

Initial Visit Procedures Manual

ACS WASC Initial Visit Procedures for:

- **Supplementary Education Programs**



2019 EDITION

Contents

Preface	iii
ACS WASC Philosophy	1
ACS WASC Mission.....	1
ACS WASC Territory	1
Supplementary Education Program Definition	2
Affiliation Categories	2
Application Guidelines	3
Conditions of Eligibility	3
Procedures	4
ACS WASC SEP Criteria for Initial Affiliation	7
Category A Organization for Student Learning	9
Category B Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	17
Category C Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth	21
Category D Resource Management and Development	23

Preface

If educational organizations are to concentrate all their energies and resources on successful student learning, a holistic, honest examination of the actual program for students is required. Through the use of empowering criteria, new communication patterns, evidence gathering techniques, and insight from fellow educators, the appropriate accreditation process can serve as a vehicle to move school community members into meaningful schoolwide improvement and accountability. The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC), utilizes a protocol for accrediting schools entitled *Focus on Learning*.

The *Focus on Learning* process has been widely accepted throughout the ACS WASC region as integral to the “heart” of education-successful student learning. This has been demonstrated through a variety of *Focus on Learning* adaptations as ACS WASC works jointly with numerous educational associations. Public, independent and church-related private K-12 and adult schools value the “basic components” of *Focus on Learning* that can be “institutionalized” as the schools address growth areas that impact student learning. These include: (1) the defining of quality achievement of schoolwide learner outcomes for every student by all stakeholders; (2) schoolwide interdisciplinary dialogue based on evidence gathering and analysis about what students are doing and producing; and (3) the development, implementation, and accomplishment of a schoolwide action plan.

This document, *ACS WASC Supplementary Education Program Initial Visit Procedures Manual*, provides information on the accreditation process and explains the initial steps toward ACS WASC affiliation for supplementary education programs.

ACS WASC Philosophy

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) believes that the goal of any school should be to provide for successful student learning. Programs encompassing both the cognitive and affective components of learning should foster human growth and development and enable students to become responsible, productive members of the school community and of society. Each school should develop a school purpose to reflect its beliefs. For ongoing program improvement, each school should engage in objective and subjective internal and external evaluations to assess progress in achieving its purpose.

The primary goals of accreditation are:

- *Certification to the public that the school is a trustworthy institution of learning*
- *The improvement of the school's programs and operations to support student learning.*

The school's self-study and the visiting committee's report provide compelling evidence that:

- *The school is substantially accomplishing its stated purposes and functions identified as appropriate for an institution of its type.*
- *The school is meeting an acceptable level of quality in accordance with the ACS WASC criteria adopted by the Accrediting Commission for Schools.*

ACS WASC Mission

ACS WASC advances and validates quality ongoing school improvement by supporting its private and public elementary, secondary, and postsecondary member institutions to engage in a rigorous and relevant self-evaluation and peer review process that focuses on student learning.

ACS WASC Territory

ACS WASC extends its services worldwide to public, private, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K–12 and adult schools. ACS WASC provides assistance to schools located in California, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Asia, and other parts of the world.

Supplementary Education Program Definition

A Supplementary Education Program (SEP) is a non-degree, non-diploma granting organization that offers programs of instruction in specific areas of learning designed for elementary and/or secondary age students who are in need of, or desire, educational development in one or more areas. Student attendance in a SEP is limited to the time required for success in the specific area(s) of learning for which the student is enrolled. Typically, students attend the supplementary education program as a means of strengthening or supplementing specific capabilities within their comprehensive education.

A SEP may be unaffiliated, part of an identifiable network, or exist through the auspices of a corporation dedicated to the provision of supplementary education either as owned by the corporation, a franchise of the corporation, or managed under a contract with the corporation.”

Affiliation Categories

After a SEP completes the necessary documentation in their application for affiliation with ACS WASC and an on-site visit is conducted, one of three possible accreditation status outcomes will be made by the Accrediting Commission for Schools:

1. **Initial** accreditation is granted to SEPs that meet the ACS WASC criteria for full accreditation and have a history and support system indicating a high-quality program that can be sustained into the foreseeable future.
2. **Candidacy** is a status of affiliation indicating that an institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward, but has not yet achieved, accreditation. The candidate for accreditation classification is designed for institutions that are not yet ready for the full evaluation based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria for accreditation. The institution must provide evidence of sound planning with sufficient resources to implement these plans, and must appear to have the potential for attaining its goals within a reasonable time. Candidate SEPs are required to submit a written report to the Commission during the spring of the school year following the initial visit, indicating the progress being made in meeting the recommendations of the initial visiting committee and noting any substantial changes in the organization or operation of the SEP. SEPs are normally expected to conduct a self-study and participate in an accreditation visit for full accreditation by the third year of candidacy.

3. **Accreditation status may be withheld** if it is determined that the SEP does not fully meet ACS WASC criteria for affiliation with the Accrediting Commission for Schools. A SEP may reapply after deficiencies have been remedied.

RUBRICS: Criteria for Initial Affiliation

Rubrics containing descriptions to assist in determining the level to which each criterion is being met can be found on pages 9–24. Documentation examples are also included.

Application Guidelines

A SEP may be unaffiliated, part of an identifiable network, or exist through the auspices of a corporation dedicated to the provision of supplementary education either as owned by the corporation, a franchise of the corporation, or managed under a contract with the corporation.”

Conditions of Eligibility

To be considered for ACS WASC affiliation, the applicant SEP must be a meeting the following conditions:

1. Be in at least the second semester of operation, with students, teachers, and administration in place.
2. SEP enrollment must reach a minimum of 6 full-time students.
3. Have developed and published a clear statement of purposes together with plans for a curriculum to carry out those purposes.
4. Have a management system that provides appropriate direction and oversight for the overall program.
5. Have employed a chief administration officer who is qualified for the position.
6. Have an organization, facilities, course offerings, and staffing acceptable for the SEP’s stage of development.
7. Have an overall plan including objectives for student achievement and assessment plans to measure progress toward those objectives.
8. Have an admissions policy compatible with the SEP’s stated objectives.
9. Have a written curriculum appropriate to the organization’s purpose.
10. Have a qualified instructional staff.
11. Have plans to provide access to appropriate extracurricular and enrichment activities, if appropriate.
12. Have developed an adequate financial base to give reasonable assurance of continuing financial stability.

Procedures

- A SEP seeking affiliation will complete a “Request for ACS WASC Affiliation” form and submit it to ACS WASC with a \$160 nonrefundable application fee. SEPs that reschedule or postpone the initial visit to a different school year will be required to pay an **additional** application fee to restart the application process.
- After the “Request for ACS WASC Affiliation” is processed, the SEP will be provided with initial visit materials and a SEP description report template to complete and submit to ACS WASC. The information provided to the ACS WASC office in this report should describe the purposes and operation of the SEP and gives evidence of the SEP’s status in relation to the conditions of eligibility. In addition to the evidence provided in the report, the SEP should make available other supporting documentation during the initial visit.
- Upon receipt of the forms, ACS WASC will arrange for a two-member, one-day visit to the SEP. Newly established SEPs may host the initial visit as early as the second semester of operation. Following the visit, the committee will prepare a report to present to the Accrediting Commission for Schools for action. This will include recommendations regarding the SEP’s ongoing improvement and assess the SEP’s readiness for initial affiliation. The SEP will be notified by the executive director of the Commission’s action.
- If the Commission’s action is unfavorable and the institution is not granted affiliation, the SEP may reapply when, in its judgment, it meets the conditions of eligibility. The SEP may reapply as early as the following semester.
- If the Commission’s action is favorable, the SEP will be granted either initial accreditation or candidacy for a period not to exceed three years. It is expected that the SEP will conduct a self-study and participate in an accreditation visit during the third year.
- SEPs that are granted candidacy status are to submit a first-year progress report addressing the visiting committee recommendations indicating the progress being made in meeting the recommendations of the initial visiting committee and noting any substantial changes in the organization or operation of the SEP.

Information about initial visit and annual membership visit fees can be found on the [ACS WASC Fees page](#) of the ACS WASC website.

SEPs that have been approved for initial accreditation may use the following phrase in advertising and/or on certificates of completion.

Supplementary Education Program: Accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

SEPs that are approved as candidates for accreditation may use the following phrase in advertising and/or on certificates of completion.

Supplementary Education Program: Candidate for Accreditation. Approved by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Candidate SEPs are NOT authorized to use the word “accredited” or “accredited by” until full accreditation has been granted by the Commission. Candidate SEPs MAY NOT use the ACS WASC logo or ACS WASC accreditation stamp on certificates of completion or advertising.

ACS WASC SEP Criteria for Initial Affiliation

The ACS WASC SEP criteria for initial affiliation can be found on the following pages. The criteria are organized into four categories:

- Organization for Student Learning
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
- Resource Management and Development

Within each of the categories are specific criteria that must be addressed by the SEP. The three columns on the following pages include:

- Criteria for Initial Accreditation status, in which the SEP is fully accredited for a period not to exceed three years.
- Criteria for Candidacy status, in which the SEP is moving toward accreditation but is not yet fully accredited.
- Examples of documentation that can be used as evidence of the SEP's compliance with each of the criteria.

In the process of applying for the initial visit, the SEP will have already provided, in direct or summary form, much of the information listed in the "Examples of Documentation" column.

The SEP can provide additional documentation to the committee on the day of the visit.

The visiting committee will write a report after the visit that will include recommendations regarding the SEP's ongoing improvement and assess the SEP's readiness for initial affiliation.

Category A Organization for Student Learning

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has established a clear statement of vision and mission that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution. • The student/community profile data has impacted the development of the SEP purpose and the SEP learner outcomes. • A high degree of involvement by representatives of the entire SEP community has occurred in the development of the purpose and SEP learner outcomes. • There is a clear and systematic network of communication of the SEP's purpose and SEP learner outcomes within the SEP community. • Staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders understand and are committed to the purpose of the SEP. • There is a process in place for the regular review or revision of the purpose and SEP learner outcomes. • There is consistency between the purpose, the SEP learner outcomes, the SEP program, and ongoing improvement. • Publications and other media are used to inform parents and community members about the SEP purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has adopted a clear statement of purpose • The student/community data has impacted the development of the SEP purpose. • The SEP has designed a system and process to communicate the SEP's purpose that will lead to further development of SEP learner outcomes. • Plans to carry out the purpose are in place and implementation has begun that show alignment of the SEP learner outcomes, the program, and ongoing improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of SEP purpose (Note: purpose is a general term for terminology used by SEPs such as vision, mission, or philosophy and objectives). • Programwide student goals and the process for development. • Student/community demographic and performance information and data. • Admission policies and materials. • Master schedule. • Any academic or operational plans the SEP may have in place. • Process for regular review or revision of purpose and SEP learner outcomes. • Processes and publications/media for communication to all stakeholders within the SEP community.

* SEP learner outcomes are interdisciplinary statements about what all students should know, understand, and be able to do by the time they complete the planned program or graduate.

Category A Organization for Student Learning

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has a functioning governance structure, with clear lines of authority and responsibility. • The governing authority has adopted policies that are consistent with the purpose and support student achievement as defined in the SEP learner outcomes. • There is participation of the governing authority, if applicable, and board in the development of the SEP purpose, and SEP learner outcomes. • The governing authority delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff. • Authority and responsibility are allocated in a way that promotes effective functioning of staff at all levels. • The SEP community understands the governing authority's role. • The governing authority carries out clear evaluation procedures on the identified goals. • There is a process in place for evaluation of the governing authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has a functioning governance structure, with clear lines of authority and responsibility. • The governing authority has adopted policies that are consistent with the purpose and support student achievement as defined in the SEP learner outcomes. • The governing authority delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff. • There is participation of governing authority, if applicable, and board in the development of the purpose, and SEP learner outcomes. • The SEP community understands the governing authority's role. • The governing authority carries out clear evaluation procedures on the identified goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents relating to the organization of the SEP, including roles and relationships of the governing board and administration and other areas of the SEP's infrastructure. Could include job descriptions, organizational charts, personnel rosters, board policies, admission policies, procedures, and forms. • Minutes of board meetings.

Category A Organization for Student Learning

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chief administrative officer effectively leads the entire staff in exercising a decision-making process that focuses on the SEP purpose, student accomplishment of the SEP learner outcomes, and academic standards. • The leadership is working to ensure that standard operational practices, decision-making processes, and established procedures for internal communication and conflict resolution are clearly written, agreed upon, understood, and practiced. • The leadership empowers the staff and encourages commitment, participation, and shared accountability for student learning. • There are written policies, charts, and handbooks that define the responsibilities and relationships of administrators, faculty, and staff. • The actions of the leadership are directly linked to student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chief administrative officer has been employed. This individual has adequate qualifications for the position. • The leadership demonstrates understanding of the purpose and the student goals. • The leadership is working to ensure that standard operational practices, decision-making processes, and established procedures for internal communication and conflict resolution are clearly written, agreed upon, understood, and practiced. • The actions of the leadership are directly linked to student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team dialogue with the principal or head of the SEP and discuss the SEP’s needs, potential, and plans for the future. • Discussion with leadership regarding modes of operation. • Review of brief summaries about professional background of leadership and defined responsibilities. • Review of policies and procedures. • Dialogue with faculty and support staff. • Documents relating to the organization of the SEP, including roles and relationships of the administration to other areas of the SEP’s infrastructure. Could include job descriptions, organizational charts, roles, responsibilities, personnel rosters, board policies, admission policies, procedures, and forms.

Category A Organization for Student Learning

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff is qualified for their assigned responsibilities, and is involved in ongoing professional development. • The SEP has clear employment policies/practices related to qualification requirements of staff. • The SEP reviews all information regarding staff background, training and preparation. • The leadership supports a professional development program with time, personnel and fiscal resources based upon student needs, the SEP learner outcomes and academic standards. • There is a clearly articulated supervision and evaluation process in place. • Staff evaluations are used to promote professional growth and improve the quality of instruction. • Processes are used to determine the measurable effect of professional development on student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff is qualified for their assigned responsibilities. • The SEP has clear employment policies/practices related to qualification requirements of staff. • The SEP reviews all information regarding staff background, training and preparation. • The SEP has plans to provide ongoing professional development that supports student learning. • The leadership and staff are developing a supervision and evaluation process. • Processes are being put in place to determine the measurable effect of professional development on student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of teaching staff credentials and preparation. • Schedule of teaching assignments with staff credentials and preparation to assess appropriateness of instructional staff assignments. • Roster of administrative and support staff with qualifications and job assignments. • Staff development plans, descriptions of current or ongoing professional development activities that promote student learning. • Examination of the written professional development plan. • Examination of the supervision and evaluation process and procedures. • Interviews with staff. • Review of policies and procedures for employee hiring, professional development, and supervision.

Category A Organization for Student Learning

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilities (buildings, labs, technology, library, and other) are sufficient to support the program in a functional, safe, clean, and healthy setting. • The environment reflects a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student. • Written policies and procedures are in place to ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that is conducive to learning. • Students and staff have a clear understanding of safety policies and procedures. • There is mutual respect, two-way communication, and support in relationships among the staff, between staff and students, between staff and parents (where applicable), and between staff and leadership. • Caring, concern, and high expectations for students are demonstrated on a daily basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilities (buildings, labs, technology, library, and other) are sufficient to support the program in a functional, safe, and healthy setting. • The environment reflects a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student. • Written policies and procedures are being developed to ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that is conducive to learning. • Students and staff have a clear understanding of safety policies and procedures. • Mutual respect and effective communication among staff is evident. • Caring, concern, and high expectations for students are demonstrated on a daily basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour of the SEP plant and review the site master plan to assess the current and planned adequacy in meeting the needs of the student body. • Tour of instructional materials center, visits to representative classrooms, laboratories, library/media center(s), and discussions with teachers regarding their judgments as to the adequacy of instructional materials and aids. • General discussion with students, staff, parents, and other stakeholders about the environment.

Category A Organization for Student Learning

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress is determined and monitored on a regular basis with respect to course content standards and SEP learner outcomes. • The leadership has monitored the accomplishment of a SEP action plan directly linked to the results of student achievement measurements. • Student work/performance is used to determine the degree to which students are achieving the SEP learner outcomes. • There is correlation between SEP improvement, professional development activities/topics and student progress of the SEP learner outcomes. • There are written procedures in place to regularly communicate to the governing authority and members of the SEP community about student progress. • There is correlation between allocation of time, fiscal and personnel resources, improvement plans, and student achievement of the learner outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress is determined and monitored on a regular basis with respect to course content standards and SEP learner outcomes. • The SEP is working to ensure that there is a link between what is learned and the SEP learner outcomes. • The SEP is developing written procedures to communicate to the governing authority and members of the SEP community about student progress. • The leadership is developing a SEP action plan with identified measures of success that show the impact of the results on student learning. • The leadership has an understanding of ongoing improvement and the importance of plans of action to enhance learning for all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzed and interpreted student achievement data with respect to content standards and SEP learner outcomes. • Evidence of professional development addressing learning issues and/or modifications in curriculum. • Means of communication with parents and other stakeholders regarding student achievement. • Dialogue with parents, other community members, staff and students. • Examination of the SEP action plan showing measures of success and with respect to student learning. The action plan should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statement of area for improvement 2. Brief statement of the rationale for identifying this area 3. SEP learner outcomes addressed 4. Specific steps 5. Timeline 6. Person(s) responsible and involved 7. Resources 8. Ways of assessing progress of steps and overall area of improvement 9. Means to report progress to all members.

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence of stakeholder involvement in development of the plan, and evidence of support for its implementation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of stakeholder involvement in the action plan development. • Discussion with leadership and staff about the action plan and the ongoing improvement process, i.e., the degree of correlation between SEP improvement, professional development, and student learner outcomes.

Category B Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has defined what all students should know and be able to do for each subject area and this is reflected in the taught curriculum. • The SEP’s taught curriculum correlates with a well-developed written curriculum that is based on high-quality content standards and SEP learner outcomes for all students. • The evaluation of each student’s academic performance is based on defined performance indicators for the content standards. • The SEP has established a regular cycle of review and revision for each curricular area to ensure a challenging, relevant, and rigorous curriculum for all students. • There is consideration by the SEP of current educational research and thinking related to various subject areas and curricular programs to maintain a meaningful instructional program for students. • Clear policies exist regarding course completion, and grades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has defined what all students should know and be able to do for each subject area and this is reflected in the taught curriculum. • The SEP is further refining its written curriculum to ensure that it reflects high-quality content standards and learner outcomes for all students. • The evaluation of each student’s academic performance is at the initial stages of being linked to the defined performance indicators for the content standards. • The SEP is establishing a regular cycle of review and revision for each curricular area to ensure a challenging, relevant, and rigorous curriculum for all students. • Clear policies exist regarding course completion and grades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written curriculum that includes content standards, performance indicators, examples of ways to assess learning, suggested learning activities, instructional materials used, and references. • Instructional materials. • Discussion with staff, students, and parents about the curriculum. • Evidence of regular review and revision of curriculum. • Observations of taught curriculum and overall linkage to SEP’s learning goals. • Examination of student work and student engagement in learning.

Category B Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

B2. ACS WASC SEP How Students Learn Criterion: The professional staff (a) uses research-based knowledge about teaching and learning, and (b) designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the SEP ’s purpose and SEP learner outcomes.

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff uses a variety of techniques that effectively engage students in learning and are consistent with the SEP’s purpose, SEP learner outcomes, and standards. • The staff addresses the various learning styles and needs of the students. • The staff is current in the instructional content taught and research-based methodology. • Staff development activities enhance instructional repertoires of the staff to improve student achievement through greater engagement and comprehension. • There is regular student use of resources for learning beyond the limits of textbooks, such as effective use of the library media center, technology, collaborative activities, and community resources. • Students engage in learning and their work demonstrates the use of critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge, and application skills. • Students have a positive perception about their learning experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and leadership utilize a variety of instructional methods to address student needs and improve student learning. • The staff is current in the instructional content taught and research-based methodology. • Staff development plans are in place that will enhance instructional repertoires of the staff to improve student achievement through greater engagement and comprehension. • There is student use of resources for learning beyond the limits of textbooks, such as effective use of the library/media center, technology, collaborative activities, and community resources. • Students engage in learning and their work demonstrates the use of critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge, and application skills. • Students have a positive perception about their learning experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations of students engaged in instruction. • Interviews with students and instructional staff. • Evidence of attention to the needs of individual students, such as accelerated programs, remediation plans, individual learning plans. • Examination of representative student work. • Documentation of professional development activities. • Documentation of resource use beyond the classroom.

Category B Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

B3. ACS WASC SEP How Assessment Is Used Criterion: Teacher and student use of assessment are frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process. The assessment results are the basis for (a) measurement of each student’s progress toward the SEP learner outcomes; (b) regular evaluation, modification, and improvement of curriculum and instructional approaches; and (c) allocation of resources.

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP’s instructional program includes identification of ways to evaluate student learning on an ongoing basis. • The teachers regularly use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring a specific body of knowledge or skills such as selected responses, essays, individual or group projects, etc. • The teacher and student use of assessment is integral to the teaching/learning process. • Assessment results measure the progress of students toward defined content standards and the SEP learner outcomes. • Assessment data is collected, disaggregated, and analyzed, and is used to make changes and decisions about curriculum, instruction, resource allocation, and professional development activities. • Student feedback is an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on standards and SEP learner outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP’s instructional program includes identification of ways to evaluate student learning on an ongoing basis. • The teachers regularly use assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring a specific body of knowledge or skills such as selected responses, essays, individual or group projects, etc. • The teacher and student use of assessment is becoming integral to the teaching/learning process. • Assessment results measure the progress of students toward defined content standards and the SEP learner outcomes. • The SEP is beginning to use assessment data collected, disaggregated, and analyzed to make changes and decisions about curriculum, instruction, resource allocation, and professional development activities. • Student feedback is becoming an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on standards and SEP learner outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of student achievement results for at least three years (if available) • Examination of sample representative student work. • Policies or other documentation relating to assessment policies, grading standards, reporting of student progress, and communications with parents and/or students about student achievement. • Discussion regarding examples of curriculum and instructional modifications based on learning results. • Plans and schedules for standardized testing and other assessment activities. • Examples of allocating resources based on student learning results.

Category C

Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP provides personalized student support correlated to student achievement of the SEP learner outcomes. • The SEP staff implements strategies to develop students’ self-confidence, a personalized approach to learning, and connection to the learning environment. • The SEP offers co-curricular and enrichment activities, correlated with the SEP learner outcomes, if applicable. • Students are involved in curricular/co-curricular activities such as student leadership organizations and service projects. • The SEP regularly evaluates the level of student involvement in curricular/co-curricular activities and student use of support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff implements strategies to develop students’ self-confidence, a personalized approach to learning, and connection to the learning environment. • The SEP offers extracurricular and enrichment activities commensurate with its stage of development, with plans to expand these services as the SEP evolves, if applicable. • Students are involved in curricular/co-curricular activities such as student leadership organizations and service projects. • The SEP is developing a process to evaluate the level of student involvement in curricular/co-curricular activities and student use of support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student activity program: discussion about the range of activities, including student government, if applicable. • Interviews with students, parents, and teachers about the range of activities, including student government. • Review of related policies, handbooks, forms, and publications, e.g., health forms, student and parent handbooks, and newsletters.

Category C

Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has established a formal process for involvement of parents and/or a parent or community-based organization that connects SEP and student life with the larger community. • Parents and community are active in the SEP, and roles, responsibilities, and communication channels are clearly delineated. • Parents have an understanding of the SEP learner outcomes and content standards in relation to student achievement, and their role in helping students learn. • The SEP has a well-developed system for communication with all parents regarding specific problems, issues, and general SEP information. • The SEP’s stakeholders take part in planning for the SEP’s further development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP is working toward educating parents and community members in understanding that student achievement is based on student accomplishment of the SEP learner outcomes and content standards. • Parents and community members are becoming active partners in supporting student learning, and understand how to access SEP personnel regarding all concerns. • The SEP is working to establish a formal process or organization that involves parents and the SEP community with the SEP and student life. • The SEP regularly communicates to parents and other stakeholders. • The SEP is encouraging stakeholders to take part in planning for the SEP’s further development. • The SEP is beginning to explore the use of community resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue with SEP staff, parents and/or community members about the means of communication, and level of involvement in the support programs at the SEP for all students. • Examination of materials and other means to engage parents and community members in the SEP’s educational program for students.

Category D Resource Management and Development

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has developed an adequate financial base to give reasonable assurance of continuing financial stability. An external audit ensures the trustworthiness of the SEP’s financial records. • Resources are sufficient to support anticipated growth, multi-year planning is in place to ensure continued viability, and resources are targeted toward achieving the SEP’s most important short- and long-term goals, and are linked to student learning. • The SEP has in place procedures for ensuring a well-qualified staff, adequate facilities, and adequate instructional materials. • There is correlation between decisions about resource allocations and the SEP’s purpose and assessment of the SEP learner outcomes and content standards. • There are written procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials, such as textbooks, other printed material, audio-visuals, support technology, manipulatives, and laboratory materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has developed an adequate financial base to give reasonable assurance of continuing financial stability. Sound business and accounting practices are followed, including an external annual audit. • The SEP has facilities that are safe, functional, and well-maintained. • The SEP has in place and is further defining procedures for ensuring a well-qualified staff, adequate facilities, and adequate instructional materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP’s budget. • Description of the budgeting process. • Any plans relating to facilities. • Examination of current facilities, including safety, maintenance, and adequacy. • Review of equipment and materials procurement policies. • Latest financial audit.

Category D Resource Management and Development

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

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP has developed a process and uses a master resource plan to focus the SEP on the goal of student accomplishment of the SEP learner outcomes and academic standards. • The governing authority uses research and internal and external information to form the master resource plan. • The governing authority, leadership, and staff understand the ways internal and external resources are obtained and used to support student learning. • Governing authorities and leaders are involved with informing the appropriate entities and constituencies about the short-term and long-term financial needs of the institution. • Stakeholders are involved in the future planning for the SEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEP is well aware of the necessity of long-range resource planning and is in the process of developing such a plan. • The resource planning process is centered upon the goal of student accomplishment of the SEP learner outcomes and academic standards. • The governing authority, leadership, and staff are understanding the ways internal and external resources are obtained and used to support student learning. • Stakeholders are becoming part of the future planning for the SEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of planning documents, such as long-term financial plans, future site and building plans, enrollment projections, and staffing needs. • Interviews with governing body representatives, leadership, and staff about the long-range planning process and strategies used. • Enrollments projections. • Development plans.

**Accrediting Commission for Schools
Western Association of Schools and Colleges
(ACS WASC)**

Dr. Barry R. Groves
President

Dr. Marilyn S. George
Executive Vice President

Northern California Office
533 Airport Boulevard, Suite 200
Burlingame, CA 94010-2009
Phone: (650) 696-1060
Fax: (650) 696-1867

Southern California Office
11590 West Bernardo Court, Suite 120
San Diego, CA 92127-1624

www.acswasc.org
mail@acswasc.org

