered with constituents, as well as among constituents. A wide range of strategies are used to incorporate involvement by the parents and the community. It is expected that the school meets the educational and developmental needs of the students it enrolls. Services at the appropriate levels include guidance (both academic and personal) and student activities (curricular and cocurricular). Appropriate resources and planning occur to ensure that the mission, vision, and philosophy are being carried out to meet the expected outcomes.

### STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

Clear statements and communication of philosophy and mission will attract mission-appropriate families and result in students being enrolled in the school. Each school should evaluate the nature and quality of its relationships with the families and the like-minded churches it serves in the local community.

Since parents are a child's primary teachers, schools must respect the critical role parents play in supporting the growth and development of their child. Scripture clearly establishes the parental mandate to teach spiritual truths throughout all aspects of daily life (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). The education offered in a Christian school must be Christ centered. Effective partnerships with parents are a vital part of quality education. A rapport is built between staff and parents that supports communication between the home and the education program.

Before the child's attendance at school, parents/guardians are oriented to the philosophy, curriculum, guidance policies, assessment practices, and operating procedures in an interactive process that provides staff of the school with information about the child and the family. The staff actively initiates relationships with families, cultivating communication and providing multiple avenues for ongoing parent involvement and feedback.

Guidance includes assessing and assisting students in their initial adjustment to the school, and then it continues with counseling as needed during subsequent years. Sound counsel requires an understanding of the student and includes assessments of ability and achievement. In secondary school, these responsibilities take on added significance as students begin to seek vocational direction and assess their academic preparation and the development of their gifts and personalities.

Student activities are another component of education. A Christian school must be certain that the activities are carried out in a way that furthers the desired schoolwide expected student outcomes in the life of the student. It is possible for schools to be strongly Christian in the classroom but to take on secular norms in their cocurricular activities. A philosophical foundation of biblical integration must also be readily apparent in the activities outside the classroom. Activities of all kinds open unique opportunities for influencing students. In many cases, the public display and testimony of a school's Christian philosophy is most evident in the arena of activities.

### INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

- (C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)
- (E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools
- (EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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**All indicators in boldface are considered nonnegotiable and are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.**

- 3.1 Enrollment is sufficient to establish the viability of the school and all divisions it offers (i.e., EE, primary, elementary, secondary). (C)**
- 3.2 The school conducts regular demographic assessments of its constituents in light of the stated mission: (1) educational levels, (2) ethnic diversity, (3) faith backgrounds, (4) family income and vocation. (C)
- 3.3 The length of the school day and year, as well as the number of instructional hours and days, complies with state or provincial laws, if applicable. (E/S)
- 3.4 Regular, established, and effective two-way communication occurs between the school and its constituents. (C)
- 3.4a **Conferences with each child's parents/guardians are offered at least twice per year and at other times as needed to discuss the child's growth and developmental progress. (EE)**
- 3.5 The school has established biblical principles for resolving differences between the school and its constituents. These policies are written, reviewed, and communicated for effective implementation. (C)
- 3.6 The school systematically seeks input/feedback from current and past students in order to adjust its instructional and operational practices. (C)

**3.7 The nondiscrimination statement is published and evident in the actions, relationships, and programs of the school. (C)**

### **Guidance Services**

**3.8** Guidance services include (1) standardized and/or criterion-referenced testing, (2) student intervention services, and (3) referrals for students with academic needs. High schools also provide post-high school planning. (E/S)

**3.9** Processes are in place to identify and address students who have special needs. (C)

**3.10** The school communicates effectively with families regarding all guidance services provided by the school. (C)

**3.11 Confidential records of students are complete, organized, current, accessible only to appropriate personnel, compliant with applicable legal requirements, and kept in a safe location. (C)**

### **Student Activities**

**3.12** Student activities are consistent with the mission of the school, are a balanced variety, and are reflective of the needs of all students. (E/S)

**3.13** The school provides sufficient facilities, appropriate personnel, and financial support for each component of the student activities program. (E/S)

### **Personal Care, Support, and Advocacy for Children**

**3.14** The director ensures that daily transitions and regrouping of children are minimized through organization, written policies, and staffing. (EE)

**3.15** Each group of children has one primary teacher/caregiver to help ensure that the individual child is cared for and nurtured. (EE)

**3.16 Staff members intentionally prepare and maintain an emotionally healthy environment (outlined in the EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators on the accompanying CD). (EE)**

**3.17** The program has a written plan to address children who exhibit varying needs. Needs may include developmental delays, special needs, or English language learners (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD). (EE)

**3.18** Families are provided with materials and resources to assist with health and educational needs of their child. (EE)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.


**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

### **Required Documentation and Supporting**

**Evidence:** Provide the required documentation and any other supporting evidence that will help to verify compliance with the standard.

### **Required Documentation**

- Constituent (past and present) surveys and demographic surveys
- Schedules of parent conferences
- Student orientation programs
- List of student activities offered and qualifications of supervising staff
- Parent/student handbooks
- Any documentation used for student transition to the next grade level
- Advisory programs for students and the student referral process
- Inclusion policy for students who have special needs, if applicable
- School calendar and other publications that reflect the number of hours and days required
- Various methods in which the school communicates with constituents

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- The inclusion of dialogue with constituents in the communications process and evidence that the school responds to constituent input
  - Planning and implementation of inclusion plans for students who have special needs, if applicable

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Perception data from constituents regarding their feeling of affiliation with the school and of being well-informed regarding school issues and events
- The use of focus groups to process issues
- Individuals and groups representative of the community that participate in the work of the school
- A wide variety of forums in which expectations for students and for school improvement are presented
- Parent and student knowledge of expectations regarding student behavior and learning and of school improvement initiatives
- Data regarding student's feeling of acceptance within the school and readiness for success at the next level
- Depth of assignments of counselors within the building
- Agendas/minutes of constituent meetings, trainings, or presentations
- Student progress reports
- Reports to the community about the school and its students
- Course selection and/or student planning guides
- Communication plans (such as school and/or teacher websites, newsletters, letters, e-mails, automated phone messages)
- Access to online reporting of student achievement results (grades, homework, etc.)
- Career planning programs

## STANDARD 4: PERSONNEL

The school hires personnel who have made a personal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and endorse the school's statement of faith. They are committed to the written philosophy, mission, vision, and core values of the school. Faculty and staff engage in ongoing professional development to improve instructional practices leading to continual growth in student learning and development of the instructional program. The executive leadership and instructional and support staff are sufficient in number to provide for the effective delivery of quality education and are appropriately credentialed, degreed, trained, and qualified for their assigned duties.

### STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

The heart of the Christian school is the people who serve God on the instructional, noninstructional, and administrative staff. Every staff member is vital to the ministry to students. Because students learn so much through what they observe, the character, attitudes, and words of Christian teachers have great influence on the lives of students in their care. Scripture affirms that students become like their teachers (Luke 6:40). The faculty and the other staff establish the professional and spiritual quality of the school.

One of the most essential ways Christian educators follow Christ's example in their instructional practices is by building relationships with students and tailoring their responses to individual needs (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). Another way is by dedication to growth in professional knowledge and instructional skill (1 Timothy 4:15–16). Teachers' professional and spiritual growth strengthens their impact on children's spiritual and intellectual development.

The educational qualifications of the faculty and staff and the training they have received in the field play a significant role in the quality of schools. Degreed and trained educators are also better equipped in developing age-appropriate goals and activities for children. Student/teacher ratios, class size, and staff turnover can also make an impact on the learning environment and the function of a school. Every effort should be made to cultivate quality faculty for long-term service.

Certification of administrators and faculty is an important component in the accreditation of schools. The purpose of the ACSI certification program is to provide qualified Christian school educators with professional credentials.

### INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

- (C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)
- (E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools
- (EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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**All indicators in boldface are considered nonnegotiable and are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.**

- 4.1 Each staff member has a clear testimony of faith in Christ, has signed the school's statement of faith, and endorses the school's code of ethics/lifestyle statement. (C)**
- 4.2 The executive leadership of the school ensures that staff members know and understand the ethical considerations of their respective positions. (C)**
- 4.3 School personnel, including volunteers, clearly indicate their commitment to the mission and philosophy of the school and biblically based relationships therein. (C)
- 4.4 **The K–12 head of school and all K–12 principals hold an ACSI administrative certificate. (E/S)**
  - 4.4a EE Director: The director of the early education program has professional training as evidenced by having obtained, at minimum, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education/child development or related field from an accredited institution, or a bachelor's degree in a nonrelated field and a CDA, or a bachelor's degree in a nonrelated field and nine credit hours of college course work in early childhood education/child development or related field.**

The director also has a working understanding of business practices as evidenced by nine credit hours of college course work in administration/business (or its equivalent). The course work includes training in leadership development and supervision of adults. Refer to the EE Equivalency Chart: Director on the accompanying CD. (EE)
- 4.5 **All K–12 teachers hold, at minimum, a bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university or an institution recognized by ACSI. (E/S)**
  - 4.5a EE Teachers: Early education teachers have obtained, at minimum, an associate's degree in early childhood education/child development or related field from an accredited institution or an AA degree out of field with**

six credit hours of early childhood/child development in college course work. Refer to the EE Equivalency Chart: Teacher on the accompanying CD. (EE)

**4.5b EE Teacher Assistants:** Early education teacher assistants have obtained, at minimum, a state/nationally recognized competency credential. Refer to the EE Equivalency Chart: Teacher Assistants on the accompanying CD. (EE)

**4.6** A minimum of 80 percent of K–12 faculty, based on full-time equivalents (FTEs), hold current ACSI certification. (E/S)

**4.7** Professional development for K–12 faculty, guidance personnel, informational resources staff, and other appropriate staff is ongoing and integral to the school and aligned with specific goals and instructional programs, and it includes training in Christian school philosophy of education. (C)

**4.7a** All EE staff who are responsible for the care and education of the children in the program participate annually in a minimum of 12 documented clock hours (or meet the state-mandated clock hours) of continuing education or professional development relating to topics specific to early education. Refer to the EE Yearly Professional Development Report on the accompanying CD. (EE)

**4.7b** A minimum of four clock hours of biblical studies (a formal group or individual Bible study) is accepted with documentation of completion. (EE)

**4.7c** Eighty percent of all early education teachers and teacher assistants complete ACSI's *Principles and Practices of Christian Early Education* course. (EE)

**4.8** Policies and procedures that reflect ethical employment practices regarding faculty/staff and separation from service are implemented and regularly reviewed. (C)

**4.9** Executive leadership supports the implementation of effective instructional practices of faculty/staff through annual observation, evaluation, and goal setting to more effectively achieve desired student outcomes. (C)

**4.9a** The director ensures that a formal evaluation of new employees takes place no later than six months into the orientation period. (EE)

**4.10** The number of instructional and support staff is sufficient for the scope of the school. (C)

**4.11** All personnel, including volunteers and substitute teachers, have the appropriate screening and background checks on file, and they are supervised by qualified staff. Orientation for new staff members is thorough and is conducted before

any new staff have contact with the students. (See the Orientation Training Chart for EE personnel.) (C)

**4.12** The program policy provides a schedule for staff that includes appropriate planning time and breaks in the work schedule. (EE)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

**Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:** Provide the required documentation and any other supporting evidence that will help to verify compliance with the standard.


#### Required Documentation

- Documentation of teacher credentials, including certification, licensure, highly qualified status, baccalaureate degree, etc.
- Schedules and teaching assignments
- Handbooks for faculty and staff
- Professional development and staff orientation plans, procedures, and/or opportunities
- Classroom management plan/policy
- Evaluation processes, plans, and forms for new and continuing staff
- Forms such as applications, job descriptions
- Proof of screening and background checks
- Code of ethics statement (See glossary.)
- Alignment of resource allocation to educational programs and to school improvement plan requirements
- Early education yearly professional development report

#### Supporting Evidence

- Trends in staff recruitment and resignation
- Level of staff preparation in specific content area of assignment



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- Support staff that are certified or licensed
  - Level of pedagogical preparation for assigned responsibilities
  - Engagement of new and veteran staff in mentoring programs
  - The extent to which staff are involved in personal plans of professional development
  - Engagement of all school employees in appropriate professional development
  - A variety of ways in which staff are evaluated in their areas of responsibility
  - Hourly staff schedule indicating appropriate breaks
  - Technology training for faculty and staff
  - Data regarding faculty and staff retention and recruitment
  - Agendas/minutes of staff meetings
  - Other



## **STANDARD 5:**

# **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM AND RESOURCES**

The instructional program consists of carefully developed, thoroughly documented, and well-executed curriculum elements that include educational philosophy, schoolwide expected student outcomes, a variety of effective instructional strategies, adequate resources, and appropriate assessments that are based on current research and quality practices. The curriculum of the school is driven by well-written policies and procedures. It is sufficiently funded, collaboratively reviewed on a regular basis, and compiled using the school's mission, vision, schoolwide expected student outcomes, and core values to ensure a biblical foundation for instruction. A method for assessing the effectiveness of schoolwide learning outcomes is in place, and the results of the assessments are communicated regularly to all stakeholders.

Informational resources exist to carry out the mission of the school by supporting the instructional program with ample and appropriate print, media, and technology resources. Qualified staff provide effective services to students, staff, and parents.

### **STANDARD JUSTIFICATION**

#### **Instructional Program**

Just as each school needs its own philosophy statement, goals, schoolwide expected student outcomes, and mission statement, it also needs to tailor its own curriculum framework to support the accomplishment of its educational goals.

Schoolwide expected student outcomes are what the school targets for all students to know, believe, understand, prefer, and be able to do upon completion of the school's program. These schoolwide expected student outcomes are those regularly assessed by the school to help determine the school's progress in achieving its mission and are used to inform program and instructional improvement. Trends in student achievement of these goals are communicated to the school community through such means as a school profile.

ACSI defines curriculum as "the planned instructional program to be delivered to the students." It is not defined as the textbooks or other resource materials a school uses, though textbooks are one of many tools used by the school to deliver the planned instructional program. Nor is it simply defined as the box curriculum set that can be purchased for the early education level. Key to understanding curriculum is the "planned" element. Each school must identify the instructional model to follow, content to be utilized, and student outcomes to be realized—all resulting in the planned instructional program that is implemented on a daily basis. This planned instructional program must be well documented, teacher friendly, and goals driven, and it must be easily revisable as needed. It should be used as more than an

occasional reference tool; faculty should use it on a regular basis, indicating that this planned instructional program functions as a living, applicable document.

Additionally, all components of the instructional program—philosophy, outcomes, documentation of instruction, textbooks, and resources—must be reviewed on a planned basis, preferably in a well-defined cycle that addresses each content area. Student achievement is also regularly analyzed, and trend data of student performance from comparable schools is utilized in evaluating the school's effectiveness. The instructional protocols and procedural standards are reviewed as well.

In Christian schools, this curricular plan must not only contain academic and developmental goals but address spiritual formation goals and integration of God's Word in a natural and unforced manner. Through the instructional program and the Christian faculty that deliver it, the students develop a Christian view of God, humanity, and the world. This view should become the foundation for students' own values, goals, and lifestyle. Care must also be given to ensure that curriculum plans and implementation appropriately reflect an acknowledgment of differences in children and show God's love for people of all races, colors, ethnicities, and genders.

Effective curriculum is also sensitive to individual developmental variation, and it provides challenging experiences that lead to growth. It is designed to meet the needs of students as they matriculate to each new level of education and eventually the responsibilities of adult life. Implementation of the curriculum is tempered by awareness of the individual variation and the characteristics of the learner, particularly early learners.

Students should be well prepared for all aspects of their lives as a result of experiencing the instructional program of the Christian school. Since all truth is God's truth, teachable moments are utilized throughout the day to incorporate in a natural and an unforced way the truth that God is Creator and Lord of all content areas and disciplines. Integrating Christian truth into the curriculum is the distinctive of instruction. Christian moral and spiritual values are directly taught and are interwoven throughout each day's activities in an age-appropriate manner. Students are given the opportunity to practice responding to issues and concepts in a Christlike manner.

#### **Instructional Resources**

As schools have moved increasingly into the world of digital delivery and the traditional school library has transformed into a media/resource center, the presentation and delivery of reading and research content has become available in a variety of access modes and in increasingly diverse formats.

ACSI defines informational resources as the print and digital resources that are accessible on-site or digitally to support the instructional program. This includes resources necessary for students to complete the research required for their class assignments, reading material for skill development or enjoyment, faculty resources, and reference or learning extension data. The resources available are balanced across the academic disciplines and grade levels of the school and students' cultural heritage.

Educational technology plays an important role as a tool for learning and instruction. Preparation for all of life includes skill development in the Christ-honoring use of technology. Quality schools and programs use technology to collect, analyze, and utilize data to enhance classroom instruction and increase student learning. Christian educators understand that technology is a tool that can be properly or improperly used.

A technology plan should be in place in the school. This plan should indicate the acquisitions that will be made and how they will be implemented for effective instruction. It is important to include a plan for training of staff and the support and maintenance of equipment.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

**(C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

**(E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools

**(EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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All indicators in boldface are considered nonnegotiable and are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.

### Curriculum Guide/Mapping

- 5.1 The curriculum guide/plan is based on biblical truth, sound educational practice, and appropriate school-selected standards that inform the instructional program for the development of the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially. (C)**
- 5.2 The curriculum guide/plan, printed or electronic, includes the following components: (1) schoolwide expected student outcomes, (2) an educational philosophy statement that includes a biblical basis for each subject area, and (3) mapping or scope and sequence of instruction for each subject area at each grade level (incorporating items such as time frame for each instructional unit, overall instructional goals**

**for each course, specific instructional objectives for each unit of study including the developmentally appropriate application of Christlike character and values, instructional methods, instructional resources and textbooks, and evaluation and assessment strategies.) (E/S)**

- 5.2a The EE director ensures that the program has developed a curriculum guide/plan that flows out of the philosophy and foundational statements and that is based on current early education research and principles.**

The curriculum plan includes the following components: (1) an educational philosophy of teaching and how children learn based on early education research, (2) schoolwide expected student outcomes, (3) mapping of instruction for each age group, (4) incorporating overall goals and objectives aligned with state/national standards for each domain, (5) developmentally appropriate instructional methods, (6) instructional resources, and (7) evaluation and assessment strategies (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD). (EE)

### Instructional Strategies

- 5.3 The school systematically evaluates its instructional strategies, learning activities, and instructional technology, ensuring that these are research based and that they reflect sound educational practice. (C)**
- 5.4 Instructional strategies and learning activities focus on active student engagement, the achievement of essential knowledge and skills, biblical wisdom and understanding, and higher-order thinking skills. (E/S)**
- 5.4a Appropriate instructional strategies include the following developmental domains: spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive to include language, math, science/discovery (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD). (EE)**
- 5.4b Teachers incorporate appropriate instructional strategies and learning activities in the lesson plans that reflect the goals of the program and connect with the overall expected child outcomes (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD).**
- 5.4c The daily schedule provides for stability, security, and flexibility to meet the group's needs, capitalizing on the children's interest and attention span. The classroom schedule includes a balance of activities that are age appropriate in length (outlined in the**

*EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators on the accompanying CD).* (EE)

**5.5 There is a systematic process in place for the assessment of student learning and development that is used for program analysis and improvement.** (C)

5.5a Developmentally appropriate child assessments such as portfolios, work samples, and observation data are collected at least twice per year and shared with parents. (EE)

**5.6 The school gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making educationally sound decisions regarding students, instructional strategies, and the allocation of resources.** (C)

**5.7 The school analyzes student performance data including (1) implications of schoolwide trends seen from year to year; (2) monitoring the progress of individual students; (3) disaggregation of data by gender, ethnicity, and other factors important to the school; and (4) comparison to comparable outside groups.** (E/S)

**Instructional Resources**

**5.8 Instructional resources are adequate and appropriate for the programs offered and are systematically evaluated and selected with appropriate input.** (C)

5.8a Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment are provided in each classroom including child-sized tables and chairs and adequate furniture in good repair to meet the needs of the children. (EE)

**5.9 The school has an appropriate, accessible, and balanced variety of informational and research resources for students and staff that includes the Christian distinctive of the school and supports the learning objectives of the instructional programs.** (C)

**5.10 Informational and research resources are culturally sensitive, representing the enrolled demographic, surrounding communities, and students' countries of citizenship.** (C)

**5.11 Faculty members, students, and other relevant constituents provide input into the selection of instructional and research resources that support the attainment of schoolwide expected student outcomes.** (C)

**5.12 Informational resources are readily accessible to students, staff, and faculty.** (C)

5.12a Passive media (television, DVDs, CDs), when used, meet the following requirements: (1) are appropriate to the age and the attention span, (2)

enhance the effectiveness and values of the program, (3) are previewed by the staff for overall content and age appropriateness, (4) serve as an occasional supplement to daily activities rather than a significant part, and (5) include appropriate teacher involvement in introducing and following up the viewing with questions and activities that elicit children's active involvement. (EE)

5.12b If the program includes computers for children's use, program guidelines have been developed for classroom use to ensure children's active involvement. Guidelines address strategies to ensure interactive involvement and consider the needs of the young learner. (EE)

**Systematic Review**

**5.13 The school formally evaluates the instructional program on a systematic basis, including monitoring of the school environment to ensure that it is conducive to the learning and development of the whole child.** (C)

**Policies and Procedures**

**5.14 The school has a written classroom management philosophy and policies that are developmentally appropriate and biblically based, and they are implemented effectively and communicated to the school community.** (E/S)

5.14a Child guidance policies and procedures are in place and published for parents and staff. The policies and procedures support staff in maintaining effective orderly classrooms (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide on the accompanying CD*). (EE)

**5.15 Written policies and procedures are in place to allocate and protect instructional time and learning opportunities and support student learning and graduation requirements. The number of students per classroom is monitored for effective learning and student-teacher relationships.** (C)

**5.16 The school instructs teachers and students in the ethical and moral use and evaluation of source materials, including verification, attribution and credit, appropriate referencing, and media literacy.** (E/S)

**5.17 The school has, and regularly evaluates, a technology plan that includes the acquisition, inventory, and maintenance of software and hardware as well as acceptable use policies.** (C)

**5.18 The school has implemented procedures for regular communication of student achievement to all stakeholders. This communication includes the following: (1) major tests used, (2) schoolwide trends in**

achievement, (3) accomplishment of schoolwide expected student outcomes, and (4) annual progress of individual students. (C)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Instructional Program Disciplines:** The steering committee will generally complete the introductory/overview section of each school division (if the school has divided this section into divisions or school units). Teachers, however, should be assigned to complete a section of the instructional program overview.

Schools should consider forming interdisciplinary subcommittees to promote improved understanding of objectives (including schoolwide objectives), methodologies, priorities, and perspectives between departments. Early education programs and classrooms naturally tend to implement the curricular plans in an interdisciplinary fashion (content delivery across subject areas).

Observations will verify this approach. Some regional accrediting agencies will expect this process in a joint accreditation effort.

The school can choose to complete this subsection in a variety of ways. Typically, the faculty will address the “subjects overview” for the overall instructional program content. The school could choose to expand the subjects within each school unit, but that is not required. In the early education program, teachers will be assigned to review all curricular plans for a specific age group. In the elementary school, sections will be completed for every subject. In the junior high/middle school and high school, each department or instructional discipline will complete a section.

**EE Programs:** The early education curriculum plan/guide is most effective when presented in domains (spiritual, physical, social/emotional, and cognitive), highlighting the goals for children in these areas. Within the cognitive domain, special attention will be given to subject/content areas. The self-study will include an assessment of the strengths of the curriculum map and identified areas for improvement.

### **Overall Instructional Program Part A:**

General instructional program description and overview:

- Brief narrative of the entire instructional program

- Data documentation
- Strengths of the entire program
- Areas for continuous school improvement

### **Instructional Program Content Synopsis, Part B:**

Subject area assessment for each of the following: Bible, mathematics, science, technology, language arts (including reading), social studies/history, classic and modern language, art, music, and physical education, and any other area of instruction.

- Brief synopsis of each subject area
- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses (with supporting evidence)
- Suggested improvements

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

### **Required Documentation and Supporting**

**Evidence:** Provide the required documentation and any other supporting evidence that will help to verify compliance with the standard.

### **Required Documentation**

- Curriculum guides/mapping and policy and procedures for formal review and revision
- Instructional guides, including curriculum mapping and/or scope and sequence charts
- Evaluation criteria for improvement or change
- Sample/example lesson plans
- Assessment results (standardized, formative, summative, comparative, and other)
- Technology plan
- Evidence of trained personnel
- Acceptable usage policy
- Formal process for faculty input on selection of materials
- Examples of biblical integration into all areas of the instructional program
- Student engagement in the classroom and classroom strategies that encourage active involvement of students in their own learning



- Faculty use of various instructional strategies and methods to provide for a variety of learning opportunities for students
- Indications that school climate is important and is used to help guide school decisions
- Evidence of communicating student performance to all stakeholders
- Early education child guidance policies and procedures
- Faculty can submit needs for educational purposes
- Circulation trends

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Instructions for alignment of lesson plans to learning expectations for students
- Agendas/minutes of grade-level and/or department meetings
- Master class schedule
- Program and/or project descriptions
- Textbooks used
- Handbooks
- Student work samples
- Classroom grading policy
- Graduation requirements, credits, GPA explanation
- Comprehensive library materials collection
- Circulation data for media materials
- Budget allocation system
- Inventory of instructional media equipment
- Steps taken within the school to link student learning to a set of standards
- Research and use of data on the effectiveness of improvement strategies
- Willingness of the school leadership to support strategies for improved instruction
- Differentiated instruction provided to students who have specific needs
- Consistency of learning and sequence across grade levels
- Continuing efforts within the school to articulate learning both horizontally and vertically
- Ways in which the school provides for the reteaching of students who have not met expectations
- Curriculum that is monitored and revised
- Students and staff have access to instructional technology
- Instructional activities have support from and interaction with information and media services

## STANDARD 6: STUDENT CARE

Written policies and procedures are in place to ensure the care of the students—emotionally, physically, spiritually, and academically. The school facilities (buildings and grounds) are appropriate in size, furnishings, and space to meet the stated philosophy, mission, and vision for the number and age of students served. The entire campus is a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for teaching and learning. Safety procedures are documented and clearly understood, and they address the prevention and identification of abuse, bullying, and the presence of unwelcomed guests. A relevant and thorough crisis management plan is in place, and the faculty and staff have been trained appropriately to handle various emergency situations. Regular drills and practices occur to assist in preparation for crisis events. Transportation guidelines for staff and students are developed, and written policies and procedures are in place.

### STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

#### Crisis Planning

Crisis planning is essential to ensure that a safe and nurturing environment is provided for the students, faculty, and staff. School preparedness for potential threats to the environment, natural disasters, and emergency situations must be documented via a well-developed plan that outlines the steps to be taken in the event of a crisis. Evidence of scheduled training and education of all involved is provided and inclusive of evacuation plans, testing and drill exercises, parent notification procedures, and compliance with local, state, federal, or provincial regulations. This plan must be updated regularly to be effective for the current status of the school.

#### Safety and Health

The health, safety, and welfare of all students has priority as a part of the overall school programming. Consistent enforcement of policies and procedures that promote and ensure compliance with health regulations is imperative. Documentation of faculty and staff training in first aid and CPR, guidelines for the storage and distribution of medication, special medical needs, food allergies, and protocol on handling of communicable diseases, and bloodborne pathogens must be evident. There is ongoing documented review of policy and education of faculty in identification of signs and symptoms of possible child abuse or neglect and their role as mandatory reporters. Education of the school population in harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) laws creates a culture that values each child. Pests and pesticides are handled as governing authorities dictate.

#### Food/Nutrition Services

Food and nutrition services are a component of school programming. Guidelines regarding the type of services provided must be outlined with attention to foodborne allergies. Compliance with governmental standards for the preparation, handling, storage, and delivery of food is required. Personnel guidelines are posted. Dining facilities must be hygienic and appropriate for the size of the school population and provide a positive atmosphere for peer and staff interactions.

#### Facilities

The facilities enhance the academic program and foster a positive reputation within the community. Safety and campus security are emphasized. Written documentation validates regular inspection and maintenance. Traffic flow patterns, playgrounds, and buildings are designed in such a manner that allows for safe usage by staff and students. The master site plan outlines optimal usage of buildings and grounds for parking, play, and recreation while detailing plans for future expansion. Good stewardship and excellent maintenance of facilities honor God's provision.

#### Environment

The indoor and outdoor spaces communicate a sense of order, and they are aesthetically pleasing. The environment is clearly designed for the comfort and engagement of children. Space allocations are sufficient and appropriate. As possible, provisions are made to accommodate those who have exceptional physical needs.

#### Transportation

Safe and effective transport of students to and from school-related activities is a priority. Regular maintenance and inspection of vehicles complies with applicable regulations. Proof of insurance and an appropriate driver's license are documented for all drivers. Policies, procedures, and guidelines outlining behavior standards for students are communicated and rehearsed.

### INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

**(C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

**(E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools

**(EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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**All indicators in boldface are considered nonnegotiable and are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.**



## Crisis Planning

- 6.1 A comprehensive written security and crisis management plan has been developed, regularly reviewed, and implemented, and it is supported by appropriate training for all staff and students. (C)
- 6.2 The school communicates with legal authorities (i.e., the fire department, police department, and other applicable agencies), parents, media, and community members when a crisis or a major incident occurs. (C)

## Safety and Health

- 6.3 The school complies with applicable local, state, and federal laws regarding safety and health issues. (C)
  - 6.3a The program does not offer foods that present a risk of choking to children. Food is cut into small pieces no larger than a one-fourth-inch square for infants and a one-half-inch square for toddlers. A written policy is communicated to all staff and parents. (EE)
- 6.4 Students are in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities regarding immunizations, physical examinations, and communicable diseases. Records of health services rendered to students (including accidents and injuries) are appropriately noted and filed. (C)
- 6.5 Written policies and procedures for all areas of health and safety services have been developed, reviewed, and implemented. (C)
  - 6.5a The program has specific written policies that guide the consistent implementation of a wellness and illness management plan as well as staff training in their responsibilities (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD). (EE)
  - 6.5b The program has an established plan for sanitizing toys and equipment regularly. Toys that have been contaminated by saliva or other body secretions are washed and sanitized before they are used by another child. (EE)
- 6.6 Biblically based plans and procedures are developed that educate the school community regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying. (C)
- 6.7 The school provides training for staff and complies with its legal reporting responsibilities in cases of alleged child abuse, neglect, or other areas in which reporting is mandated. (C)

## Food/Nutrition Services

- 6.8 The school complies with local, state, and federal regulations regarding preparation, delivery, handling, and storage of food. (C)
- 6.9 The school provides a suitable and hygienic eating space for the staff and students. (C)
- 6.10 Nutritional standards for meals and snacks have been established. (C)
  - 6.10a The nutritional needs of children are met and supported by the staff and facilities (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD). (EE)

## Facilities, Environment, Transportation

- 6.11 Required local, state, provincial, and federal legal standards for fire protection, sanitation, and transportation are met. (C)
- 6.12 The school maintains the site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide an environment that is safe, secure, and orderly. (C)
- 6.13 The facilities are secure and suitable for the size of the school; these facilities are well maintained, enhancing quality instruction for the students. (C)
  - 6.13a The program provides an ongoing maintenance plan that ensures the health and safety of the children (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD). (EE)
  - 6.13b Sinks and toilets are readily accessible to children. (EE)
- 6.14 The recreation area/playground, common areas, and athletic areas are safe, age appropriate, and large enough for the number of students. (C)
  - 6.14a The early education playground supports the developmental growth of children within a context of safety (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD). (EE)
- 6.15 A written facilities plan is in place to address future programs; enrollment changes; staff, facility, and technical needs; as well as future capital improvements. (C)
- 6.16 Vehicles and drivers used to transport students for all school activities follow the school's policies as well as government and insurance regulations. (C)
- 6.17 Adequate liability, vehicle, and property insurance are in place. (C)

6.18 Written policies and procedures are in place for routine safety inspections, service, and repair of school-owned vehicles and for reporting vehicle accidents—including communication with all constituents. (C)

6.19 **Infants and Toddlers: Appropriate health, safety, and supervision practices ensure the specific needs of infants and toddlers are met (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators* on the accompanying CD).** (EE)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

#### **Areas for Continuous School Improvement:**

State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

#### **Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:**

Provide the required documentation and any other supporting evidence that will help to verify compliance with the standard.

##### **Required Documentation**

- Crisis management and emergency plan
- Building evacuation plan displayed in classrooms, offices, and other rooms used by students
- Food services guidelines and inspection reports, if applicable
- Schedules and documentation of required drills (e.g., fire or earthquake)
- Health policies, procedures, and guidelines (including medicine distribution and storage)
- Student and faculty health files
- Documentation of known allergies
- Documentation showing compliance with local, state, federal, or provincial regulations, when appropriate
- Reporting procedures and policies for child abuse/neglect/bullying prevention

- Written process describing how facilities are regularly inspected and maintained and data demonstrating the quality of these processes
- Long-range facility plans (including plans for continual updating of facilities)
- Transportation policy/plan
- Documentation showing compliance with all local, state, federal, or provincial regulations, when appropriate
- Master site/security plan
- Crisis plans notification procedures
- Parent notification procedures

##### **Supporting Evidence**

- Regular updates to evacuation and crisis management plans
- Guidelines posted in appropriate places for food services
- Sample health forms and immunization records
- Copies of CPR and first aid certification
- Field trip policies, procedures, forms
- Copies of recent menus for meals/snacks
- Student emergency profile forms (follows the students for activities)
- Indication that facilities are regularly inspected and maintained
- Indications of a safe and orderly environment
- Vehicular flow and traffic safety
- Surveys
- Budget allocation for maintenance and facility development
- Environmental studies
- Building and/or transportation usage forms
- Evidence of insurance, if appropriate
- Any other documentation to verify compliance with this standard
- Facility maintenance history
- Policy for appropriately sized food for infants and toddlers
- Policy for wellness and illness management plan

## STANDARD 7: CHARACTER, VALUES, AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF STUDENTS

The school shall provide for spiritual nurture and discipleship of its students with the goal of developing a biblical worldview. Spiritual nurturing of Christlike character is planned, intentional, and systematic in implementation. Bible is a required core subject. Mentoring and discipleship experiences are necessary components in a spiritual formation strategy. Students are given opportunities to serve others and develop a Christlike attitude toward the poor, needy, and vulnerable. A commitment to a community of faith is modeled by the faculty and emphasized to all students. Spiritual formation assessment is integral to effective and ongoing improvement of the school program.

### STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

The distinctive nature of a Christian school is that it seeks to produce rational, reasoned, and responsible Christian citizens—rational in that it is shaping its students to be spiritually formed thinkers, reasoned in that Christian schooling trains pupils for the thoughtful use of a biblical worldview, responsible because it deliberately educates students for Christian living.

The educational process is holistic in that it addresses the development of mind, body, and spirit. Spiritual principles, then, are not presented in isolation; they become embedded into daily routines and activities. Truths are presented, taught, and modeled in ways appropriate to the developmental level of the students. Schoolwide expected student outcomes include strong character, evidence of values consistent with a person of faith, and a God-centered pattern of life.

Christian schools should not be teaching students to withdraw from the world but to love God with all their heart, mind, and soul (Matthew 22:37); demonstrate growth in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52); demonstrate the ability to live in the world as salt and light (Matthew 5:13–14); and demonstrate the sacrificial giving of themselves and their resources to reflect the essence and love of Christ who lives and dwells with them (Romans 12:1).

Measurement of students' growth in spiritual formation and attainment of schoolwide expected student outcomes in the spiritual/affective domain is an integral component of the school's assessment strategy in order to identify trends in the student body for program improvement.

### INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:


- (C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)
- (E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools
- (EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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**All indicators in boldface are considered nonnegotiable and are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.**

- 7.1 Schoolwide expected student outcomes include character development, acquisition of Christian values, and spiritual formation. (C)**
- 7.2 Christlike respect, compassion, and caring for self and all others is taught and demonstrated by school personnel. (C)
- 7.3 Mentoring and discipleship experiences focus on spiritual formation, character development, and the instilling of Christian values. (C)
- 7.4 Staff-student interactions reflect the attitude of Christ. Communication between staff and students demonstrates sensitivity and responsiveness to the individual needs, interests, and temperaments of the students. (C)**
- 7.5 All aspects of the school and its instructional programs reflect developmentally appropriate application of a biblical worldview and Christlike character and values. (C)
- 7.6 Age-appropriate opportunities for service and missions, including compassionate outreach to the poor, needy, or vulnerable, are provided as a means of spiritual growth and formation. (C)
- 7.7 Active participation in a local Christian church community is required of the faculty and emphasized within the school's philosophy, schoolwide expected student outcomes, and goals. (C)
- 7.8 Assessment of the spiritual development of students is intentionally included in the ongoing evaluation of the school's effectiveness in formally measuring its schoolwide expected student outcomes. (E/S)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the



data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies.  
(Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

**Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:**  
Provide the required documentation and any other supporting evidence that will help to verify compliance with the standard.

**Required Documentation**

- Schoolwide expected student outcomes
- Handbooks
- Guidelines and policies related to spiritual assessment
- Mentoring and discipleship activities

**Supporting Evidence**

- Chapel schedules
- Community service schedules
- Surveys
- Publications
- Student feedback
- Parent and community feedback
- Community outreaches
- Classroom observations and records of students' questions and conversations about spiritual matters

## STANDARD 8: CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The school must, with appropriate stakeholder input, systematically develop and annually update a continuous school improvement plan (CSIP). The plan, based on the school's philosophy, mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcomes, includes specific long-range and short-range goals, as well as action items. The process is driven by data collection and analysis. This plan must have significant focus on how it will promote organizational growth and high achievement of schoolwide expected student outcomes. The CSIP reflects a pervasive culture of ongoing improvement and accountability.

### STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

The CSIP may include areas where the school is pursuing its vision, developing innovative and creative ideas, pursuing academic and faith development, and establishing new strategies for growth and development. The major recommendations from the team report must be included in the revised CSIP. The head of school is ultimately responsible for the ongoing updating of the CSIP.

### INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

- (C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)
- (E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools
- (EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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**All indicators in boldface are considered nonnegotiable and are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.**

- 8.1 The ongoing planning process is collaborative, and it includes opportunities for input from all stakeholders. (C)**
- 8.2 The CSIP reflects the attainment of schoolwide expected student outcomes and school effectiveness. **(C)**
- 8.3 The planning process is organizationally comprehensive and establishes priorities for short- and long-range development. **(C)**
- 8.4 The school improvement plan is developed by utilizing a variety of organizational, achievement, and survey data and input from stakeholders. The plan is viewed as a strategy for strengthening mission effectiveness and vision accomplishment. **(C)**
- 8.5 Each action item in the improvement plan addresses the fiscal, personnel, resources, and time implications for implementation. **(C)**

- 8.6 The school evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its improvement plan and regularly communicates the results to all stakeholders. **(C)**

**Brief Narrative:** In two to three paragraphs, explain how this standard is met or how compliance is hindered. If compliance is hindered, include plans for strengthening and maintaining compliance. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.


**Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:** Provide the required documentation and any other supporting evidence that will help to verify compliance with the standard.

### Required Documentation

- Written school improvement plan and process
- School profile
- A plan that includes components that provide specific goals, a set of appropriate assessments, a set of interventions expected to cause student growth to occur, and a plan for ensuring that the staff have the skills to implement the plan
- A continuous review process to ensure ongoing monitoring and adjustment of the improvement plan
- Student performance and achievement data

### Supporting Evidence

- The degree to which staff have analyzed student results in the context of school improvement plan interventions and programs
- A broad range of involvement by constituency in the design of the school improvement plan
- Alignment of the school improvement goals with needs identified in the profile and supported by data analysis
- Professional development activities that are aligned with and a part of the school improvement plan
- A variety of baseline and interval data to describe progress toward the goals
- The extent to which the improvement agenda has been widely discussed among constituents
- Various communication techniques used to inform constituency regarding school improvement efforts and successes

- 
- A rigorous data-analysis process to evaluate the degree of success in goal attainment
  - A school improvement plan that focuses on increased student achievement
  - Agendas/minutes of meetings regarding school improvement activities and results
  - Communications to constituency regarding school improvement activities and results
  - Success demonstrated in reaching goals of the school improvement plan



# APPENDIXES

The following appendixes were developed to provide schools with more clarity and direction as they progress in their self-study and begin the accreditation process.

Please note that there are additional resources and tools made available on the accompanying CD.

## APPENDIX A

### ACSI MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS AND STATEMENT OF FAITH

#### ACSI MISSION STATEMENT

ACSI exists to strengthen Christian schools and equip Christian educators worldwide as they prepare students academically and inspire them to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

#### ACSI VISION STATEMENT

ACSI will become a leading international organization that promotes Christian education and provides training and resources to Christian schools and Christian educators, resulting in

- schools that contribute to the public good through effective teaching and learning and that are biblically sound, academically rigorous, socially engaged, and culturally relevant and
- educators who embody a biblical worldview, engage in transformational teaching and discipling, and embrace personal and professional growth.

#### ACSI STATEMENT OF FAITH

ACSI is committed to responding to the needs of Christian educators and schools in order to lead its membership to spiritual and academic excellence—to provide assistance without interference and opportunity without obligation. We are bound to extend our ministry to all we can reach if we are to carry out our Lord's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20).

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).
2. We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30).

3. We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15, 7:26), His miracles (John 2:11), His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9), His resurrection (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4), His ascension to the right hand of God (Mark 16:19), His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).
4. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved (John 3:16–19, 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:8–9; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 3:5).
5. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28–29).
6. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, Galatians 3:26–28).
7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13–14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19–20; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18).

# APPENDIX B

## NONNEGOTIABLE INDICATORS

All of the standards in *REACH 2.0* should be met at an acceptable level for a school to be identified as “accredited.” In support of this acceptable level, the following indicators are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.

### INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

**(C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

**(E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools

**(EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

### 1.0 PHILOSOPHY AND FOUNDATIONS

- 1.1 The statement of faith and the philosophy, vision, mission, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcomes statements of the school are established and are reviewed regularly and systematically in a collaborative manner. **(C)**
- 1.3 The philosophy statement is consistently applied as an integrative, coordinating, and examining device throughout all aspects of the programs, operations, and curriculum. **(C)**

### 2.0 GOVERNANCE AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

- 2.2 The governance and executive leadership team of the school reflects a clear Christ-centered governance and executive leadership model. A policy is in place that requires a testimony and evidence of faith in Jesus Christ from all board members and executive leadership. **(C)**
- 2.5 Established written policies and procedures promote effective operations in admissions, governance, finance, and other operational aspects. Appropriate legal documents and clearly articulated articles of incorporation, governing body policies, and bylaws are established and are available for review. **(C)**
- 2.6 Established written policies are in place to see that the educational and developmental needs of each admitted student are being met on the basis of biblical principles, professional ethics, and high standards. Staff members are sensitive to the culture, gender, language, and special needs of students and their families. **(C)**
- 2.7 Financial resources are available to fulfill the mission and programs of the school, and financial operations and decisions are conducted with integrity and in accordance with biblical principles. Income received from tuition is appropriately used for education-related expenses within the school. **(C)**
- 2.9 A financial review is conducted by an external CPA that has no vested interest in the school at the time of initial accreditation and renewal. The annual statement

of financial practices is submitted with the annual accreditation report. The school complies with GAAP. **(C)**

### 3.0 HOME AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

- 3.1 Enrollment is sufficient to establish the viability of the school and all school divisions it offers (i.e., EE, primary, elementary, secondary). **(C)**
- 3.7 The nondiscrimination statement is published and evident in the actions, relationships, and programs of the school. **(C)**
- 3.11 Confidential records of students are complete, organized, current, accessible only to appropriate personnel, compliant with applicable legal requirements, and kept in a safe location. **(C)**
- 3.16 *Staff members intentionally prepare and maintain an emotionally healthy environment (outlined in the EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators on the accompanying CD).* **(EE)**

### 4.0 PERSONNEL

- 4.1 Each staff member has a clear testimony of faith in Christ, has signed the school’s statement of faith, and endorses the school’s code of ethics/lifestyle statement. **(C)**
- 4.2 The executive leadership of the school ensures that staff members know and understand the ethical considerations of their respective positions. **(C)**
- 4.4 The K–12 head of school and all K–12 principals hold an ACSI administrative certificate. **(E/S)**
  - 4.4a *EE Director: The director of the early education program has professional training as evidenced by having obtained, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education/child development or related field from an accredited institution, or a bachelor’s degree in a nonrelated field and a CDA, or a bachelor’s degree in a nonrelated field and nine credit hours of college course work in early childhood education/child development or related field.*  
The director also has a working understanding of business practices as evidenced by nine credit hours of college course work in administration/business (or its equivalent). The course work includes training in leadership development and supervision of adults. Refer to the EE Equivalency Chart: Director on the accompanying CD. **(EE)**

4.5 All K–12 teachers hold, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college/university or an institution recognized by ACSI. (E/S)

4.5a EE Teachers: Early education teachers have obtained, at minimum, an associate’s degree in early childhood education/child development or related field from an accredited institution or an AA degree out of field with six credit hours of early childhood/child development in college course work. Refer to the EE Equivalency Chart: Teacher on the accompanying CD. (EE)

4.5b EE Teacher Assistants: Early education teacher assistants have obtained, at minimum, a state/nationally recognized competency credential. Refer to the EE Equivalency Chart on the accompanying CD. (EE)

4.6 A minimum of 80 percent of K–12 faculty, based on full-time equivalents (FTEs), hold current ACSI certification. (E/S)

4.11 All personnel, including volunteers and substitute teachers, have the appropriate screening and background checks on file, and they are supervised by qualified staff. Orientation for new staff members is thorough and is conducted before any new staff have contact with the students. (See the Orientation Training Chart for EE personnel.) (C)

## 5.0 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM AND RESOURCES

5.1 The curriculum guide/plan is based on biblical truth, sound educational practice, and appropriate school-selected standards that inform the instructional program for the development of the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially. (C)

5.2 The curriculum guide/plan (printed or electronic) includes the following components: (1) schoolwide expected student outcomes, (2) an educational philosophy that includes a biblical basis for each subject area, and (3) mapping or scope and sequence of instruction for each subject area at each grade level (incorporating items such as time frame for each instructional unit, overall instructional goals for each course, specific instructional objectives for each unit of study including the developmentally appropriate application of Christlike character and values, instructional methods, instructional resources and textbooks, and evaluation and assessment strategies.) (E/S)

5.5 There is a systematic process in place for the assessment of student learning and development that is used for program analysis and improvement. (C)

5.7 The school analyzes student performance data from trends including (1) implications of schoolwide trends seen from year to year; (2) monitoring the progress of individual students; (3) disaggregation of data by gender, ethnicity, and other factors important to the school; and (4) comparison to comparable outside groups. (E/S)

## 6.0 STUDENT CARE

6.1 A comprehensive written security and crisis management plan has been developed, regularly reviewed, and implemented, and it is supported by training for all staff and students. (C)

6.5 Written policies and procedures for all areas of health and safety services have been developed, reviewed, and implemented. (C)

6.6 Biblically based plans and procedures are developed that educate and address the school community regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying. (C)

6.7 The school provides training for staff and complies with its legal reporting responsibilities in cases of alleged child abuse, neglect, or other areas in which reporting is mandated. (C)

6.13 The facilities are secure and suitable for the size of the school; these facilities are well maintained, enhancing quality instruction for the students. (C)

## 7.0 CHARACTER, VALUES, AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF STUDENTS

7.1 Schoolwide expected student outcomes include character development, acquisition of Christian values, and spiritual formation. (C)

7.4 Staff-student interactions reflect the attitude of Christ. Communication between staff and students demonstrates sensitivity and responsiveness to the individual needs, interests, and temperaments of the students. (C)

## 8.0 CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

8.1 The ongoing planning process is collaborative, and it includes opportunities for input from all stakeholders. (C)

# APPENDIX C

## OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Success in completing the self-study and in accomplishing accreditation depends on the investment of time and energy by the entire faculty and staff. The chief administrator/early education director assumes a major role in the leadership of the process; however, support is needed from the faculty and the board. Many responsibilities must be delegated to the faculty to accomplish the major goal of accreditation: school improvement. It is also imperative that the governing body/steering committee members and others be involved in the self-study process.

### 1. EXAMINATION OF PHILOSOPHY, GOALS, MISSION, AND SCHOOLWIDE EXPECTED STUDENT OUTCOMES

The faculty as a whole should examine the stated philosophy, goals, and mission of the school in relationship to the programs and services it offers. The philosophy, goals, and mission must be examined in light of the Scriptures to ensure that the foundational principles of the school are compatible with the biblical mandates for Christian education. Each accredited school is required to have established a set of schoolwide expected student outcomes that are well-known and regularly assessed. Schoolwide expected student outcomes identify what the school intentionally wishes to produce in the lives of its students and what the school intends that the student will become after his or her tenure in the school. Outcomes are based in the philosophy of the school as well as its statements of mission and vision and then personalized to the lives of the students. These outcome statements may take a variety of forms, but they should be clear, widely distributed across the school constituency, discussed by the staff, and consistently assessed.

### 2. STEERING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

A steering committee, which is responsible for the overall management and completion of the self-study, should be established. The head of school/early education director is usually a member of this committee, though not necessarily the chairperson. A vital function of the steering committee is to develop and follow a timetable for the completion of the self-study. Realistically, at least a year should be allowed for the self-study process.

### 3. SELF-STUDY SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Subcommittees must be established for the self-study, and assignments must be made for each section of the accreditation manual and for the areas of the instructional program. After subcommittee assignments have been made, each subcommittee should carefully review and study its assigned section. It is imperative that each member of a subcommittee be thorough, yet concise, in completing his or her assigned tasks. When the report is completed to the satisfaction of the self-study subcommittee, it should then be presented to the steering committee for its consideration and evaluation. The steering committee may make recommendations to the subcommittee concerning the report before it is presented to the entire faculty and staff for final approval.

One product of the committee report is a list of the major strengths and goals established for improvement and growth. These goals for improvement may be identified later by the steering committee as major areas for improvement as a schoolwide or program-wide priority for standard 8. However, even if they are not incorporated as a portion of the major plans for improvement for standard 8, the plans for improvement in the subcommittee report are useful as annual goals.

### 4. FACULTY, STAFF, AND BOARD READINGS

It is important that the entire faculty, staff, and board come to a consensus concerning the findings of the self-study. For this reason, each section of the self-study should be considered in its final form by the entire faculty and staff. In regularly scheduled meetings, each of the assigned subcommittees should give presentations.

### 5. DURING THE VISITING COMMITTEE'S ONSITE VISIT

The responsibility of the administration, faculty, and staff during the visit is to be themselves, as much as possible, while the committee members are visiting. Visiting committee members are not there to evaluate individual teachers but to get a sense of the instructional quality of the school program. The staff should respond candidly in interviews but should not seek to air problems or issues with the visiting committee.

### 6. AFTER ACCREDITATION

After accreditation the school must do the following:

1. The staff should read carefully the entire visiting committee report while giving special attention to the sections most closely associated with their responsibilities and to any major recommendations.
2. A plan of action based on the insights of the visiting committee, and the subcommittees, should be developed and communicated to the constituency. The plan should include recommendations from the visiting committee report and items from the continuous school improvement plan section of the self-study.
3. The school must respond to the major recommendations in the visiting committee report as well as ultimately to all recommendations in the report and the findings of the subcommittees.
4. An annual report must be filed with the ACSI regional office or the ACSI Global office. An interim report is due at the midpoint of the accreditation term for international schools and can be required for U.S. schools if deemed necessary.
5. ACSI accreditation standards must be maintained, and a continuous effort to address the recommendations of the visiting committee report is expected of an accredited school.
6. The appropriate regional or global office will contact the school 12 to 18 months before the accreditation expiration date to set a review timeline for the reaccreditation visit.



## APPENDIX D

### THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Writing the self-study is the critical ingredient in maximizing the value of the accreditation process. The self-study is foundational, addressing all the other components of the process. Therefore, it requires the best efforts of the faculty to prepare an accurate, complete, and well-written document. Writing the self-study is conducted by subcommittees that review, analyze, and evaluate every area of the school's program. *REACH 2.0 Standards Manual for Accreditation for EE-12 North American and International Schools* provides a framework and a set of rubrics to guide the subcommittees through the process.

There are three basic commitments to a successful self-study:

1. A willingness to invest the necessary time, effort, and cost
2. The complete support of the entire school community—administration, board, faculty, staff, and parents
3. A commitment to make any changes that the self-study brings to light for the betterment of the school and student learning

#### The Steering Committee Duties

The steering committee generally serves as the editorial committee for the self-study, but the committee's time will be spent best in thinking carefully about the responses submitted for each standard.

The steering committee evaluates the report for accuracy, completeness, and thoroughness. Once approved by the steering committee, the report is read to the full faculty for their comments and input. Their suggestions are reviewed and incorporated. The report is then resubmitted to the steering committee.

The steering committee then accumulates the data that should be supplied with the report in an electronic fashion (Dropbox, Google Docs, Sky Docs, etc.). Each artifact and document must be clearly labeled according to what section of the self-study it addresses. Copies of the self-study must be made available for all members of the visiting team at least four weeks before the visit. The steering committee is responsible for having available the appropriate documentation for the visiting team before and during the time they are on-site.

#### Subcommittee Duties

The function of the subcommittees is to accomplish the following:

1. Determine for each area what evidence is necessary to provide a concise, yet complete and accurate, response. For questions seeking analysis of quality or effectiveness, the subcommittee should investigate "what is" through observation, interviews, portfolios, or other evidence. The subcommittee should not assume that what is put forth as the curriculum, policies, and programs of the school is what is actually experienced by the students.
2. Investigate what is actually being implemented by the administration, taught by the faculty, and experienced by the children, students, and parents. After all relevant information has been collected, the subcommittee synthesizes the evidence and records "what is" by giving a summary response.
3. On the basis of its determination of "what is," the subcommittee compares its findings with the school's Christian philosophy and statement of objectives, including the schoolwide expected student outcomes. The subcommittee determines "what should be" by discussing each area that requires appraisal. The subcommittee should seek to reach consensus.
4. The *REACH 2.0 Rubrics Manual* provides examples of what noncompliance, partial compliance, compliance, and exceeds compliance look like. They are examples for each category and not intended to capture all the implications of compliance. The subcommittee will base its work on the topics listed in the rubrics for their standard. For each rubric, the committee asks whether there is sufficient evidence to substantiate classification in one of the rubric categories and determine what additional evidence might help the subcommittee make this determination besides those listed as required in the standard section.
5. The concluding portion of each self-study section asks the subcommittee to identify areas of strengths and areas of needed improvement that are most needed. First, the subcommittee should clearly indicate whether it believes the accreditation standard for the section is being met by the school and can continue to be met during the accreditation period. Second, the subcommittee identifies the areas of greatest strength and the most needed improvements. This list must be supportable from the responses provided in the subcommittee's report. The process should be managed by the subcommittee chairpersons in such a way that there is a variety of input, discussion, and suggestions before the report is finalized and submitted.



6. The subcommittee's report is submitted to the steering committee for its review.


Each subcommittee will benefit by having a packet of materials from several sections of each of the *REACH 2.0 Standards Manual for Accreditation* and *REACH 2.0 Rubrics Manual*. The following is recommended:

1. Words of thanks and encouragement from the steering committee.
2. Timeline for the process
  - a. Prior to first meeting—read accreditation materials in their packet
  - b. Deadline for collecting required documentation
  - c. Deadline to identify and collect additional input/evidence as necessary to accurately determine compliance with each indicator
  - d. Meeting dates to review progress work assignments
  - e. Date to submit first draft of the subcommittee report to the steering committee
  - f. Date to complete second draft of subcommittee report, submit for faculty reading and feedback
3. Pages from the *REACH 2.0 Standards Manual for Accreditation*
  - a. Page 1—Introduction
  - b. Pages of their specific standard
  - c. Appendix B: Nonnegotiable Indicators
  - d. Schoolwide Expected Student Outcomes (on the accompanying CD)
  - e. Appendix C: Overview of School Responsibilities
  - f. Appendix E: The Self-Study Outline
  - g. Glossary
  - h. Self-Study Sample Template (on the accompanying CD)
4. Pages from the *REACH 2.0 Rubrics Manual*
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Pages for their standard
  - c. Standards/Indicator Checklist at the end of the manual

## Subcommittee Assignments

The steering committee has great latitude in subcommittee formation. They should seek to bring fresh eyes to the self-assessment process and encourage all committee members to be constructive in their analysis and be committed to ongoing improvement for the sake of improved student attainment of the schoolwide expected student outcomes. The following suggestions are possible stakeholders for subcommittee appointment.

1. Philosophy and Foundations
  - a. Governing body member
  - b. Executive leadership/early education director
  - c. Faculty member
  - d. Parent
  - e. Pastor
  - f. Mission representative
2. Governance and Executive Leadership
  - a. Governing body member
  - b. Admissions director
  - c. Financial officer
  - d. Executive leadership/early education director
  - e. Faculty member
  - f. Community member
3. Home and Community Relations and Student Services
  - a. Parent
  - b. Student leader
  - c. Guidance counselor
  - d. Faculty member
  - e. Parent-teacher organization representative
4. Personnel
  - a. Faculty member
  - b. Executive leadership/early education director
  - c. Governing body member
5. Instructional Program and Resources
  - a. Executive leadership/early education director
  - b. Governing body member
  - c. Parent
  - d. Student leader
  - e. Faculty members



The subcommittee generally completes the introductory section for each school division: early education, elementary, middle school, and high school. However, teachers in each division will be assigned to complete a section of this standard. In the early education program, teachers will review all curricular plans for a specific age group. For the elementary school, sections will be completed for every subject: Bible, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, physical education, computer, foreign language. In the middle school and high school, each department will complete a section. Schools should also consider forming interdisciplinary subcommittees for this standard to promote improved understanding of objectives, methodologies, priorities, and perspectives between departments.

#### 6. Student Care

- a. Faculty member
- b. Community member
- c. Coach
- d. Student organization leader
- e. Executive leadership/early education director
- f. Nurse
- g. Secretary
- h. Driver
- i. Food services personnel

#### 7. Character, Values, and Spiritual Formation of Students

- a. Parent
- b. Student leader
- c. Guidance counselor
- d. Faculty members
- e. Executive leadership/early education director
- f. Governing member
- g. School chaplain

# APPENDIX E

## THE SELF-STUDY OUTLINE

A completed self-study contains the following:

### Chapter 1—Introduction and Profile (3–5 pages)

1. **Title page:** School name/date/title
2. **Participants' page:** Identifies all committee personnel (names and committee assignments)
3. **Introductory statement:** Brief description including the location and ownership (half page)
4. **Table of contents**
5. **Glossary:** Commonly used acronyms/terms unique to the school (optional)

### Chapter 2—School Profile (16–22 pages)

1. **Historical overview** of the school (about 2–3 pages)
  - a. Foundation
  - b. Original mission and purpose of the school
  - c. Current mission and purpose (if changed)
  - d. Significant historical developments
  - e. Accreditation history
  - f. Major awards/recognitions
2. **Vision casting**—looking ahead to the next three to five years (1–2 pages):

With the Lord's blessing, what do you anticipate the school could look like in three to five years?
3. **Demographic portrait** (about 5–7 pages):

Provide a data-supported demographic portrait of the school and its various constituencies. The portrait should include descriptive summaries of children, students, faculty, administration, board, parents, and the wider geographic community, as well as survey data from each of the constituent groups, when applicable. Below are samples of what might normally be documented in a demographic portrait:

  - a. Basic data—school name, address, phone, e-mail, the head of school's name, contact information
  - b. Campus locations and grades or age levels seeking accreditation EE–12
  - c. Governance structure: church sponsored/church supported/independent, incorporation status, primary functions of the governing body, number of governing body members, and how they are chosen or elected
  - d. Executive leadership and personnel: degrees or credentials of the head of school, key leadership team members and roles, number of faculty and staff
  - e. Organization and enrollment: program type and number of students in each level—early education, primary, elementary, middle or junior high, and high school (Identify any significant groups of unique populations such as international students, special needs, or first nations students.)


- f. Instructional program: a general description of the type of instructional program offered, mentioning any special learning needs programs (Include core instructional emphasis and schoolwide expected student outcomes. Detailed curriculum documents are to be included in the evidence and made available for the team to review electronically.)
  - g. Facilities: number of classrooms; specialty rooms such as library, computer labs, gym, music/art rooms; and overall acreage
  - h. Finance: size of the annual school budget, recent or current capital campaigns, tuition and fee costs
  - i. Family and student descriptions: geographic communities served, socioeconomic levels, cultural descriptors, denominational backgrounds
4. **Achievement levels and accomplishments** (approximately 8–10 pages, because charts will be included): Present the educational accomplishments of the students and how these relate to the mission of the school.
    - a. Select summary achievement data that best represents the overall picture of student performance for the last three years.
    - b. Provide examples of how assessments have been analyzed and used to adjust instruction to promote learning.
    - c. Indicate how progress is monitored over time for both groups and individuals and how trends in achievement are tracked.
    - d. Identify how schoolwide expected student outcomes are assessed and include the assessment results.

### Chapter 3—For Reaccreditation Visits Only (3–5 pages)

1. Identify any **major changes** at the school since the last visit.
2. Summarize **progress on the continuous school improvement plan** (CSIP).
  - a. For the last three years, summarize how addressing the updated CSIP has made an impact on student learning.
3. Summarize how the school addressed the **major recommendations** left by the visiting committee from the previous full self-study.
  - a. Include a summary of what was accomplished and whether or not they are considered “completed” or still in progress.

### Chapter 4—Self-Study Process (2–3 pages)

1. Explain the process used by the school to conduct its self-study (gathering evidence, agreeing on ratings, and writing the summaries).
2. Explain how committees were established, how the steering committee guided the overall process, and how approval for the final report was gained by the administration and the board.

- 
3. Describe the timeline. This chapter should demonstrate that broad involvement and collaboration were accomplished in the self-study process—involving all stakeholder groups—students, parents, board, faculty, and administration. (Refer to appendix D for more detailed information.)

**Chapter 5—Self-Study Findings (15–25 pages)**

Chapter 5 contains each subcommittee’s report consisting of a brief narrative along with strengths.

A self-study template is provided on the accompanying CD.

# APPENDIX F

## CURRICULUM GUIDE/PLAN AND CURRICULUM MAPPING (ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY)

Please note that early education support documents can be found online.

A quality school places a high priority on the continuous development of its instructional program and the documentation that guides that program. At each grade level taught and in each secondary course, an instructional program includes far more than the contents of any textbook. The curriculum guide/plan is a description of what is taught throughout the school, and as such (1) describes the school's instructional program, (2) helps to ensure continuity between grade levels and subject areas, and (3) provides a basis for evaluation of the school's instructional program.

It is understood that the guide/plan development process takes time and that it is revisited on a regular basis to keep it effective and applicable. While the initial development of a site-specific curriculum document will take several years, the true value is found in the ongoing revisit of those documents, the adjustment and revision that keep them current, and the updating in response to new educational research, instructional trends, and emerging content. As a school matures and adjusts its instructional program, the curriculum guide/plan must change as well, reflecting improvements to instruction, changes in supportive materials, and expansion of the school's integrative component.

A well-documented curriculum guide/plan provides guidance to new teachers, and it is the basis for revisions to the instructional program, including the selection of the most appropriate textbooks and supplemental materials. In this respect, it is a tool to ease the work of the teacher. A school's curriculum guide/plan should be a collaborative effort of teachers in the same department or grade level as well as those above and below it. Members of the faculty at other levels should review the guide for a given level. A separate curriculum guide/plan should be developed for each school division. A curriculum guide/plan must be complete enough to be useful, and it must be organized in a manner that is consistent and practical.

The following list of components for each core instructional area\* should be included in the curriculum guide/plan. For initial accreditation, these items are required to complete the curriculum guide/plan for the instructional program standard:


- Introduction and educational philosophy, including the biblical basis for each course: The introduction and educational philosophy is a narrative statement that includes the subject or grade level for which the curriculum guide/plan is designed, the school's approach to that subject, the biblical foundation for teaching this subject, and any suggestions that might help the users of the guide with this course or content.

- Scope and sequence (or map) of instruction for each subject area at each grade level: The scope and sequence of instruction indicates the breadth of the content to be taught and the order in which it will be taught.
- Time frame for each instructional component (i.e., course and units): The time frame specifies the amount of time spent on each course or for each unit of instruction.
- Overall instructional goals for each course: The instructional goals identify the general objectives of large blocks of instruction, such as yearlong or semester courses.
- Resources, including textbooks: The required and supplemental instructional materials that are a part of the instructional program are specified.
- Integrative elements: The integrative elements are the key biblical, Christian worldview or scriptural concepts used to tie the content to the school's Christian mission and spiritual formation outcomes. Rather than a list of Bible verses, these elements should be connective concepts that make appropriate references between content and the school's Christian distinctive.

The following items should be added as the school completes the development of its curriculum guides/plans, and progress must be reported in the school's annual report.

- Specific instructional objectives for each unit: Specific instructional objectives are the skills or concepts a student attains when the instruction of a unit or a lesson is completed.
- Instructional methods: Instructional methods are the techniques used by a teacher for instruction (e.g., hands-on activities, peer tutoring, discussion, experimentation, learning centers, debates, role-playing, drill, and practice) that are adapted to the learning styles of the students.
- Evaluation/assessment techniques: Evaluation/assessment techniques are the procedures used to measure the stated instructional objectives, including observations, portfolios, projects, demonstrations, reports, and oral and written tests. Caution should be used to avoid a boilerplate approach that replicates identical techniques across all grades. The assessments must be applicable, specific, and appropriate to the grade and the content.
- Standards alignment: State standards alignment is aligning with local or state instructional standards to ensure continuity for students entering or leaving the school while maintaining connectivity to the instructional context in which the school functions. While most Christian schools are not mandated to follow state or local frameworks, some alignment, or at the very least, some reference to them is beneficial.





\* Core instructional areas are defined as Bible, language arts (reading, English, literature, grammar, and composition), mathematics, science, and social studies or history.

## **CURRICULUM MAPPING**

With the development of curriculum mapping as a documentation strategy, a well-produced instructional map—whether hard copy, electronic, or Web-based—can satisfy most of the required elements listed above. Care must be taken to ensure that a school's curriculum maps contain the essential elements required for accreditation and that they provide the documentation of biblical integrative components of the school's programs.

An effective curriculum map will allow for the overview of subject content, objectives or outcomes, resources, and alignment with school-defined or state frameworks while spreading that content over the time frame of the instructional year or unit, depending on the depth of the mapping content. Time must still be given to developing meaningful philosophy statements, biblical integrative elements, and selection of the key content by the faculty. Maps will not and should not replace faculty lesson plans, but maps could be foundational to the generation of lesson plans.

When an electronic curriculum database is used, the components may look slightly different. For example, the scope and sequence may not be a static document but instead would be a matrix that is created dynamically from a query/sort the administrator assembles for a specific purpose or level. The educational philosophy may not be included in the database but may be found in another document such as the course descriptions, which may be available on the website for parents.

Essential to any curriculum document is its usability by the faculty and effectiveness as a foundation device to guide instruction and evaluate its learning impact. A well-constructed map can accomplish this task and meet the requirements above, but it will take more preplanning, particularly if a Web-based system is utilized. It is recommended (not required) that schools use curriculum mapping software for curriculum documentation because of the significant enhancement this technology brings to the school's ongoing curriculum development review and analysis.

# APPENDIX G

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUALS AND HANDBOOKS

The policy manuals and handbooks (governing body, administrative, faculty/staff, and student/parent) of the school should contain the establishing documents for the organization (articles of incorporation/bylaws) and include a comprehensive list of all policies that guide the governing body in its governance role (standing policies) and the administration in its management role (regulations and procedures) of the school. These manuals should be written and codified so that they are practical documents.

### 1. Governing Body Policy Manual

Standing policies are the “one voice” of the governing body, and they should be kept in one organized policy manual within a meaningful framework. These policies (1) define the ends (results/outcomes) of the organization, (2) set parameters/limitations to guide staff/volunteer groups in fulfilling their activities toward meeting the desired ends, (3) describe governing body/administrator/staff relationships, and (4) define the governing body’s own structure and process.

Below is a list of the types of policies that would be included in the governing body policy manual (the list is not meant to be exhaustive but only to serve as a guide):

- Statements of mission and purpose, Christian school philosophy statement
- School’s relationship to its sponsoring organization
- Hiring of the head of school
- Member nomination and selection process, qualifications of governing body members
- Church membership quorum and voting procedures
- Governing body-administrator relationship, duties and responsibilities of the governing body
- Governing body committees/organization and removal of governing body members
- Executive sessions

### 2. Administrative Regulations and Procedures Manual

Administrative regulations and procedures establish the operational guidelines and responsibilities for the school’s executive leadership. In practice, they become the means by which the ends policies of the governing body are implemented in the day-to-day operation of the school. Administrative regulations and procedures should be organized by category into one document within a meaningful framework.

Below is a list of suggested categories and types of regulations and procedures that should be included in the various manuals (the list is not meant to be exhaustive but only to serve as a guide):

### Financial Regulations and Procedures


- Establishing documents (articles of incorporation/bylaws)
- Fund-raising policy, solicitation, and acceptance of gifts
- Budgetary process and timeline audits
- Financial aid program registration/application fee
- Tuition policy, tuition discounts
- Payroll salary schedule
- Signatures on checks/accounts
- Delinquent accounts

### Human Resources Regulations and Procedures

- Nondiscriminatory hiring policy, spiritual qualifications for employment
- Professional qualifications for employment, teacher contracts
- Professional qualifications for early education staff
- Guidelines for supervision of staff (part-time, full-time, hourly)
- Family and Medical Leave Act policy, medical/liability insurance
- Corrective/termination procedures, grievance procedure
- Hiring of relatives/spouses, teacher/support staff evaluations
- Staff dress code, overtime/compensatory time
- Jury duty policy, service recognitions
- At-will employer statement, discrimination/sexual harassment policy
- ADA policy

### 3. Handbooks Instructional Program Regulations and Procedures (Faculty/Staff Handbook)

- Statements of mission and purpose, Christian school philosophy, and schoolwide expected student outcomes
- Textbook review and selection procedures
- Achievement testing
- Assessments used for all age levels
- Dishonesty in schoolwork
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Homework policy

- 
- School calendar
  - Curriculum development
  - Field trips
  - Grading standards
  - Instructional goals and objectives
  - Instructional philosophy statement
  - Use of technology

Note: Some schools choose to combine administrative regulations and procedures with instructional program regulations and procedures into one policy manual, often referred to as an employee handbook.

#### **4. Student Regulations and Procedures (Parent/Student Handbook)**

- Statements of mission and purpose, Christian school philosophy statement, and schoolwide expected student outcomes
- Admissions, immunization/infectious diseases policy
- Absences/tardiness, discipline procedures and consequences
- Suspension/expulsion, student moral standards
- Dress code
- Student accident insurance
- School-age extracurricular activities
- Interscholastic athletics, visitors
- Pupil records/student files, nondiscriminatory policy
- Transportation policy for inclement weather

# APPENDIX H

## OVERVIEW OF CONSULTANT RESPONSIBILITIES

The ACSI accreditation program helps a school aim for, attain, and maintain the highest standards possible through a system of self-evaluation and peer evaluation. The role of the consultant is to counsel the school through the self-evaluation. Once candidate status has been granted, the role of the consultant may be thought of in three stages. The first is preparation, the second is visitation, and the third is concluding activities.

### PREPARATION

The role of the consultant during the preparation stage is vital to the entire self-evaluation process. There are three specific aspects to the preparation stage:

1. The consultant is responsible for verifying that the ACSI accreditation standards are met. The consultant does the following:
  - a. Meets with the school administrator/early education director to ensure that the accreditation commitments and standards are understood
  - b. Verifies that all the accreditation commitments and standards are met before scheduling a committee visit
2. The consultant is responsible for guiding the school through the self-study process. The heart of the accreditation process is the self-study. *REACH 2.0 Standards Manual for Accreditation for EE–12 North American and International Schools* contains the protocol that the school follows, and the school responses are compiled into the self-study document. The consultant does the following:
  - a. Ensures that the accreditation process is understood by the school administrator/early education director
  - b. Is available to give advice while the school makes plans for conducting the study
  - c. Visits the school one or more times, as necessary, before the arrival of the visiting committee
  - d. Advises the school concerning its “readiness” for the committee visit
  - e. Sets a visitation date that is agreeable
3. The consultant is responsible to counsel the school in preparation for the visit. The school needs to complete numerous details. The consultant does the following to assist the school in finalizing details:
  - a. Ensures that the school e-mails or provides a secure access

to a portal containing the self-study and data to each member of the visiting committee at least three weeks before the date of the visit

- b. Ensures that the school finalizes the arrangements for the lodging, food, transportation, and meeting room for the visiting committee (All these expenses are the school’s responsibility.)
- c. Ensures that the school secures the supplementary data noted at the end of each self-study section (e.g., curriculum guides/plans, governing body policy manual, faculty handbook)

### VISITATION

Normally, the consultant becomes the chairperson for the visit, and he or she is responsible for organizing and leading the visiting committee. The visiting committee provides objective verification of the self-study information, analysis, and conclusions reached by the school.


The chairperson does the following:

1. Orients the committee members to the school and its facilities
2. Introduces the committee members to the faculty, the staff, the school governing body, and others
3. Schedules the committee members so they have the opportunity to observe teachers and interview executive leadership/directors, students, parents, and any other individuals who have insight into the operation of the school
4. With the visiting team, presents a final oral report to the school’s representatives at the conclusion of the visit (The audience for the oral report is generally the executive leadership and faculty and any other representatives that the school chooses.)

### CONCLUDING ACTIVITIES

At the conclusion of the visit, the chairperson has several responsibilities affecting the visiting team and the submission of the final report. These responsibilities are as follows:

1. The chairperson does the following for the visiting team members:
  - a. Obtains a voucher for transportation expenses from each team member and passes the vouchers on to the school for payment
  - b. Reminds the team members of the need to keep information and their report confidential

- 
2. The chairperson does the following for the ACSI regional and global accreditation commission:
    - a. Edits the final report, which includes the team's recommendation indicating whether accreditation should be granted
    - b. Sends the completed report and a copy of the self-study to the ACSI regional office. The report of the visiting team is reviewed at the next scheduled meeting of the ACSI Regional Accreditation Commission or at the next ACSI Accreditation Commission meeting. Following the meeting, the school is informed of its accreditation status, and it receives a copy of the final report.



# APPENDIX I

## GOVERNANCE/STRUCTURAL LEVELS FOR ACSI ACCREDITATION

1. ACSI regional office (accreditation process begins here—candidacy, monitoring, timelines, teams, questions, etc.)
2. ACSI Regional Accreditation Commission (final decisions on accreditation status and length of terms, monitoring issues when appropriate)
3. ACSI Headquarters (direct oversight and development of the accreditation process and procedures, oversight of appeals and grievances)
4. ACSI Accreditation Commission (final authority in approval of process and policy)

### ACSI REGIONAL OFFICES

#### Headquarters

PO Box 65130, Colorado Springs, CO  
80962-5130  
719-528-6906 | Fax 719-531-0631  
accreditation@acsi.org

#### North America Regional Offices

##### California/Hawaii

910 E. Birch Street  
Brea, CA 92821-5854  
714-256-1287 | Fax 714-256-4085  
acsica@acsi.org

##### Canada—Eastern

1 Wenden Court, RR 2  
Minesing, ON L0L 1Y2 Canada  
705-728-7344 | Fax 705-728-4401  
acsiec@sympatico.ca

##### Canada—Western

44 Willow Brook Drive NW  
Airdrie, Alberta T4B 2J5 Canada  
PO Box 3460  
Airdrie, Alberta T4B 2B7 Canada  
403-948-2332 | Fax 403-948-2395  
info@acsiwc.org

##### Florida/Caribbean

461 Plaza Drive, Suite C  
Dunedin, FL 34698  
727-734-7096 | Fax 727-734-3666  
acsifl@acsi.org

##### Mid-America/Ohio River Valley

Serving: IL, IN, IA, KY, MI, MN, NE, ND,  
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6755 Weaver Road, Suite 1  
Rockford, IL 61114  
815-282-7070 | Fax 815-282-7086  
acsima@acsi.org

##### Northeast

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Lancaster, PA 17601-1183  
717-285-3022 | Fax 717-285-2128  
acsine@acsi.org

##### Northwest

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acsinw@acsi.org

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acsirm@acsi.org

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Snellville, GA 30078-1537  
770-985-5840 | Fax 770-985-5847  
acsise@acsi.org

##### South-Central

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2001 W. Plano Parkway, Suite 3600  
Plano, TX 75075-8632  
972-941-4404 | Fax 972-941-4405  
acsisc@acsi.org

#### ACSI Global

##### Africa, CIS, and Europe

PO Box 65130, Colorado Springs, CO  
80962-5130  
719-528-6906 | Fax 719-531-0631

##### Asia and Latin America

PO Box 65130, Colorado Springs, CO  
80962-5130  
719-528-6906 | Fax 719-531-0631

##### International Schools

PO Box 65130, Colorado Springs, CO  
80962-5130  
719-528-6909 | Fax 719-531-0631

## APPENDIX J

### THE EXCEPTIONS PROCESS

In general, there are no exceptions to any of the accreditation standards or indicators. In cases in which a school, because of an unusual circumstance or situation, cannot meet the compliance level of a standard or nonnegotiable indicator, it may appeal to the ACSI regional office and commission for an exception. The regional office and commission have guidelines and criteria to follow in determining whether an exception may be granted. If a requested exception is not covered in the ACSI guidelines for the granting of an exception, it must be forwarded to the ACSI Office of Academic Services for a decision. In most cases, exceptions are conditional and they require a school to meet the compliance level over a set period of time.

For an exception to be considered, there must be significant evidence that the exception is clearly warranted and that the strengths of the school in other standards areas will make it significantly clear that an exception in the one area should be granted.

- Exceptions to one or more indicators or compliance with a standard should be requested at the time of candidacy.
- The request must be presented in writing, with supporting documentation, well in advance of a planned accreditation visit to the school. Regional commissions meet twice a year, and commissioners assist the regional office in considering any request for an exception.
- Any exception request that is not covered in the accreditation guidelines for regional offices and commissions must be forwarded to the Office of Academic Services at ACSI Headquarters. At times, these requests require the ACSI Accreditation Governance Commission to make the decision.
- A school has the right to appeal the decision of a regional commission in regard to an exception by addressing it to the Office of Academic Services at ACSI Headquarters.

# GLOSSARY

**accreditation** The status granted to a school after standards are met, a self-study has been written, a visiting committee has verified the self-study, and the commission has approved the school for accreditation. Accreditation is granted for seven years or a period commensurate with that of another agency in a joint accreditation.

**achievement testing** A standardized testing program typically used annually to measure student achievement, or how well the students perform when compared with a national sample of similar students. Test results assist the school in measuring its effectiveness and give parents additional information about their children's performance.

**ACSI Accreditation Commission** The nine-member commission is appointed by the ACSI Board of Directors, and it reports to them. It is made up of three board members and six members elected from the various ACSI Regional Accreditation Commissions. The commission sets accreditation policy, serves as the Global Schools Commission, and hears and adjudicates appeals from the regional commissions.

**annual report** A report that provides the school and ACSI with a yearly evaluation of how well the school is maintaining the ACSI accreditation standards.

**annual statement of financial practices** A statement that consists principally of inquiries of personnel and analytical procedures applied to financial data. It is substantially less in scope than an audit and is in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

**assessment** (early education) Assessment utilizing formative strategies that include a variety of observations, collections of work samples that exhibit growth and development milestones, and snapshots of children's activities (audio recording, video recording, and photographs). Summative assessment would be in the form of school readiness screening.

**assessment** (elementary and secondary) Methods of evaluating student performance and attainment—the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs (formative, summative, objective, subjective, formal, informal, etc.).

**biblical integration** The weaving of God's truth—in precept, principle, and practice—into teaching and learning in such a way that a unified, God-centered view of life is presented.

**candidate status** The status a school is placed in when it is deemed able to complete the accreditation process in a three-year maximum time frame. Candidate status is effective for three full school years.

**career guidance** Advice and assistance provided to students who are encouraged to examine appropriate career possibilities. Literature and other opportunities for learning about various careers are made available to students.

**certification** The status given to teachers who meet specified academic requirements for an ACSI teaching/administration credential.

**child guidance** The entirety of discipline strategies and techniques employed by an early childhood educator to guide a child toward self-control of attitudes and actions.

**code of ethics** An identified set of standards that each individual commits to upholding in his or her role (see *ethical guidelines*).

**college selection assistance** Efforts made to provide literature and exposure to various colleges/universities, with an emphasis on Christian institutions.

**committee visit** A visit to the school by fellow educators to validate the self-study, assess the accuracy and completeness of the report, and construct a report on their visit. The report is based on each section of the self-study. This visit generally lasts three or four days.

**consultant** The person who serves first as a school's consultant during the self-study process, including final preparation for the team visit, and then normally as chairperson of the visiting committee.

**continuous improvement** A consistent effort to improve the school's processes, procedures, and practices that focus on improved teaching, student achievement, and learning.

**continuous school improvement plan (CSIP)** A school's specific long-range and short-range goals and plans; strategies for reaching these goals; and assessment, analysis, and reporting procedures to determine whether the goals have been achieved.

**core instructional areas** Bible, language arts (reading, English, literature, grammar, and composition), mathematics, science, and social studies or history.

**core values** A set of principles that will guide the practice of the school in fulfilling its mission (see *guiding principles*).

**counseling** Service to parents, students, or faculty members who are in need of advice or assistance with spiritual, emotional, social, or academic problems.

**curriculum** The planned instructional program to be delivered to the students. It is not a textbook series.

**curriculum guide** A description of what is taught throughout the school, and as such it (1) describes the school's

instructional program, (2) helps to ensure continuity between grade levels and subject areas, and (3) provides a basis for evaluation of the school's instructional program.

**curriculum guide/plan introduction** The introduction to the curriculum guide/plan, which includes the subject or grade level that the curriculum guide/plan is designed for, an overview of the school's approach to the subject, and any suggestions that might help those using the guide.

**early education** Both the care and the education of children before and/or including kindergarten.

**ethical guidelines** An identified set of standards that each individual commits to upholding in his or her role (see *code of ethics*).

**evaluation** The process used to measure the stated instructional objectives (e.g., observation, oral or written tests).

**exempt** Those programs or classrooms that are exempt from state regulatory inspections on the basis of provisions within the childcare licensing code.

**expected student outcomes** What the school intentionally targets for all students to know, believe, understand, prefer, and be able to do after their tenure in the school. Outcomes are based in the philosophy of the school as well as its statements of mission and vision and then personalized to the lives of the students.

**executive leadership** A person or group of persons having administrative or supervisory authority in an organization.

**financial review** A specific procedure conducted by an external CPA in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). It is less thorough and less complete than an audit. A review or an audit is recommended every year, but it is required at the time of initial, as well as renewal of, accreditation.

**governing body** A group of elected or appointed individuals who come together to act as one for the purpose of establishing policies that will enable an organization to achieve its established desirable ends and to avoid results it considers unacceptable. These individuals are "trustees" who have authority when sitting as members of the governing body.

**guiding principles/statements** A set of principles that will guide the practice of the school in fulfilling its mission (see *core values*).

**head of school** The chief administrator. Titles for that role vary significantly from school to school (e.g., principal, administrator, headmaster, head of school, director, president, superintendent).

**indicators** Descriptions of exemplary practices, processes, and procedures that are evident in educational programs that are highly effective in meeting the standards of accreditation.

**informational resources** The print and digital resources that are accessible on-site or digitally to support the instructional program.

**instructional goals** The general objectives of large blocks of instruction such as yearlong or semester courses. Instructional goals should reflect the rationale, both biblical and educational, for the inclusion of the subject as part of the school's curriculum.

**instructional methods** The instructional techniques that a teacher uses (e.g., hands-on activities, peer tutoring, discussion, experimentation, learning centers, debates, role-play, drill and practice) and adapts to the learning styles of the students.

**instructional objectives** Statements that describe the skills or concepts the student has attained when instruction in a particular subject, grade, unit, or lesson is completed.

**interim report** The report at the midterm of accreditation that holds the school accountable for working on the recommendations from the self-study and the visiting committee report.

**license exempt** Those programs or classrooms that are exempt from state regulatory inspections on the basis of provisions within the childcare licensing code.

**media literacy** A collection of competencies that enable people to analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a wide variety of media modes, genres, and formats.

**mission** The objective that a school seeks to accomplish in order to fulfill its vision.

**oral report** An exit report given by the chairperson of the visiting committee to the school's administrator and others who are invited to the meeting by the school. Significant recommendations and commendations are shared with the school. The chairperson cannot indicate whether the school will be accredited because that decision is made by the ACSI Accreditation Commission, and it is based on the self-study and the visiting committee report.

**philosophy** The system of thought that will guide the school.

**philosophy of teaching and learning** The philosophy that articulates the program's beliefs about how children learn and how they should be instructed, guided, and assessed. The statement determines the instructional methods and classroom practices deemed appropriate in light of the program's view of the nature and needs of children.

**precollege admissions testing** Registration information and practice materials for precollege tests such as the ACT and SAT given to students. Pretests, usually given in grades 10 and 11, prepare students for the types of questions they will encounter and the degree of content knowledge these tests will require.

**profile** A written snapshot of the school, as described in appendix E.

**referral** A procedure by which a counselor suggests school or community resources to assist a parent or a student who has learning, emotional, physical, or other problems.

**regional accreditation commission** The commission elected by the ACSI-accredited schools in each region. The commission meets, usually twice a year, to review and monitor the accreditation activity in the region and to make decisions on school accreditation.

**resources** The required and supplemental instructional materials that are used in the instructional program and that are identified in the curriculum guides/plans.

**rubric** An assessment tool to assist schools in measuring their level of compliance with the standards of accreditation.

**scaffold** To support a child's learning by asking questions, connecting new information to existing knowledge, providing encouragement for attempting something new, or providing assistance to move understanding to the next level.

**school readiness** The culmination of the preschooler's preparation for formal schooling as evidenced in age-appropriate maturation of social skills, intellectual inquiry and achievement, emotional development, physical growth and coordination, and spiritual training.

**schoolwide expected student outcomes** The measurable changes or transformations that will occur in the people the school serves.

**scope and sequence** Indicates the breadth of the content to be taught and the order in which it will be taught.

**self-study** The document produced by the steering committee and the various subcommittees of the school as they answer the questions in the evaluative criteria. Subcommittees are composed of administrators, board members, and faculty, and at times parents and students. This document is a collaborative effort of the school groups. It must represent the combined input, analysis, and consensus of all those involved.

**spiritual formation** The broad area of teaching and nurturing of students in their spiritual development, including their understanding that all truth is God's truth, they are created in the image of God, they must confront the issue of sin and redemption,

they can know God as revealed in Christ and made present in the Holy Spirit, they have been called to become a disciple of Jesus and become more like Him. In addition, the school's role in spiritual formation is to help students develop a biblical worldview as they are taught and nurtured intellectually, socially, and physically through every planned learning activity.

**stakeholder(s)** A person or group of individuals who have direct interest, involvement, or investment in the realization of the mission/vision (e.g., parents, community, faculty, staff).

**standards** The eight established qualitative conditions for school accreditation.

**steering committee** A group of individuals at the school that is responsible for the development and completion of the self-study. The steering committee works with each of the section subcommittees to advise them and to hold them accountable for completing the tasks and putting quality effort into the process.

**subcommittee** A group of persons at the school that is responsible for one section of the self-study. The subcommittee reports to the steering committee.

**target groups** The people whom the school accepts the responsibility to serve, then the number of people in the group and where they are located.

**viable** A viable school, in terms of accreditation, must have multiple students in each grade level that is offered by the school, faculty members that are qualified, sufficient instructional resources, finances, facilities, and support that gives every indication that it will, under normal circumstances, continue to exist as a school. Typically, there should be a minimum of at least five students per grade level and no fewer than 30 students in the school.

**vision** Vision is a description of what the (school, department, division, program) will look like in the future. Alternatively, vision is a description of a preferred future.

**visiting committee** The committee of educators from outside the school who visit it in order to validate the self-study, assess the accuracy and completeness of the report, and construct a report on their visit. The visiting committee evaluates the school according to the ACSI accreditation standards and policies.

**visiting committee report** A report written by the visiting committee that is sent to the ACSI Regional Accreditation Commission or the ACSI Accreditation Commission for international schools with a recommendation about the school's accreditation. ACSI Accreditation Commissions are not bound by the recommendation. The final report is given to the school.



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# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are available on the accompanying CD, the ACSI website ([www.acsi.org](http://www.acsi.org)), or in the resources section of the EE-12 Accreditation group on ConNEXUS, [my.acsi.org](http://my.acsi.org):

## **Application Forms**

- Application
- Standards/Indicator Checklist
- EE Exempt Program Form
- Credit Card Payment Form
- Regional/Global Contact List

## **Initial Accreditation School Resources**

- School Administrator Handbook
- Candidacy Report Template
- Standards Deficiency Form
- Statement of Financial Practice
- Steering Committee Guide
- Sub-Committee Checklist
- Self-Study Template
- Administrator/Instructional Staff Information Sheet
- Certification Report
- Faculty Deficiency Action Plan

## **Renewal Accreditation School Resources**

- Annual Report Form
- Statement of Financial Practice
- School Administrator Handbook
- Steering Committee Guide
- Sub-Committee Checklist
- Self-Study Template
- Certification Report
- Faculty Deficiency Action Plan

## **Team Chairperson/Member Resources**

- Chair/Team Member Handbook
- Chairperson Checklist
- School Candidacy Checklist
- Team Member Accreditation Section Preference Form
- REACH Report Template
- Accreditation Ballot
- Team Member Expense Form
- Team Member Evaluation Form
- Chairperson Evaluation Form

## **EE Program Resources**

- EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators
- EE Age-Group Ration Guide
- EE Employee Personal Testimony Form
- EE Equivalency Chart—Director
- EE Equivalency Chart—Teacher
- EE Equivalency Chart—Teacher Assistant
- EE New-Staff Orientation Checklist
- EE Professional Growth Plan
- EE Program Staffing Chart
- EE Staffing Report
- EE Yearly Professional Development Report
- EE Annual Report Form

## NOTES



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